Peta Goldburg • Principal author | Patricia Blundell • Trevor L. Jordan

INVESTIGATING RELIGION

STUDY OF RELIGION FOR SENIOR SECONDARY STUDENTS

Activity writers | Peta Goldburg • Anne Browning • Ellen Browning • Rachael Oike

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About the authors

Peta Goldburg

Peta Goldburg RSM FACE, a leading educator in the field of Study of Religion, is Head of the School of Religious Education at the Australian Catholic University, Brisbane. Peta is the National President of the Australian Association of Religious Education (AARE) and chaired the Queensland Studies Authority (QSA) Syllabus Committee for Study of Religion in 2001 and again in 2008. She is also a Fellow of the Australian College of Education.

Patricia Blundell

Patricia Blundell RSM is the Coordinating Chaplain at Griffith University, Brisbane. She completed a Master of Religious Education in 1999 and her PhD in 2007. She is President of the Tertiary Campus Ministry Association and co-Chair of the Asia Pacific Women of Faith Network, Religions for Peace.

Trevor L. Jordan

Trevor Jordan is a Senior Lecturer in Applied Ethics in the Humanities Program at Queensland University of Technology. He is a past president of the Australian Association for the Study of Religion.

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Introduction

Australia is a nation of immigrants and a place where many religions exist and flourish. However, we have only begun to embrace religious pluralism in the last twenty years, and we are still learning. One way we begin to engage with religion is to learn about it, question it, plumb its depths and critique it. This is exactly what Study of Religion is all about.

We have designed this book specifically for Study of Religion teachers and senior secondary students in Queensland. The text develops the inquiry model required in the syllabus and provides an opportunity to investigate religion, and how religious issues affect today's world. Each chapter of the book provides a range of information related to the topic or core components of the syllabus. In addition, each chapter contains a wide variety of activities based on the inquiry process.

How to use this book

Investigating Religion provides a number of ways to study religion. The chapters model the application of the 2008 QSA Study of Religion syllabus to the topic areas. While the core is presented in some depth, these chapters are intended as a foundation and enriching reference material for grounding the topic chapters.

Ideally, elements of the **core components** should be integrated into **topics**.

Core components:

- Australian religious perspectives (including Aboriginal spiritualities and Torres Strait Islander religions; Religion in Australian society; and Religious diversity in Australia)
- World religions (including Hinduism, Judaism, Buddhism, Christianity, Islam)
- The nature and significance of religion.

Topics:

- Religion–state relationships
- Ritual
- Sacred texts
- Ultimate questions
- Religion, values and ethics
- School-based topic – religion and human rights.

When studying Chapter 2, Ritual, for example, cross-referencing this material with key concepts from the chapters discussing world religions may assist the investigation, as might something from Chapter 3, Sacred texts. In other words, moving from one section to another would be more beneficial than beginning at the introduction and working through to the conclusion. To study a topic in depth, you might find it useful to consider sections of four or five chapters, as well as drawing on other resources.

As you work through the book, you will be asked to complete a range of different activities. All of these activities are provided in electronic format at *Cambridge GO* (www.cambridge.edu.au/GO). Whenever you see this icon you will know that the corresponding worksheet or activity text for the activity is available on *Cambridge GO*. This will allow you to print them out and complete them by hand, or complete and submit them electronically.

As part of your learning, you will also be expected to access a number of resources online. Whenever you see this icon you will know that an activity requires you to access the internet.

In order to provide a varied learning experience, this book uses a wide range of activities. Some of them you will no doubt have heard of before, whereas others will be completely new to you. The learning activities and strategies used in this book include:

- 5Ws & H
- Alphabet list
- Annotated bibliography
- Annotated timeline
- Blog entry
- Character map
- Collage
- Comic strip
- Compare and contrast chart
- Consequences wheel
- Fishbone diagram
- Histogram graph
- Hot seat
- Info break
- Jigsaw
- KWHL
- K-W-L
- Mind Map
- PMI
- Six Thinking Hats
- Storyboard
- SWOT

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- Flowchart
- Frayer Concept Model
- Graffiti wall
- T-chart
- Venn diagram
- Y-chart.

For more information and examples of each of these strategies and learning activities, access the Student CD-ROM.

The inquiry process

In the 2008 Study of Religion syllabus, the first four elements in the inquiry process – Framing, Investigating, Reasoning and Judging – are assessable, and relate to the syllabus' general objectives of Knowledge and Understanding, Evaluative Processes, and Research and Communication. These are linked to the exit criteria for awarding levels of achievement. The fifth element of the inquiry process, Reflecting, is not assessable and is linked to the affective objectives which describe the attitudes, values and feelings that the syllabus aims to develop.

The first of the general objectives, **Knowledge and Understanding**, should:

- develop students' abilities to recognise, recall and demonstrate that they understand the meaning of key ideas and concepts from a range of sources and materials
- develop students' abilities to comprehend, explain and apply key ideas and concepts about religion in familiar and unfamiliar contexts, drawing on a variety of materials, issues and phenomena related to religion.

The second objective, **Evaluative Processes**, refers to students' abilities to analyse, synthesise and evaluate information about religion while simultaneously demonstrating rigorous inquiry, reasoned judgement and critical comment.

The third objective, **Research and Communication**, refers to the use of the inquiry process including gathering, selecting, sorting, organising and presenting information about religious issues and phenomena.

The Study of Religion inquiry process is not a linear process. It is fluid, enabling movement freely between framing, investigating and reasoning before judging. The fluidity with the inquiry process will depend on the unit and topic being studied and the particular emphasis taken for the area under investigation. The process of inquiry enables teachers and students to organise the selection, pacing and timing of knowledge transmitted and received as they investigate religion and its place in society.

Ethnographic investigations

An ethnographic investigation may run for the duration of a unit or for only part of a unit and may encompass one or more assessment instruments, such as a research assignment, a report, a multi-modal presentation or a piece of extended writing. The assessment tasks are completed at various milestone points throughout the process of inquiry.

The QSA Study of Religion syllabus clearly states that before the interview section of the ethnographic investigation, students should have a broad understanding of the phenomenon under investigation and have mastered the language involved. This means that the findings of their investigation will be based on comprehensive knowledge. *Investigating Religion* provides a number of support activities in each of the topics for the ethnographic investigations.

The ethnographic investigation ideas provided have been designed so that they might be adapted to suit a variety of school locations and access to resources (human and material). Where it is not possible to speak with people, it is possible to use documentary or other sources in which adherents describe or show what takes place in their religious communities.

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For the student

The inquiry process for Study of Religion is shaped by five aspects of inquiry (i.e. Framing, Investigating, Reasoning, Judging and Reflecting).

Framing asks you to become aware of matters and issues relating to the topic, outlining and defining the topic or issue, identifying a range of sources, exploring knowledge, viewpoints, questions and approaches and identifying, focusing and recording key points of the study. You might ask:

- What questions can I ask about this topic or issue?
- What resources and sources might I look for relating to this topic or issue?
- Where might I locate other materials?
- What do I know about this topic or issue? What is my point of view on this issue?
- What might be other points of view in this class, in the local community and in the wider community?

Investigating is concerned with identifying appropriate resources and methods, establishing validity of sources, formulating research questions, developing ideas for an hypothesis, gathering, organising, sorting, presenting data and evidence and investigating and researching issues related to an hypothesis. You might ask:

- Are the sources and resources I have located appropriate for, or relevant to, this topic or issue?
- What frameworks or methods have other people used to investigate this topic?
- Are some frameworks or methods more appropriate than others?
- What questions do I need to generate which relate to this topic?
- How might I collect evidence relating to this topic or issue?
- Do I have enough material?
- How might I sort the evidence I have gathered?
- How will I begin to shape a hypothesis?

Reasoning requires you to speculate about sources including identifying bias, to propose/deduce interrelationships from data, to present findings and evidence using various genres, to move towards providing explanations and interpretations of religious beliefs, values, practices, events and to shape and reshape the hypothesis. You might ask:

- How reliable is the evidence I have collected?
- Is the material I have collected from authoritative sources?
- What ideas do the sources have in common?
- What ideas in the sources are different?
- What social, cultural, religious or gender bias might be present in what I have collected? Why might this bias exist?
- Do the sources present a range of perspectives and/or ideologies?
- In what socio-historical contexts were the sources located?
- How is the material I have collected assisting me to reason and think?
- How is the material I have collected assisting me to shape my hypothesis?

Judging requires you to synthesise, make decisions, draw conclusions and advocate a position. You will need to develop skills to draw conclusions based on evidence, justify conclusions about the hypothesis using evidence, and decide whether further investigation, reasoning, evidence or action is required. You might ask:

- What conclusions can I draw based on the evidence I have gathered?
- Do my conclusions relate to my hypothesis?
- Can my hypothesis be reshaped?
- Do I need to investigate this further?
- Do I need to collect more evidence?

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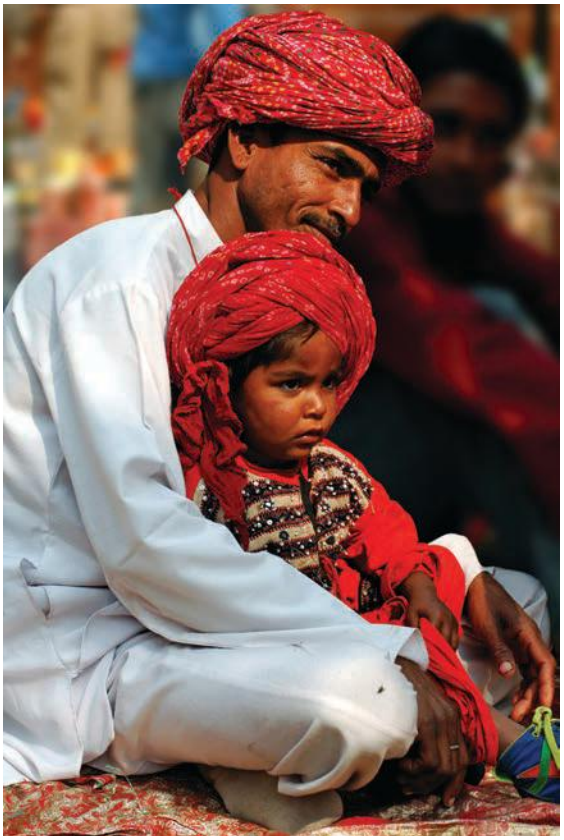

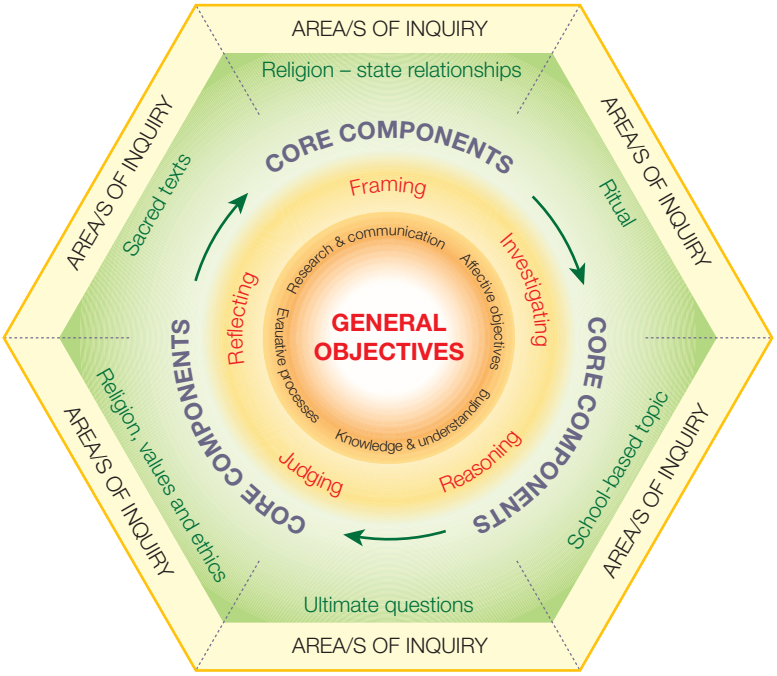

- Have I thought this through?
- What is the most appropriate genre to use to present this information?

The final element in the inquiry process, **Reflecting**, invites you to reflect on your learning and on your actions. You might consider:

- How effective has my learning been?
- What problems did I encounter in the research and how did I respond to them?
- How could the investigation have been improved?
- How has this study helped my understanding of religion?
- What have I learnt about and from religion?
- How can I apply my personal learning to current religious issues?
- What action, if any, might I take?
- How might I improve my approach to Study of Religion?

Throughout the inquiry process you will find that you will move back and forth between framing, investigating and reasoning before judging. Keep asking questions of the information you have sourced and keep investigating until you are satisfied that you have a sound grasp of the topic.

For the teacher

The Study of Religion syllabus advocates and promotes an educational approach to the teaching of religion and is designed to be available to all students in all schools, irrespective of the existence or absence of individual religious beliefs. Educational approaches to the teaching of religion encourage rigorous and critical study rather than confessional interest. Good education about religion should inform, be based on sound education theory, and take account of educational research to inform its practice. The Study of Religion syllabus is grounded in such an approach to teaching and learning.

Investigating Religion is designed to assist you implement the 2008 Syllabus for Study of Religion by opening up topics and areas of inquiry in *Study of Religion*.

The Study of Religion syllabus (2008) states that the five aspects of inquiry – Framing, Investigating, Reasoning, Judging and Reflecting – should be used

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as the basis for unit planning, for developing learning activities, and for designing assessment instruments.

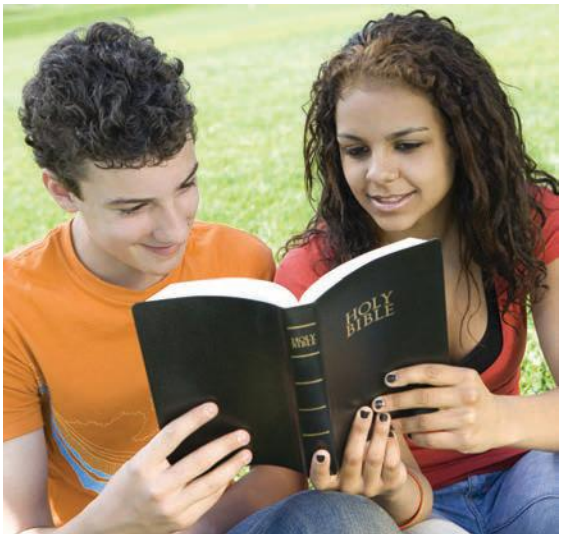
The syllabus outlines six topics available for study. For each topic there are several areas of inquiry that provide ideas for how to investigate the topic. A topic may be explored through one or more areas of inquiry.

All topics and units of work should integrate the core components. Core components are considered central to *Study of Religion* – Australian Religious Perspectives, World Religions, and the Nature and Significance of Religion. If the topic chosen is Ritual, for example, elements of the rituals of various world religions could be investigated in order to analyse how they contribute to our understating of the Nature and Significance of Religion. While this does not exclude an in-depth investigation of rituals in one particular religious tradition, there should nevertheless be examples from other World Religions and examples that show Australian Religious perspectives.

The Queensland Studies Authority (QSA) Study of Religion (SOR) syllabus has over the past few years been moving along the path of inquiry learning. Since 2001, the Study of Religion syllabus has moved away from purely didactic or transmission models and suggested an inquiry-based approach which promotes a serious study of religion. The 2001 syllabus shifted from a mono-model approach (Smart's dimensions) to a dialogical approach, which required the use of multiple approaches including sociological, historical, feminist and phenomenological approaches. The syllabus also encouraged students to critique the content and approaches used. The 2008 syllabus is built on an inquiry model of learning and teaching.

Inquiry based learning is not new, in fact it was promoted by the American educator John Dewey (1859–1952) who revolutionised education in the early twentieth century. Inquiry learning is focused on the learner rather than the teacher and describes a process where students formulate investigative questions, obtain information that builds knowledge and then critique that knowledge in the light of the information gathered.

The 2008 Study of Religion Syllabus provides a Process of Inquiry which should act as a guide for you



and the students. With your leadership, students will, over time, develop skills to enable them to formulate investigative questions, obtain information which builds knowledge and then critique that knowledge in the light of the information gathered. The 2008 Study of Religion syllabus, through the inquiry process, encourages students to move beyond the mere acquisition of facts to metacognition. It also encourages teaching and learning approaches which will develop critical religious literacy.

Critical literacy draws from a variety of theoretical perspectives but is distinguished from the routine decoding of textual information and from 'compliantly participating in the established, institutionalized textual practices of a culture' (Unsworth, 2000, p. 6). To be critical is to employ self-critical scholarship. It does not refer 'to one's attitude toward the content . . . , but to ways of thinking that enable us to recognise the assumptions and bias that we … might impose' (Boys, 2004, p. 150). Unsworth (2002) describes the steps in the process towards critical literacy as moving through three phases: recognition, reproduction and reflection. **Recognition literacy** involves learning to recognise and produce the verbal, visual and electronic codes that are used to construct and communicate meaning as well as cultural practices present and central to common experience of everyday life. **Reproduction literacy** involves understanding and producing the conventional visual and verbal text forms that

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construct and communicate the established systematic knowledge of cultural institutions. **Reflection literacy** necessitates an understanding that all social practices and literacies are socially constructed. Reflection literacy involves learning how to read inclusion and exclusion, analysing and interrogating verbal and visual codes to expose how choice of language and image privilege certain viewpoints and how other choices of visual and verbal resources could construct alternative views.

Critical literacy challenges the status quo in an effort to discover alternative paths; it connects the political and the personal, the public and private, the global and local; the economic and pedagogical. It is not only concerned with identifying and deconstructing the conditions of production but also with the conditions of interpretation including other standpoints and positions. There are several interpretations of critical literacy underpinned by different theoretical approaches, but the one element they have in common is that they involve analysis and critique of the relationship among texts, language, power, social groups and social practices. A critical literacy approach challenges us to examine how we read the world, to examine what we take for granted and to critique the particular culture in which texts are constructed. It enables us to look at written, visual, spoken, and multimodal texts to question and challenge attitudes, values and beliefs that lie beneath the surface.

Classrooms are places where students learn about worlds through socially constructed texts. In religion, as in all subject areas, teachers select, distil and organise information on behalf of students. One challenge teachers of religion face is providing students with a variety of materials, including contestable materials, so that students can engage in critical analysis.

It might begin by inviting students to ask:

- What or whose view of religion is presented as normal by the text?
- Why is the text written this way? How else could it have been written?
- What assumptions does the text make?
- Who is silenced or heard in the text?
- Whose interest might be served by the text?
- What are the possible readings of this situation/event/character?
- What moral, political or religious position does the reading promote?
- How might it be challenged?

A critical literacy approach assists students to question information presented in the text, and reinforces the idea that there are multiple readings and realities. Through such an approach students are encouraged and enabled to identify, examine and critique problematic, contradictory and multiple ways of viewing the world. Reading texts from different positions could also open doors to issues of plurality and religious diversity, to critiquing the home religious tradition as well as the religious traditions of others.

Study of Religion invites an understanding and appreciation of the meaning and significance of religion. In a world in which we are now more likely to encounter the religious other, learning of beliefs, religious traditions and ways in which these shape peoples' lives enable and enrich our own functioning religiously and politically in contemporary society. Since religions are dynamic and living entities, which are transformative for their adherents, understating something of the vital role religious practices play in the lives of their communities helps us to engage intelligently in Australian society, which is now characterised by religious pluralism.

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Section One

Topics

1

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CHAPTER ONE

RELIGION–STATE RELATIONSHIPS

'A religion that takes no account of practical affairs and does not help to solve them is no religion.'

Mohandas Gandhi

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

This chapter discusses:

- Religious states
- Active state religion
- Area of inquiry: anti-Semitism in Europe
- Area of inquiry: religious fundamentalism

KEY *terms*

religion	religious states	deicide	fundamentalism
nation-state	active state religion	Concordat	nationalism
Enlightenment	secularisation	*Shoah*	anti-Semitism

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Introduction

religion
a personal or institutionalised set of attitudes, beliefs and practices, which may include a system of prayers and religious laws

nation-state
an independent state inhabited predominantly by a people sharing a common culture, history, religion and language

nationalism
a term referring to an ideology, sentiment, form of culture, or social movement that focuses on the nation

Enlightenment
a phase in Western philosophy and cultural life during which reason was promoted as the primary source of and legitimacy for authority

religious states
states or countries in which religion controls the government

active state religions
the state supports a religion while maintaining a level of independence from it

Religion has always been influential in society; it is among the basic elements of modern society and has been an intrinsic part of all major civilisations. Contrary to many expert predictions, religion has not disappeared; rather it has evolved and renewed itself in new social and political settings.

Few religions have been left unaffected by the rise of the secular **nation-state**. Interaction between religions and nation-states takes many forms: some governments are aggressive towards religion, while others have tried to win support from religious organisations to give their role legitimacy. Throughout history, religions have both supported and opposed the state at different times.

In the late nineteenth century, **nationalism** replaced religion-based allegiances as the binding force in society. However, in the latter half of the twentieth century, religious nationalism again had a significant impact. For example, in 1979 the secular government ruling Iran was overthrown by Islamic nationalists. More recently, we have witnessed the growth and impact of Hindu nationalism in India and ultra-Orthodox Judaism in Israel. The rise of the religious right in the US has highlighted religion's role in political affairs, education, welfare and community organisations.

The terms 'church' and 'state' are grounded firmly in a Christian understanding of Western culture. The notion of the 'nation-state' emerged from post-Reformation European political experiences and the 1648 Treaty of Westphalia, which enabled rulers to decide which Christian denomination, Protestantism or Catholicism, would be favoured in their region. Since the **Enlightenment**, Western society has endorsed the principle of the separation of church and state, however, debate over their roles continues today.

This debate over church and state is predominantly a Western phenomena influenced by European culture and history, but the tension goes as far back as Jesus' statement, 'Give to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's' (Mark 12:17).

When comparing religion–state relationships in Islamic cultures the issue becomes more clouded. We need to consider the 'political community' rather than the state and the 'moral community' rather than the church, as in Islamic countries there is no separation between religion and politics: God is the ruler of all aspects of life.

In this chapter, we will examine various religion–state relationships and explore two possible enquiry areas suggested in the Study of Religion Syllabus.

Activity 1.1

Framing

1 What understandings of 'religion' and 'state' exist?
2 What states are classified as 'religious states'?
3 How does the state interact with religion?
4 What does the separation of religion and state mean?
5 List ways in which the state and religion work together.
6 What different kinds of relationships exist between religion and state in different parts of the world?
7 What different kinds of relationships have existed between religion and state in different times in history?

Religious states

There is a subtle distinction between **religious states** and **active state religions**. Religious states are where religion controls the state or the government. In active state religions, the state supports religion while maintaining a level of independence from it.

Activity 1.2

Investigating, reasoning and judging

List three countries in Asia, Europe and the Middle East.
1 Classify them as religious states or as active state religions.
2 Provide evidence to support your claims.

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Poland

Roman Catholics make up 96 per cent of Poland's population. During the 1980s, the Catholic Church, encouraged by Pope John Paul II, played a significant role in overthrowing communism in Poland and in Eastern Europe in general. The Polish Roman Catholic Church (PRCC) played an important role, supporting the Solidarity party's opposition to the communist government. The government was eventually defeated in the 1989 elections. Polish Catholic opposition to communism is a classic example of religion versus state.

The rise of the Solidarity party, which started as a trade union movement, can be traced to the organisation of workers and intellectuals in the 1970s. Workers were increasingly dissatisfied with growing hardship, the inability of Poland's economy to recover from the worldwide recession and the government's repression of dissent. The Catholic Church not only supported the rights of the workers but also fostered independent intellectual movements and made public statements supporting workers and human rights.

During the 1950s under the communist regime, many Catholic clergy were arrested–including the Polish Cardinal. The government was actively trying to control and divide the Church and to interfere in the appointment of church leaders. While still in prison, Cardinal Wyszynski instigated a protest, the *Great Novena* (special prayer devotions of nine days), as a symbolic and unifying strategy. The *Great Novena* (1957–1966) also involved the 'Black Madonna' icon touring all parishes and resting for a night in private homes. This tour helped the society bond together, which increased the religious vitality of Poland and the political dissemination of ideas. Wyszynski blended Polish legend, folklore and peasant mysticism with Polish Romantic poetry to create a **mariological** vision of the Polish nation.

The *Novena* and the touring icon were opposed by government authorities who continually tried to disrupt the celebrations. The disruptions backfired, however, instead reinforcing national opposition solidarities. In Gdansk, for example, state authorities refused to allow people to decorate the streets for the procession. In protest, people placed hundreds of candles along the perimeter of the Church boundaries, marking the limit they were allowed to decorate. This shifted the ground of conflict from the political to the symbolic, where the church could make a powerful statement.

Gdańsk, 24 – 26 lipca: OBRADY KKP

STANOWISKO KKP w sprawie proponowanej podwyżki cen

TYGODNIK

SOLIDARNOŚĆ

18

POWSTANIE WARSZAWSKIE

SIERPIEŃ 44

Ten grzmot płynący nad Warszawą
Granatów plusk i kaszel salw
To niebo, które ogniem krwawi
Różowiąc świtem broni stal,
Wichurą rozwiej dookolną,
Nike! I szumem skrzydeł graj!
Z tej burzy nitry piorun — wolność
Rozświetli innym SIERPNIEM kraj!

FIGURE 1.1
The *Scholarly Weekly* was the first legal paper before the martial state in Poland.

Catholicism inspired other opposition groups such as the Confederation for an Independent Poland (KPN), formed in 1979. It also contributed to the development of civil society by supporting cultural activities and expanding its role in education, raising literacy levels and empowering people. Catholic publishers encouraged **pluralism** by publishing poetry written by agnostic political dissidents.

mariological
of or relating to devotion to Mary, the mother of Jesus

pluralism
the acceptance or acknowledgement of different religions

Activity 1.3

Investigating and reasoning

1 Search the web for information on Catholic Social Teaching (CST). The following sites will be useful:
   a www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au/CONTENT/socialteaching.html
   b www.faithdoingjustice.com.au/catholic-social-teaching.php
   c www.osjspm.org/catholic_social_teaching.aspx
2 Locate *Rerum Novarum* (On the Condition of Labor) 1891 and *Laborem Exercens* (On Human Work) 1981. What do these two documents say about the rights of workers?
   a How might Catholic Social Teaching as expressed in *Rerum Novarum* and other CST documents have motivated the Solidarity party?
   b How relevant are Catholic Social Teaching documents regarding the rights of workers today?
   c What role did the Church play in influencing state decisions in Poland? Use evidence to support your claims.

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Activity 1.4

Reasoning

Select evidence from the chapter which supports the claim that the church and Solidarity practised non-violent resistance.

Activity 1.5

Framing, investigating, reasoning and judging

Find another situation in which religion has interacted with state authority through non-violent resistance. Investigate this in detail and present your findings in a multi-modal format, drawing a conclusion about its effectiveness.

Israel

In the early history of Judaism, the exodus from Egypt was a formative event, not only for the religion, but also for the Israeli/Jewish nation. The covenants, a formal promise or contract, between G-d and Abraham and G-d and the Israelites at Sinai has deep-rooted significance for Jewish people today.

Prior to the founding of modern democracies, there was no country in the world where Jews were permitted the status of citizens. Jews might sometimes have had right of residence, but that right could be withdrawn at any time. Jews were often excluded from certain professions and segregated into special living areas or ghettos.

FIGURE 1.2
Modern Israel

The democratic movement began in Europe with the French Revolution in 1789. Unfortunately, this movement was of little benefit for Jews as they were still discriminated against. Many Jews left Europe for America where, under the federal constitution, they were granted full citizenship.

In the nineteenth century, the Zionist movement emerged. This movement attempted to fulfill the promise that Jews would eventually have a homeland. The basic principles of Zionism were for Jews to return to Israel, settle the land, create a Jewish majority in the country and revive Hebrew as the national language.

The State of Israel was finally proclaimed in 1948. By 2005, its population was approximately 6.9 million people, with Jews comprising about 80 per cent of the population or 5.26 million. Muslims number about 1.2 million; Christians number 145 000 including 115 000 Arab Christians; and Druze number 255 000. Israel does not have a formal separation between religion and the state but instead has a hybrid system of limited intervention by government in religious affairs.

Judaism in Israel is an active state religion where the government supports the state religion, rather than controls it. Israel has no constitution; instead it has a series of basic laws. The country's declaration of independence describes Israel as a Jewish state but provides for equality regardless of religion. These laws guarantee access to and prohibit the desecration of holy sites. Under the Right of Return, any Jew who wishes to return to Israel gains automatic citizenship.

Some aspects of Jewish law are enforced on the population under the 'status quo' agreement that existed from the founding of the State of Israel. For example, on the Sabbath and other Jewish religious holidays businesses must close; buses and the national airline do not operate; and the streets in some ultra-Orthodox Jewish neighbourhoods are closed to vehicles. Many of the recognised religions in Israel receive government funding for their operations and the government funds religious and secular schools, including religious schools for Muslims.

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FIGURE 1.3
Old City, Jerusalem

The law provides for freedom of worship. The government, however, limits Muslims making the *Hajj* (the Muslim pilgrimage to Mecca) to those over thirty-five years of age and allows only one trip per person in order to meet quotas set by Saudi Arabia. The government also limits the number of Muslims able to pray on the Temple Mount due to violent incidents in the past and it has also banned two extremist Jewish political parties on the grounds that they are racist.

Activity 1.6

Investigating, reasoning and judging

1 What is the Right of Return and how is it applied?
2 What might be some difficulties in the Right of Return?
3 What is Zionism? How did it develop? Why are some Jews opposed to Zionism?
4 Given that Zionism is a secular movement and many Israeli Jews are ultra-Orthodox, how does the State of Israel balance religion–state relationships?

Muslim states

Politics is important to Muslims because they believe their salvation requires not only redemption from sin but also the building of a just society to facilitate their surrender to God. Islam is considered a faith system without separation between religious beliefs and political practices.

More recently, Muslim societies have struggled with secularisation. In Iran, the Pahlavi Shahs enforced secularism: they replaced *sharia* law with a civil system and forbade Muslims from going on the *hajj*. They directed soldiers to remove women's veils with

FIGURE 1.4
The Iranian parliament in Tehran

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bayonets and rip them to pieces. In 1935, people staged a peaceful protest against the dress laws but the soldiers fired on the unarmed crowd leaving hundreds injured.

In general, it is difficult for Muslims to set up a modern nation-state as a democracy because 'government of the people, by the people and for the people' is virtually impossible when religious leaders have the ultimate authority.

Saudi Arabia attempted to create an alternative and in 1932 built a government based on Wahhabi ideals. There was no constitution, because the governing system was based on a literal reading of the *Qur'an*. Gambling and alcohol were forbidden, women were forced to be fully covered and traditional punishments such as mutilating thieves were made part of the legal system. Today, most Muslim states do not consider that the *Qur'an* requires such practices, in fact, the political group the Muslim Brotherhood has condemned the Saudi government's use of Islamic punishments.

Active state religions

Pakistan

Pakistan's constitution includes numerous references to Islam and also protects the religious freedom of religious minorities. The constitution declares Islam the official religion, but Article 22 prohibits educational institutions from requiring students to take religious education or participate in religious ceremonies in any religion other than their own. The constitution also requires all laws to be consistent with Islam and a government-supported Islamic Ideology Council advises whether the laws conform. The constitution exempts non-Muslims from Islamic personal laws.

The government of General Muhammad Ayub Khan (1958–1969) promoted secularism including a secular legal system and restrictions on madrasah (Islamic) education. He wanted to make Islam a civil religion under state control but, ultimately, this led to his downfall. After the coup of 1977, an Islamic regime was enforced. Traditional Muslim dress was re-introduced and Islamic penal law was restored. Islam became a required subject in all schools and, while non-Muslims are exempt from classes on Islam, no alternative is provided. Foreign books are censored for anti-Islam content but religious literature of minority religions is not substantially restricted. Non-Muslims are at a disadvantage in all court proceedings as their testimony is given less weight. In Pakistan today there remains a tension between secularist approaches to the economy and an Islamic way of life.

Indonesia

The Indonesian constitution says that 'the state shall be based upon the belief in the One and Only God' (Article 29) but it also protects religious freedom. A majority of Indonesians want the country to become an Islamic state. In the Aceh province, special authority is given for *sharia* law, except where it contradicts national laws. The Ministry of Religion recognises Islam, Roman Catholicism, Protestantism, Hinduism and Buddhism. While practicing other religions is legal, the groups must register as social

FIGURE 1.5
Indonesian women demonstrate in favour of *sharia* in Jakarta

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organisations and atheism is illegal. Religious groups must obtain permits for public events including concerts. Religious speech is permitted as long as people do not **proselytise** and people are forbidden to disseminate religious materials to members of other faiths. Indonesia experiences severe inter-religious violence which has included incidents where Muslims have forced Christians to convert to Islam as well as violence by Christians against Muslims.

proselytise converting or attempting to convert

Activity 1.7

Investigating and reasoning: response to stimulus

Read the article, 'In religious Aceh, Islamic law is taking hold' from the *International Herald Tribune* on Worksheet 1.7 and answer the following questions:

1 Which sentence in this article indicates that Indonesia is a secular state?
2 Why has the province of Aceh incorporated *sharia* law into its legal code?
3 List three crimes punishable by *sharia* law in Aceh.
4 How does the application of *sharia* law differ between Indonesia and Saudi Arabia?
5 Explain the benefits and problems associated with Aceh's introduction of *sharia* law.
6 Is religious freedom threatened by the introduction of *sharia* law in Aceh? Why or why not?

Laos and Cambodia

During the 1960s and 1970s, Buddhism in Laos and Cambodia became a vehicle through which political groups advanced their agenda. This happened as the nation-state became more common in Buddhist societies and welfare and education, once the province of religion, shifted to other authorities.

Buddhism has responded differently in various nation-states. For example, in Laos from the 1950s onwards, the government infiltrated the *Sangha* (the Buddhist community) by issuing monks with identity cards and spreading anti-imperialist slogans that appealed to monks from rural and poor areas. Thailand employed a similar approach in the 1960s, when they trained monks to become anti-communist. Both tactics resulted in divisions between rural and urban monks. During the 1970s in Laos, the government made a concerted effort to link Buddhism with socialism and monks were used as propaganda pawns.

In Cambodia, between 1975 and 1979, the Khmer Rouge, a socialist movement under Pol Pot, attacked Buddhism as unpatriotic and killed many of its followers. Monks who survived the mass killings were sent for 're-education'. The general population was discouraged from donating to monasteries. More than 60 000 monks were killed by Pol Pot and Buddhism was virtually made extinct in Cambodia. In recent times, Buddhist monks have joined in the reconstruction of the country.

FIGURE 1.6 Under the rule of the Khmer Rouge, Buddhism was outlawed. This image shows decapitated Buddhist statues in Bangor, Cambodia

Burma

Buddhism in Burma remained relatively intact even after the demise of the kingship in 1853. The first Burmese Prime Minister promoted a form of Buddhist nationalism and in 1954, the country hosted the Sixth Great Buddhist Council and introduced Buddhist moral policies. Today, however, Buddhism in Burma is strictly controlled by the state.

In 1962, a military leader staged a coup and took over the country, forming a new government. They then removed anti-government monks from positions of influence and introduced national registration for all monks. In 1988, half of the monks participated

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FIGURE 1.7
Aung San Suu Kyi during a demonstration

in anti-government demonstrations and actively supported the National League for Democracy (NLD) lead by Aung San Suu Kyi. Between 1990 and 1992, the military arrested and de-robed hundreds of monks and many fled to Thailand. Since 1990, only nine officially recognised Buddhist monastic orders have been allowed to operate.

In 1992, Mandalay monks protested – striking and overturning their food bowls when soldiers approached. This symbolic action prevented the soldiers gaining spiritual merit. Since that time, the military government has tried to win the *Sangha* over by offering donations to monasteries. Nevertheless, the *Sangha* remain defiant and continue to promote democracy.

The Burmese government also opposes the spread of Christianity and bans public meetings of Christian groups. Soldiers have beaten Christian clergy who refuse to stop preaching to non-Christians and since 2002, the government has refused groups permission to repair their churches.

The government is particularly hostile to the Chin Christian minority and since 1990, has supported forced conversions of Chins to Buddhism to 'Burmanise' them.

Thailand

In Thailand, there is no official religion, but almost everyone practices Theraveda Buddhism. After 1957, the *Sangha* became part of the government's political program, when monks were trained to promote programs related to national goals. Monks who spoke out against the programs were labeled communists and expelled from the *Sangha*. As a result, public opinion of the *Sangha* diminished. During the 1970s, reformist Buddhist groups emerged under the leadership of the monk Buddhadasa, who promoted 'this worldly' Buddhism.

Religious education is mandatory in Thai public schools and is generally offered in Buddhism and Islam. Officially, Muslim civil servants are not allowed to wear head coverings, but in practice head covering is not uncommon.

Activity 1.8

Investigating and reasoning

Read the extract from the abstract of Nick Cheeseman's article 'School, state and *Sangha* in Burma' included on the CD-ROM in Activity 1.8 and complete the activities below.

1 Devise a diagram to show the sequence of events which has shaped religion–state relationships (particularly in the area of education) in Burma.
2 How does control over schooling relate to state legitimacy in this case?

China

China's policy is to control religion, limit it to registered activities and places of worship, and prevent it from becoming a separate source of authority or opposition. Currently there are five recognised religions in the country: Catholicism, Protestantism, Buddhism, Islam and Taoism and all are closely supervised by government agencies. The government has banned all 'cults' including Falun Gong and the Zhong Gong movements. Since 1995, over 100 000 Falun Gong members have been detained or placed in 're-education' camps. In some areas where there have been ethnic uprisings, the building of mosques has been restricted, but in other regions, the government permits religious expression and even subsidises the

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building of mosques and participation in the *hajj*. The government supports the rebuilding of religious buildings destroyed during China's cultural revolution but will destroy unregistered places of worship.

Tibet

The Chinese communist invasion of Tibet in the early 1950s sought to repress Buddhism, which caused massive social upheaval. After the aborted uprising in 1959, 100 000 refugees fled Tibet for India and surrounding countries. During the Chinese Cultural Revolution, religious expressions and Tibetan cultural tradition were suppressed and the entire *Sangha* and its socio-economic support structure was disbanded. The textual heritage of Tibetan Buddhism was destroyed and many monks and nuns were forced to disrobe.

It was not until the early 1980s, when the Cultural Revolution ended, that the Chinese government again permitted limited religious activities. The Chinese government considers Buddhism in Tibet to be a challenge to the state and regulates Tibet's religious institutions. Religious activities are generally allowed unless they are considered to be a vehicle for political dissent. All monks and nuns must undergo patriotic education and a number of them have been detained for actions against the state. The Chinese government has also taken control of the process for recognising reincarnated *lamas*, however, *lamas* living outside Tibet rarely recognise the government's choice.

FIGURE 1.8
Falun Gong practitioners regularly stage protests against persecution

In Tibet, Buddhist revival steers a careful path between enhancing Tibetan identity and cooperating with Chinese authorities; and confronting the authorities about human rights and democracy. In pre-modern Tibet, the Dalai Lama was head of state and played an active role in government – his religious authority went beyond sectarian boundaries. He was also held in high esteem and treated with devotion. The Fourteenth Dalai Lama has become the symbol of Tibetan nationalism for people in exile and those in Tibet.

FIGURE 1.9
Prior to, and during, the Beijing Olympic Games in 2008, pro-Tibetan protestors staged massive demonstrations

FIGURE 1.10
The fourteenth Dalai Lama

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Activity 1.9

Investigating, reasoning, judging and reflecting

Text comparison chart: The Dalai Lama and the invasion of Tibet

1 Examine representations of the Dalai Lama and his response to the invasion of Tibet by the Chinese army.
2 Suitable sources might include relevant scenes from the films *Seven Years in Tibet*, *Kundun* and information from this text. Find another source (e.g. cartoons, news clips, youtube or the internet in general), examine it and complete your inquiry.
3 Use information from your research to complete the table on Worksheet 1.9.

India

When the Indian constitution was created, those drawing it up did not separate religion and state because they feared that such a separation could help create a state that was hostile toward religion and that would eventually deny religious freedom. India's constitution prohibits discrimination on the basis of religion, except when an office or position is connected to a particular religion. Article 25 of the constitution includes the possibility of throwing open all religious institutions to all classes of Hindus, but in reality this would conflict with Hindu caste divisions. The constitution bans religious education in state-funded institutions, but otherwise religious education is permitted. While the national government respects rights outlined in the constitution, some local governments restrict them. For example, the state of Uttar Pradesh requires a permit to build new places of worship.

Much of Indian politics is dominated by religious nationalism known as 'communalism'. In 1964, the Vishva Hindu Parisha (VHP) gave voice to Hindu religious leaders who demanded the destruction of mosques that were built over temple sites. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), from the mid 1980s, attempted to make India a Hindu state. World attention was drawn to the situation when members of the BJP destroyed the Babri Mosque in Ayodhya in 1992 and tried to replace it with a temple commemorating Rama's birthplace. More recently the BJP campaigned to reconvert Indian citizens believed to have 'forcibly' converted away from Hinduism: even people who had been Christian or Muslim for generations.

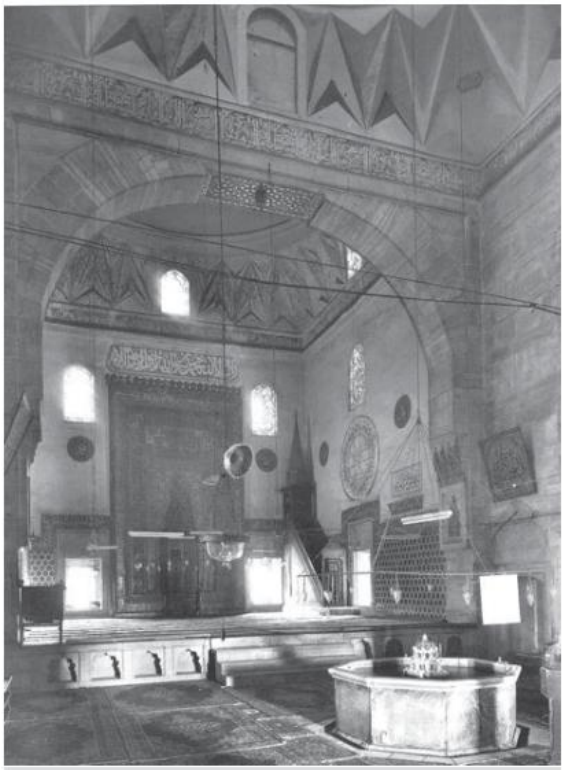

FIGURE 1.11
The Babri Mosque in Ayodhya prior to its destruction by around 150 000 Hindu nationalists in 1992

Activity 1.10

Investigating and reasoning

Conduct a SWOT analysis of religion–state relationships in India as described above.

In the next section of the chapter, two topics are investigated as areas of inquiry.

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Area of inquiry: anti-Semitism in Europe

Anti-Semitism in Europe allowed an attitude to develop which enabled Hitler and the Nazis to murder six million Jews during World War II (1939–1945). The Nazi policy of extermination of the Jews (1933–1945) which resulted in the ***Shoah*** must be studied because it is a part of world history that must not be forgotten.

While Christianity did not cause the rise of anti-Semitism in Germany in the 1930s and 1940s, traditional Christian teachings formed some of the attitudes toward the Jews that led to prejudice and hostility. While, in some instances, Jews and Christians have lived together in harmony, there has also been hostility and conflict.

The history of anti-Semitism

Despite having a unique relationship, some Christians have spoken of Judaism disparagingly, even promoting the idea that the validity of Christianity depended upon supplanting the Jewish tradition. Many Christians understood their tradition as a replacement of Judaism. As early as the second century, Jews were accused of committing **deicide**.

During the Middle Ages, over twenty church councils issued rulings regarding relations with Jews. Among their decrees were that marriages were forbidden between Jews and Christians; Jews and Christians were forbidden to eat together; Jews were prohibited from owning Christian slaves and that they were forbidden to appear in public during Easter and to work on Sunday. While these decisions were regional, they suggest that church officials were concerned about Christians and their relationships with Jews.

As Jews migrated into northern Europe in the late tenth century, they became the subject of popular antipathy. In the twelfth century, the papal statement, *Sicut Judeis* called for the protection of Jews while disparaging Judaism. This proclamation was promoted sixteen times during the twelfth and thirteen centuries. In popular opinion, Jews were not simply historic enemies who had put Christ to death: they were a threat to society.

During the Reformation it appeared that Jews would receive greater tolerance. But this was not to be. Martin Luther saw the Jews as enemies of society, declaring that if they did not convert to Christianity, their synagogues should be burnt, their homes destroyed, their prayer books taken away and their Rabbis forbidden to teach.

With the Enlightenment, Jews achieved legal equality in most of Europe and became less separate from mainstream society, working in the community. But in the worldwide depression of 1873, Jews became the scapegoats. Anti-Semitism, a term attributed to Wilhelm Marr in 1878, developed into a body of beliefs in Germany and by the end of the nineteenth century, it was rife throughout Europe. The stage was set for Hitler's rise to power, World War II and the *Shoah*.

The following chronology notes major events relevant to the state, Christianity and Judaism.

FIGURE 1.12
During the rule of the Nazis, Jews were required to wear a yellow Star of David badge at all times

FACT

Anti-Semitism is a particular form of racism directed specifically against Jews. The word comes from an eighteenth century etymological analysis that differentiated languages with 'Aryan' roots and those with 'Semitic' roots. Anti-Semitism ranges from quiet contempt to hatred and persecution of Jews.

anti-Semitism
a term used to describe prejudice against, or hostility towards, people of Jewish lineage

Shoah
term meaning great whirlwind, is a word used by Jews, in preference to Holocaust, which means a burnt offering to G-d offered in the temple and therefore something sacred

deicide
the killers of a god, goddess, or similar deity

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TABLE 1.1
Major events leading up to, and during, the *Shoah*

Date	State	Judaism	Christianity
1932			Politicians, pastors and lay people meet in Berlin to discuss how to use Germany's Protestant churches for the National Socialist cause.
30/1/1933	Hitler becomes Chancellor of Germany.		
22/3/1933	Dachau concentration camp established.		
1/4/1933		Germans boycott Jewish businesses.	
7/4/1933	Law for Restoration of the Professional Civil Service enacted – non-Aryans dismissed from government and public positions.		
10/5/1933		Public book burnings of Jewish authors and those opposed to Nazism.	
20/7/1933			Pope Pius XI signs Concordat with Hitler.
3/8/1934	Hitler declares himself Chancellor and Reichsführer (leader of the Reich)		
15/9/1935	Nuremberg Laws decreed	Jews cannot be Reich citizens. Classification system of 'Jewishness' introduced.	
14/3/1937			Pope Pius XI's encyclical Mit Brennender Sorge (With Burning Concern).
1/7/1937			Bekennende Kirche (The Confessing Church) is banned in Germany.
22/6/1938			Pope Pius XI instructs two Jesuits to draft an encyclical letter denouncing racism and anti-Semitism. It was never published.
17/8/1938		Jewish women made to include Sarah in their names and men to include Israel.	
28/10/1938		17 000 Polish Jews expelled from Germany.	
15/1/1938		Jewish children excluded from German schools.	
10/2/1939			Pope Pius XI dies.
2/3/1939			Cardinal Pacelli elected as Pope Pius XII.

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TABLE 1.1 continued

Date	State	Judaism	Christianity
15/3/1939	Hitler invades the Czechoslovak Republic.		
4/4/1939			German Christians establish the Institute for Research into the Elimination of Jewish Influence in German Church Life.
1/9/1939	Germany invades Poland.		
3/9/1939	France and Great Britain declare war on Germany.		
October 1939			214 Catholic priests are executed in Poland.
23/1/1939		Jews must wear armbands with the Star of David.	
9/5/1940	Germany invades Holland, Belgium and France.		
24/10/1940			Protestant churches in Holland send letter protesting against discriminatory regulations against Jews. Lutheran churches refuse to associate with the protest.
January 1942		Escapees from Chelmno extermination camp reach Warsaw with testimony of the horrors.	
23/12/1942			Pope's Christmas message contains veiled references to the murder of thousands of Jews.
18/1/1943		First Warsaw Ghetto uprising.	
March–June 1943	Construction of four crematoria and gas chambers completed at Auschwitz–Birkenau.		
29/9/1943			Danish Lutheran Church sends protest against Jewish persecution to Nazi authorities.
18/1/1945	Auschwitz abandoned.		
27/1/1945	Auschwitz liberated.		
15/4/1945	Bergen-Belsen liberated.		
7–8/5/1945	Germany surrenders.		
19/10/1945			Stuttgart Declaration of Guilt issued by Evangelical Church in Germany.
14/5/1948			First assembly of Protestant World Council of Churches.

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German churches and the Third Reich

The Nazi regime was hostile to institutionalised Christianity, particularly Catholicism, with its strong centralised hierarchy. However, Church establishments were not equipped to confront the Nazi state – Protestants and Catholics were divided over different parts of Europe. While Germany was largely Protestant, the areas Hitler occupied were predominantly Roman Catholic and Orthodox Christian (e.g. Poland), it was difficult for them to unite and form a common voice. Goebbels, the Propaganda Minister of the Nazis, hated Christianity and planned to destroy it, believing it to be an extension of Judaism.

Roman Catholic Church

Before Hitler came to power, Catholic bishops warned the faithful about Nazi racism. Very few Catholics voted for Hitler or the National Socialists in the elections between 1930 and 1933 and German Bishops regularly refused the rites of the church to Nazi officials. However, after Hitler came to power in 1933, the Catholic Church stopped officially opposing the Nazi party and Catholics were told to cooperate with the government. One of the key moments in the Catholic Church's relationship with the Nazi Party centres on the **concordat** signed in 1933.

Concordat
an agreement between the Vatican state and a government of a certain country on religious matters

The Concordat

A concordat is an agreement, which defines relationships between the nation-state and the Vatican state. The main negotiator of this concordat was Cardinal Pacelli, who later became Pope Pius XII (1939–1958). The Vatican believed that the concordat would guarantee German Catholics religious liberties, but in reality it consolidated Hitler's power by reducing Catholic opposition. While the concordat may have secured rights and privileges for the Catholic Church, it meant that they could not intervene in state affairs. It therefore prevented Catholics, at the official level, from acting against Nazi policies.

As Nazi policies became more extreme, Pope Pius XI became more concerned about the increasing racism in Europe. In 1937, he released an **encyclical** *Mit Brennender Sorge* (With Burning Concern), which focused on racism. This letter was smuggled into Germany and read in every Catholic Church. By the end of the 1930s, church officials were aware that Hitler's ultimate aim was to destroy Catholicism and Christianity. When the war officially broke out, Hitler, not wanting to distract Christians from the war effort, limited his anti-Catholic activities. The Catholic bishops did not wish to appear unpatriotic and supported the war effort even though it was against Catholic Poland.

encyclical
a letter written by the people and 'circulated' throughout the Church

FIGURE 1.13
A memorial to Cardinal Josef Frings in Germany

Several bishops spoke out against what was happening to the Jews. Konrad Preysing, for instance, preached a sermon in 1942 that attacked the state. Cardinal Josef Frings wrote a pastoral letter cautioning the faithful to respect the rights of others and later preached at Cologne Cathedral saying that 'no one may take the property or life of an innocent person just because he was a member of a foreign race'.

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Activity 1.11

Investigating, reasoning and judging: response to stimulus

'Statements of Pope Pius XII' and 'Letter of Pope John Paul II' (March 1998).

1 Read the statements on Worksheet 1.11 on the Student CD-ROM and answer the following questions.
2 What reasons does Pius XII give for:
   a acting in the interest of those who were suffering
   b being cautious in dealings with the Nazi regime.
3 Summarise the two Popes' attitudes to the actions of the Nazi regime.
4 For each Pope, formulate a hypothesis about the reasons for his stance. Provide a quote to support each hypothesis.
5 From the evidence provided, what conclusion can be drawn about the Catholic Church's attitude between 1943 and 1998 to the suffering of Jews during the *Shoah*?

Protestant churches

From the time of the Protestant Reformation, a strong link existed between Protestant churches and political rulers. Protestant churches in Germany in the 1930s and 1940s included Lutherans, Reformed, United Protestants, Methodists, Baptists and Mennonites, each with their own hierarchy and international divisions. While there was not a time when the Protestant churches denied political parties access to church services, each of the established churches tried to defend their interests and resisted Hitler's attempt to unite them into a National Church.

Throughout the 1930s, there were many examples of anti-Semitic sermons and articles in German church publications. Some church leaders openly stated that they were anti-Semitic, while others warned people against showing support for Jewish victims. Martin Luther's tract *Against the Jews and Their Lies* (1542) was widely quoted and some Protestants claimed that Luther's hatred of the Jews proved that Protestants were more German than Catholic Germans.

An extreme example of anti-Semitism was the German Christian Movement, whose members controlled many regional Protestant churches. The German Christian Movement not only embraced anti-Jewish policies but also worked to bring Christianity in line with Nazism. They suppressed the Old Testament, revised liturgies and hymns to remove all aspects of Judaism and promoted Jesus as an Aryan who personified the ideals of Nazi Germany.

Some Protestants, like Lutheran theologian Dietrich Bonheoffer (1906–1945), opposed the Nazis and realised that respect for Jews and Judaism was integral to the Christian faith. But Bonheoffer and other like-minded thinkers were in the minority.

After the Nuremberg rally in 1935, laws were introduced against Jewish people. Protestant and Catholic Churches had to provide baptismal and marriage records to the Nazis to identify if a person's grandparents were Aryan or Jewish because no Nazi scientist could provide a definition of Jewishness based on biological or physical traits.

Between 1939 and 1945 the Nazis used the T4 Euthanasia Program to murder handicapped people who lived in church-run institutions. Protestant institutions largely cooperated with this. No Protestant leaders spoke out publically against the T4 Program. Some Catholic priests protested against the killings from the pulpit.

Even though Bishop Theophil Wurm (Protestant) and Cardinal Bertram (Roman Catholic) spoke

FIGURE 1.14
Pastor Ludwig Müller being consecrated as the 'Reich Bishop' in Berlin, 1936

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out against euthanasia of the handicapped in 1940, neither said anything to defend the Jews who were being systemically deprived of their civil rights. More concerning is the fact that neither the papal encyclical *Mit brennender Sorge* nor the Protestant *Bekennende Kirche* said anything about the plight of the Jews.

Churches throughout Europe were mostly silent when Jews were deported and murdered. Church leaders wanted to avoid any conflict with the Nazi regime for several reasons. First, the anti-Jewish teachings within Christian traditions had coloured people's perception of Jews. Second, Christianity was considered to be the foundation of Western values; therefore anything 'other', for example, Judaism, along with secularism and Marxism, was considered to be against Western/Christian values. In the German church, Christendom was linked to nationalism, which embodied German Protestants' belief in 'Throne and Altar', the association of church and state.

Another reason was the churches' opposition to state control of their affairs. The churches sought to maintain some degree of independence by entering into agreements with the Nazi regime. Church leaders, both Catholic and Protestant, went to great lengths to avoid antagonising Nazi officials. Most public statements of the churches during this time show an obvious desire to say very little about what was actually happening for fear of jeopardising their own interests.

FIGURE 1.15
Anti-Jewish propaganda was rife in Nazi Germany

Post-*Shoah* statements

Christian churches have reflected upon the *Shoah* and have responded with compassion to this horrific event.

The International Council for Christians and Jews (ICCJ) was founded over five decades ago as a reaction to the *Shoah*. At the emergency conference on anti-Semitism in 1947, Christian participants, with the advice of Jews, issued the 'Address to Churches', a statement regarding Christian–Jewish relations:

> 'We have the firm hope that they [Christian Churches] will be concerned to show their members how to prevent any animosity towards the Jews which might arise from false, inadequate or mistaken presentations or conceptions of the teaching and preaching of the Christian doctrine …'

The Catholic Church gradually developed better relationships with Jews and Judaism. Seventeen years after the *Shoah*, it made its first formal statement about Jewish–Christian relations at the Second Vatican Council. The ground-breaking document *Nostra Aetate* (*The Declaration on the Relation of the Church to non-Christian Religions)* was released in 1965.

Since then, the Catholic Church has built a strong relationship with Jews and Judaism and has issued a number of significant documents, including: *Notes on the Correct Way to Present the Jews and Judaism in Preaching and Catechesis in the Roman Catholic Church*, (1985); and *We Remember: A Reflection on the Shoah* (1998). Cardinal Kasper described this document as the first universal document of the Catholic Church dedicated to remembering the particular Jewish suffering in the Holocaust. It also invites people to reflect on the *Shoah* and says that Holocaust education should be a part of every Catholic educational institution.

Islamic anti-Semitism

When Islam emerged in the seventh century, Jews were a homeless and powerless people. Islam regarded Jews and Christians as *dhimmi* (protected peoples).

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THE PALESTINE POST

STATE OF ISRAEL IS BORN

Most Crowded Hours in Palestine's History

JEWS TAKE OVER SECURITY ZONES

Egyptian Air Force Spitfires Bomb Tel Aviv; One Shot Down

U.S. RECOGNIZES JEWISH STATE

Proclamation by Head Of Government

2 Columns Cross Southern Border

Etzion Settlers Taken P.O.W.

Special Assembly Adjourns

FIGURE 1.16
After the State of Israel was established in 1948, millions of Jews from all over the world migrated there

Judaism was tolerated in the Muslim world as long as Jews adopted a low profile and a self-effacing attitude.

The *Qur'an* distinguishes between warfare against pagans and toleration of Jews and Christians. It states that Jews and Christians should be tolerated, provided they pay a special tax. Traditional Islam, while not displaying hostility towards Jews, nevertheless labelled them as corrupters of scripture (*Qur'an* 3:63); promoters of falsehood (*Qur'an* 3:71) and as the enemies of Islam.

Anti-Semitism among Muslims mainly arose out of the Jewish resettlement in Palestine, the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, and the series of Arab-Israeli wars which followed. Muslim anti-Semitism became more pronounced after the 1956 Sinai War and the Six-Day War in 1967: both of these wars were overwhelming Israeli victories. Anti-Zionism has become a primary vehicle through which anti-Semitism is expressed in the Muslim world.

Area of inquiry: religious fundamentalism

Fundamentalism is a part of all religious faiths. Contemporary fundamentalism first emerged in the early twentieth century within evangelical Protestant communities in the USA as a reaction to modernisation. Fundamentalism is not a 'knee-jerk' reaction – reformers first try to address concerns from within, however, when moderate measures do not appear to work, more radical forms and methods are applied.

Religious fundamentalism is frequently concerned with changing moral and social values in society. Religious fundamentalists often turn to core religious texts such as the *Bible*, the *Torah* or the *Qur'an* for 'God's opinion'. They then use selected readings to challenge secular rulers or offer their ideas as the basis for reform. In many ways, fundamentalists are opposed to modernisation, however they make good use of modern technologies and communications to fight what they perceive to be the negative effects of modernisation.

Religious fundamentalism in all faiths has some common features and goals:

- a desire to return to the fundamentals or core of a religious tradition
- a rejection of Western secular modernity
- the establishment of a group identity as oppositional and exclusive, with special behaviour, language, music, dress and hairstyles to differentiate members from outsiders
- an attempt to reclaim public space for religion
- emphasis on patriarchal and hierarchal relations.

The goal of fundamentalism is to defend religion and religious identities against secularism. But instead of returning religion to a past golden age, fundamentalists create something new and unique to modernity.

Fundamentalists build a closed community where rules govern all aspects of their lives and there is very little distinction between public and private affairs. They also try to change their environment to fit their ideology, either by taking over or altering the state's regime through political or military strategies.

fundamentalism
a belief in, and strict adherence to, a set of religious principles; often a reaction to perceived compromises with modern social and political life

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Militant fundamentalist movements recruit members who are often uneducated or have been alienated by modernity.

Hindu fundamentalism

Hindu fundamentalism, also known as cultural chauvinism, is most commonly directed at India's largest minority – Muslims – who number approximately 100 million people, 11 per cent of the population.

FIGURE 1.17
Prime Minister Indira Gandhi was assassinated in 1984

Other examples of Hindu fundamentalism include the assassination of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi in 1984. She was killed by her Sikh bodyguards after she appealed to Hindus to challenge Sikh militancy in the Punjab. Later, her son, Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, was assassinated by a Tamil Hindu in 1991 because he sent troops to resolve a conflict in Sri Lanka between Hindu Tamils and Buddhist Sinhalese.

Buddhist fundamentalism

In 1975 the Santi Asoke, a Thai neo-Buddhist movement, declared independence from the Thai *Sangha*. In 1980, one of its followers Major General Chamlong Srimaung formed a political party called Palang Tham (moral party) with the aim of creating a radical Buddhist state in Thailand with Buddhist ideals and teaching at its centre. The party won 14 seats in the 1988 elections but failed to influence the general Thai population.

Jewish fundamentalism

Probably the most well-known Jewish religious fundamentalist is Yigal Amir, who assassinated Yitzhak Rabin, the Prime Minister of Israel, in 1995. To fundamentalists, Rabin's crime was to negotiate with Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) leader Yasser Arafat with the goal of granting self-government to Palestinians.

Jewish fundamentalist groups in Israel oppose any negotiations with the Palestinians over land. The largest group, Gush Emunim (Block of the Faithful), was founded in 1978 after the Camp David agreement in which Israel agreed to hand back the Sinai desert to Egypt. The Land of Israel is central to Jewish fundamentalists and, according to scripture, is significantly larger than the current State of Israel. To them, giving land to the Arabs is going against G-d's will. Two fundamentalist groups banned in Israel are

FIGURE 1.18
The gravestones of Yitzhak Rabin and his wife

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Kach (Thus) and Kahane Chai (Kahane Lives) but their banning has not diminished the political influence of Jewish fundamentalism.

Islamic fundamentalism

Some Islamic fundamentalist (Islamist) groups work to overthrow the current order, attempting to reform existing political regimes by employing violence and terrorism. The growth in Islamic resurgence dates from either World War I and the end of the Turkish Ottoman rule or from when nations in the Middle East were freed from French and British colonial rule, depending on the countries in question.

The question for the Muslim nations at the time was how extensively to embed *sharia* law in their legal systems. Contemporary Islamic fundamentalists see themselves as the Islamic 'just' and strive to reform the 'unjust' society. To the fundamentalists, liberal democracy is flawed and should be replaced by *sharia* law.

FIGURE 1.19
Osama bin Laden

One of the early fundamentalist ideologues was Mawdudi, the founder of Jamaat-i Islami in Pakistan, who called for a universal *jihad*, or holy war. This development was new to Islam at the time and a distortion of the faith.

Another influential fundamentalist was Sayyid Qutb (1906–1966) who convinced Muslims that religious people and secularists could not live together in the one society. Qutb told Muslims to model themselves on Muhammad and to engage in violent *jihad* because tolerance could only occur after the establishment of the 'true' Muslim state. He was executed in 1966, but his influence has spread to every Sunni fundamentalist movement including the Taliban and Al-Qa'ida.

In 1988, Osama bin Laden, a wealthy Saudi Arabian, established Al-Qa'ida, which today is a transnational Islamic fundamentalist group. In 1998, bin Laden issued a statement called 'The World Islamic Front for Jihad Against the Jews and Crusaders'. This statement called on Muslims to kill Americans and their allies, with the aim of returning to a pure and authentic Islam. He also wanted to overthrow regimes deemed to be 'non-Islamic' and to expel non-Muslims from Muslim countries, particularly the Holy Land (Israel). Al-Qa'ida's network includes links with other Islamist groups such as Egypt's Islamic Jihad, the Harakat ul-Majahidin (Pakistan) and other Sunni Islamic extremist groups.

Despite obvious differences, common elements of religious fundamentalism in Christianity, Judaism, Islam and nationalist-oriented Hindu and Buddhist fundamentalism include a reaction to modernisation and **secularisation**. Fundamentalist groups across all religions express a dissatisfaction with traditional religious bodies, ultimately leading to the desire to stand and fight for the fundamentals of religious belief.

secularisation
the process by which a society or country moves from close identification with religious institutions to a more separated relationship

Christian fundamentalism

Unlike Islamic fundamentalism, which emerges from poor and disadvantaged communities where traditional family ties are broken, Christian fundamentalism, particularly in the USA, is usually found in affluent groups.

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FIGURE 1.20
Christian fundamentalists protesting

Christian fundamentalists oppose any teaching or practice regarded as contrary to biblical teaching, even if the teachings have sound scientific backing. They look back to Jesus and the early church for authority. Evangelical fundamentalism aligns itself with capitalism and promotes the virtues of hard work, frugality and honesty – it engages with the modern secular state. Fundamentalists strive to prepare themselves for Christ's return and to convert others. Christian fundamentalists do not accept Darwin's theory of evolution, nor any critical study of the *Bible*.

Since the 1970s, Christian fundamentalists have voiced their concern about society's growing amorality. Christian fundamentalists in the USA, who now constitute more than 20 per cent of the population, are very political and have supported various presidential candidates since 1988. They provide significant financial support to political issues such as anti-gay rights and anti-abortion programs.

Activity 1.12

Investigating, reasoning and judging

Briefly explain, referring to evidence where possible, how fundamentalism in religion exhibits the common features listed in the chapter. Complete the table on Worksheet 1.12. Some answers may require lateral thinking and/or further research.

Activity 1.13

Judging

Devise your own set of criteria for assessing the degree to which a religious movement is fundamentalist.

Conclusion

Religion is constantly adapting to a changing social and political environment. The role of religion in modern society is multifaceted and over the past twenty-five years has increasingly interested political scientists. Since the attacks of 11 September 2001, religion has again entered the public space and become a focus for international relations.

There is great diversity in relationships between the state and religion but some common patterns have emerged. Historically, states have given preference to one religion over others and each state has its own policy towards religion. States see the need to protect their citizens from religions that they perceive to be dangerous. In many states, religion is linked to national identity, particularly states with Muslim majorities. In India, many Hindus strongly associate Hinduism with the national identity. In a number of Asian states, such as Bangladesh, India, Indonesia and Vietnam, restrictions are placed on conversion from the national religion and converts suffer harassment. Religions and religious institutions often have a symbiotic relationship with the state as each supports the other. Religion remains a significant influence on society and politics and the state.

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End of chapter activities

Activity 1.14

Framing

1 Create a collage or mind map of interactions between religion and state in different contexts.
2 Graffiti wall: complete the following statements
   a Religion and state should never interact because …
   b Religion and state should co-operate because …
   c Religion and state should be one because…
3 List (a) religious states, (b) places that have state religions and (c) secular states.
4 Recite a line from a national anthem that refers to God. What does this suggest about the country to whom the anthem belongs?

Activity 1.15

Investigating

1 List countries which have religious symbols on their national flags.
   a What percentage of the world's countries uses religious symbolism in this way?
   b Are the countries concentrated in particular areas or spread evenly throughout the world?
   c Are symbols from all five major world religions represented?
2 Complete a *Who, What, Where, When, Why* and *How* table based on a religious reformer who also influenced politics.
3 Create a comic strip telling the story of a time when there was significant struggle or cooperation between religion and state.
4 Prepare an information brochure for Australian travellers planning to visit a religious state of your choice.

Activity 1.16

Reasoning

1 Construct a paragraph (employing a topic sentence, elaboration and evidence sentences and a concluding sentence) on the current relationship between religion and state in Australia.
2 Complete a Venn diagram showing the unique and common attributes of 'States with an official religion' and 'Religious states'. *Extension* – complete a three-way Venn diagram showing the unique and common attributes of 'Secular states' 'States with an official religion' and 'Religious states.'
3 Devise and produce a summary chart showing the attributes of secular states, states with an official religion and religious states.

Activity 1.17

Investigating, reasoning and judging

Investigate the 2006 conscience vote in the Australian House of Representatives on the abortion drug, RU-486.

1 What is a 'conscience vote' and what distinguishes it from other parliamentary votes?
2 Are conscience votes ever appropriate, in your opinion? If so, under what circumstances?
3 To what extent should the consciences of politicians (often formed by religious ethics) influence the law in Australia?
4 To what extent should religious lobby groups influence the law in Australia?

Activity 1.18

Judging

1 Assess whether the religion–state relationship in a chosen country is consistent with the country's declarations about religion–state relationships in its constitution. Provide evidence to support your assessment.
2 To what extent do the sacred text/s of a chosen religion mandate a particular kind of religion–state relationship? How well is this kind of religion–state relationship upheld in countries around the world?

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CHAPTER REVIEW

Activity 1.19

Reflecting

1 What has been most interesting about this area of inquiry?
2 How can I apply my new understandings about religion–state relationships to my own life?
3 What has surprised me during this inquiry process?
4 How has my learning about religion–state relationships enhanced my appreciation of current affairs?

Ethnographic investigation: religion–state relationships

For an overview of the ethnographic investigation section of the course, refer to page x.

Investigation 1.1

Framing

Before starting this investigation, you should already understand the implications of a range of different kinds of religion–state relationships. You should have considerable knowledge about the religion/s under investigation.

1 Identify interview candidates suitable for this task.

Investigating

1 Choose a person to interview about the relationship between their religion and the state, or the government of the place they have come from. You may wish to focus on how the religion itself functions within the state (for example, as a lobby group) or an agency or sub-group associated with the religion, such as a Buddhist hospice, a Muslim school or Christian home care visitors.
2 Devise open-ended interview questions to find out useful information.
3 Conduct the interview, taking detailed notes.
4 In addition, you may wish to gather further data (booklets, photographs, more general information about the agency or group they are involved with, constitution, law and funding arrangements, religious denomination etc.) both before and after the interview to assist in your understanding of the relationship that exists and your interview subject's experience of it.
5 Organise and collate all your material.

Reasoning

1 Using your interview subject's responses, analyse the nature of the relationship between the religion or religious agency/group and the state. Is it co-operative, hostile or somewhere in between? What makes you say this?
2 Are there any activities or attitudes of the religion, group or agency that the state does not approve of? Why?
3 What are the consequences of the religion–state relationship for adherents of the religion, members of the group or staff of the agency?
4 What elements of the religion–state relationship serve to reflect, reinforce and/or construct the identity or beliefs of adherents, members or staff?

Judging

To what extent is the religion–state relationship you have found out about positive for those involved with it? To what extent is it positive for the general public?

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CHAPTER TWO

RITUAL

'Ritual is necessary for us to know anything.'

Ken Kesey

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

This chapter discusses:

- Ritual analysis
- Civil religion
- Life-cycle rituals – birth, adolescence, marriage, death

KEY terms

rites of passage	liminal	communitas	multivocal
pre-liminal	post-liminal	liminality	civil religion

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Introduction

Rituals use signs, symbols and dramatic actions to invoke feelings of belonging and transition. They enact belief through celebration, sharing, obedience, submission, purification and movement bridging belief and practice.

Rituals generally communicate on two levels:

1 between people and their god or higher being
2 between the individual and fellow believers.

Rituals demonstrate that religion is not only about what people believe in but it is also about what people do to practice and enhance their belief.

FIGURE 2.1
A traditional ceremony at a temple in South Korea

Activity 2.1

Framing

1 List five rituals that you have participated in or observed.
2 Devise a way of grouping all the rituals listed by class members.
3 Describe one ritual from another country or culture.
4 Complete the following statements:
   a Ritual is significant in society because …
   b Ritual is significant in religion because …
   c If there were no ritual, then …

Ritual analysis

Scholars of religion have provided a number of ways to analyse rituals, each of which fulfills a different purpose and provides a useful tool.

Ethnographer Arnold van Gennep (1873–1957) noticed that many cultures and religions performed rituals that commemorate milestones in peoples' lives such as birth, passage through puberty, marriage and death. He argued that all **rites of passage** consist of three phases:

1 the **pre-liminal**
2 the **liminal**
3 the **post-liminal**.

He also emphasised that ceremonies which mark rites of passage not only provide essential meaning for individuals but they also provide a type of social stability.

Activity 2.2

Investigating and reasoning

1 How are the following transitions ritualised? Identify the pre-liminal, liminal and post-liminal stages of each transition and explain how each is expressed in religious or secular ritual:
   a going from school to university
   b becoming a parent
   c going from being single to getting married.
2 Identify similar rites of passage which exist in society, either religious or otherwise, and apply van Gennep's classification to these rites of passage.

Victor Turner (1920–1983) examined the symbolism used in rituals and introduced a new term '**communitas**' which is experienced by people in **liminality**.

Turner decided that rituals had three meanings:

1 the exegetical (subjective) meaning, which is explained by the person performing the ritual
2 the operational (objective) meaning, which is what can be observed by the outsider and refers to the purpose of the ritual in society
3 the positional meaning, which focuses on the symbols used and the relationships between them.

ethnographer a person who studies and systematically records elements of human cultures

rites of passage rituals or ceremonies that mark a change in a person's social or religious status

pre-liminal related to separating from the previous life

liminal related to transitioning from one stage to another

post-liminal a new status or state of life

communitas intense community spirit and solidarity

liminality a subjective, conscious state of being on the 'threshold' of or between two different existential planes

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In addition, he concluded that different levels of meaning are available to people. The 'manifest' meaning can be seen by the observer; the 'latent' meaning may be identified after a period of thought and reflection, and the 'hidden' meaning, which is in some way revealed to those belonging to the ritual community.

Turner found that symbols are **multivocal**.

Activity 2.3

Reasoning

1 Use Table 1 from Worksheet 2.3 to apply Turner's ideas to the ritual of the induction of school leaders at your school.
2 Choose one symbol used during the ritual (perhaps a school captain's badge). Select four different people associated with the ritual and explore the multivocality of this symbol by explaining what different meanings this symbol might have for each person. You could choose, for instance, a Year 8 student, the principal, the school captain's parent, the school captain.
3 Complete Table 2 on Worksheet 2.3.

Activity 2.4

Judging

Draw on the findings in both tables from Activity 2.3 to shape a hypothesis about how these multiple interpretations of the meaning of the ritual and its symbols unite the school community participating in this ritual.

Terence Lovat, an Australian religious educator, has developed a model that can be applied to all rituals. Lovat (1995) began his analysis of rituals from the perspective that all rituals have a beginning, middle and an end. He developed a five-step approach which can be applied to rituals. The participant:

1 leaves the ordinary or mundane world and enters the ritual
2 engages in some type of preparatory rite
3 experiences a central or highpoint of the ritual
4 joins in some form of celebration in the ritual
5 leaves the ritual and returns to the ordinary world.

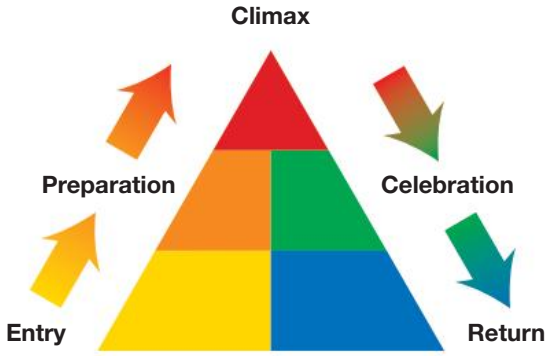

FIGURE 2.2
A graphical representation of Lovat's five-step approach

Activity 2.5

Investigating and reasoning

Analyse two of the rituals outlined in Activity 2.2 using Lovat's five step model. Indicate which parts of the ritual belong to each of the five steps. Provide a reason for your choice.

multivocal
meaning different things to different people (e.g. symbols)

Another way to analyse a ritual is to ask questions dealing with eight elements of a ritual: place, time, participants, leader or expert, form, community, symbols, transforming power, as shown in the table below.

TABLE 2.1
Ritual analysis questions

	Questions
Place	*Where* is the ritual taking place? (e.g. home, sacred space)
Time	*When* is the ritual performed? (what time of the year, month, day)
Participants	*Who* is involved in the ritual? (is everyone allowed to participate or is this ritual for a select group of people only)
Leader or expert	*What* is the role and function of the ritual leader or expert? Is this position open to both men and women?
Form or pattern	*What* is the form, pattern or order of the ritual?
Community	*What* does this ritual mean for the community? What effect does it have on the community? How does the community participate?
Symbols	*What* symbols are used? What do the symbols mean?
Transforming Power	*How* does the ritual make present the divine? How does the ritual bring alive the faith of the participants?

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civil religion
a term used to describe events that link religion to national identity

Activity 2.6

Investigating, reasoning and judging

1 Read the description of a *Bar Mitzvah* or Joining the *Sangha* on Worksheet 2.6.
2 Identify van Gennep's three stages in the chosen rite of passage.
3 In what way/s is van Gennep's classification helpful?
4 How might using such a classification limit your analysis?
5 Using the same rite of passage identify and explain Victor Turner's three levels of meaning in the ritual.
6 Apply Lovat's five-step model to the same ritual.
7 Analyse the ritual using the eight categories.
8 What do each of the models highlight in the ritual?
9 Which model/s is more appropriate for this particular ritual?
10 Evaluate the various models provided by using one of the following methods:
   a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) Analysis
   b Compare and Contrast chart
   c PMI (Plus, Minus, Interesting) chart
   d Multiple Venn diagram
   e De Bono's Six Thinking Hats.

For a detailed description of how these methods can be used, refer to 3.28 on the Student CD-ROM.

Civil religion

In the 1960s, Robert Bellah coined the term **civil religion** to describe events which link religion and American national identity (e.g. Thanksgiving or Independence Day celebrations). These rituals integrate citizens with a variety of backgrounds into a unified nation. Civil religion operates in public rituals, presidents' speeches and patriotic songs like the 'Star Spangled Banner'.

Until quite recently, Australia demonstrated little evidence of civil religion but elements of civil religion now exist in ANZAC Day, Labour Day, Australia Day and even Melbourne Cup Day.

Activity 2.7

Investigating and reasoning

1 Use Lovat's five-step model to analyse ANZAC Day or one of the rituals within ANZAC Day (e.g. the Dawn Service, the march).
2 Apply the eight ritual analysis questions to ANZAC Day.
3 In light of your analysis, defend or refute the statement 'ANZAC Day is an Australian example of civil religion'.

FIGURE 2.3
Elements of Robert Bellah's concept of civil religion can be seen in ceremonies commemorating ANZAC Day

Life-cycle rituals – birth, adolescence, marriage, death

In this section we will explore the life-cycle rituals of the major world religions.

Judaism

Birth

Judaism believes children are a gift and a blessing from God. However, women who have just given birth are considered to be unclean (see Leviticus 12). In ancient Judaism, the mother was not permitted to enter the

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temple or handle sacred objects until a prescribed number of days was over, at which time she would bring a burnt offering to the temple.

Today, observant Jews consider a new mother to be 'unclean' as they do a woman who is menstruating, and after a prescribed time she purifies herself by immersion in a ***mikveh***.

Eight days after a Jewish boy is born, the family and friends gather in the synagogue or their home to celebrate a *Brit Milah* (covenant of cutting). At the *Brit Milah*, the baby boy is circumcised by a highly trained *mohel* in the presence of a group of 10 people, known as a ***minyan***. The *Brit Milah* is performed on the eighth day even if this falls on *Shabbat* (Sabbath) or the Jewish holiday *Yom Kippur*.

If a baby boy is not circumcised he is considered to be excluded from the Jewish people. Circumcision, one of the 613 commandments, is mentioned in Genesis 17:10–14 as a command of G-d and is seen as the physical mark of the covenant between G-d and Abraham.

In the ceremony, the godmother presents the child to the ***sandek***. The baby is placed on a highly ornate seat called the Chair of Elijah. The circumcision is performed by the *mohel* using a ritual knife (*izamel*). At the end of the procedure, ***Kiddush*** is recited and the baby given his formal Hebrew name.

FIGURE 2.4
A *Brit Milah* ceremony

The *Brit Habat* (covenant of the daughter) is one of the newest rituals developed during the rise of American feminism in the 1970s. This ritual has roots in Sephardic (Spanish Jewish) tradition where an event called the *seder zeved habit* celebrated the gift of a daughter.

While there is no set ceremony for the *Brit Habat*, there are common elements which echo the *Brit Milah*. Celebrated in the synagogue or at home, the ritual usually opens with the child being brought into the room to a call of *B'rucha habah* (blessed is she who enters). There are prayers and readings by the parents and, usually, a rabbi. *Kiddush* is made and the parents display some physical expression of affection for the child, which may include washing the girl's hands and feet accompanied by a blessing. The child is also named during the ceremony.

Activity 2.8

Investigating, reasoning and judging

Construct an information leaflet about *Brit Milah* appropriate for maternity wards in hospitals explaining the ceremony and its meaning.

Adolescence – *Bar Mitzvah* and *Bat Mitzvah*

Bar Mitzvah means 'son of the commandment' and *Bat Mitzvah* means 'daughter of the commandment'. These rituals are performed when a boy turns 13 or a girl turns 12. They are now old enough, according to Jewish law, to fulfill the *mitzvot*, the central tenets of Judaism.

Prior to becoming a *Bar Mitzvah*, a boy learns to wear ***tefillin*** and ***tallit***; study the scriptures and Jewish history; and recite a passage from the *Torah*. Once the boy becomes a *Bar Mitzvah* he is able to be counted in a *minyan*.

Originally, there was no similar rite of passage for girls. In 1922, Rabbi Mordecai Kaplan developed a *Bat Mitzvah* ceremony for his daughter. Girls now attend classes in scripture and history, learn to keep kosher food laws and how to prepare for *Shabbat* and the

mikveh
ritual bath

minyan
quorum of ten adult Jewish men over the age of thirteen

sandek
honoured family friend

Kiddush
prayer of sanctification or blessing recited over wine at *Shabbat* and festival meals

tefillin
two small leather boxes containing Torah passages worn by males on the head and arm for daily morning services

tallit
prayer shawl

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FIGURE 2.5
A *Bar Mitzvah* celebration

other religious festivals. In some communities, young girls also wear *tefillin* and *tallit*.

Both *Bar Mitzvahs* and *Bat Mitzvahs* are a time of celebration for the young person and a party often follows the formal ritual.

Marriage

In Judaism, marriage is a sacred act and requires a legal marriage contract, or *ketubah,* be made between two equals. The marriage comes into effect only when the woman accepts the contract.

In ultra-Orthodox communities, it is still customary for the bride to provide a dowry. Today,

FIGURE 2.7
A Jewish wedding couple under the *huppah*

FIGURE 2.6
A *ketubah*

this is often a promise to support the new son-in-law while he completes his study at the *yeshiva*.

On the *Shabbat* prior to the wedding, Jewish couples partake in the *aufrufa* ritual (Yiddish for 'calling up'). The groom is called up to the *Torah* and after he has completed the second of the blessings he is showered with lollies, symbolising the wish for a sweet future. The day before the wedding, the bride visits the *mikveh*.

On the day of the wedding, the *ketubah* is signed by two witnesses and a *t'nayim* (legal contract between the parents agreeing that their children will be married) is also signed. After the declaration the mothers break a dish, which symbolises the irreversible nature of the decision.

The groom usually wears a *tallit* and sometimes a *kittel* (a white robe that he will also wear at *Yom Kippur*, the *Pesach Seder* and his burial).

The parents lead their children to the *huppah* (marriage canopy). The rabbi begins the ceremony with a blessing over a cup of wine, the couple sips the wine and exchange rings declaring, 'You are

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consecrated to me with this ring according to the faith of Moses and of Israel'.

The *ketubah* is read aloud, followed by seven blessings made for: creation; the creation of humanity; the creation of the human ability to reproduce; the future joy of Zion and her children; the joy of the bride and groom; love, kinship, peace, friendship and the sound of happy wedding couples in a restored Jerusalem. The part of the wedding which most people are familiar with is the groom stomping on a glass accompanied by the shouts of *Mazel tov* (good luck).

Activity 2.9

Investigating

1 According to Jewish law and custom what is *Levirate* marriage?
2 What does the term 'marrying out' mean? Is it considered good or bad? Why or why not?
3 Investigate the parameters for divorce in Judaism.

Death and burial

According to Jewish custom, a dying person should not be left alone. Observant Jews will recite the *vidui* (deathbed confession) and their final words will often be the *Shema*. The instructions of the *goses* (the dying person) are binding and it is forbidden to manipulate a *goses* in a manner that would speed up the dying process.

When a person has died, their body is covered with a sheet to maintain its dignity and the corpse is not left alone from this time until burial. A *shomer* or guard stays with the body reading the Psalms. Members of the immediate family tear a small portion of their clothing, usually a collar or lapel, in a custom known as *k'riah* and these torn garments are worn throughout the seven days of mourning.

To keep the *mitzvot* (or commandment) the *Khevrah Kadishah*, a group of people whose duty it is to prepare the corpse for interment, wash the body, cut the person's hair and nails and wrap the body in a white linen shroud. Men may also be wrapped in their *tallit* but the *tzitzitm*, the fringes, will be cut, signifying that he is no longer required to perform *mitzvot*.

The person should be buried within forty-eight hours of dying, except on *Shabbat* or festivals. Escorting the dead is important for Jews and a person is obligated to accompany the casket on foot at least part of the way into the cemetery. At the graveside, each person puts three shovels full of dirt into the grave. Generally participants do not pass the shovel on after using it but plant it in the ground so as not to 'pass on death'. Observant Jews wash their hands before leaving the cemetery.

During the seven days of solemn mourning *(Shivah)* which follows, members of the immediate family stay home from work and friends bring them food. On the first day of mourning, a *minyan* comes to the home to say the ***Kaddish*** and on the seventh day, the mourners go to the graveside to pray. A less formal mourning period continues for thirty days and the mourning for parents continues for eleven months.

Those who are mourning parents are given priority in leading services in the synagogue and it is considered a great *mitzvah* to do so at this time. After twelve months, a tombstone is added to the grave. On the anniversary of the death, it is customary to light a memorial candle that burns for twenty-four hours in the home.

FACT

A *ketubah* may include:
1 A provision for the maintenance of the wife for one year after a divorce.
2 The value of the property the bride brings to the marriage.
3 An additional amount pledged by the husband.

The *Talmud* states that the *ketubah* ensures that 'it should not be easy for a husband to divorce his wife', a protection under Jewish law, as only the husband can initiate a divorce.

Kaddish
a Jewish prayer recited by mourners after the death of a relative

FIGURE 2.8
A Jewish funeral in Jerusalem

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Activity 2.10

Investigating and reasoning

1 Create two Jewish life-journey diagrams marked with major life events, one for a man and one for a woman. Annotate the journey diagrams to show how *mikveh, Brit Milah/Brit Habat, Bar/Bat Mitzvah,* marriage and death/burial rituals mark and celebrate particular events and transitions in the life of devout Jews.
2 What beliefs about God and humanity are expressed in the rituals you have included on the life-journeys?
3 What values are reinforced in Jewish communities through the celebration of these rituals?

Activity 2.11

Reasoning and judging

1 Compare the Jewish rituals with life journey rituals celebrated in your family. To what extent are the sets of rituals similar or different?
2 To what extent do Jewish and other life journey rituals assist people who experience them to negotiate important life events and perceive meaning in life?

Hinduism

Hinduism has one of the most extensive systems of life-cycle rituals called *samskaras* (being made fit for use), which mark key moments in people's lives from before birth to death. There are over forty *samskaras,* sixteen of which are described in Hindu religious literature and divided into four general groupings, following.

Birth and childhood

Nine of the sixteen *samskaras* are concerned with birth and infancy. The first *samskara* is performed during the new bride's first fertile period. It is related to celestial events as Hindus believe that the date the child is conceived determines its gender and personality. The ceremony requires participants to make an offering of food to the gods and to chant an appropriate mantra.

The second *samskara* is carried out between the second or third month of pregnancy and expresses the couple's desire for a male child. Drops of banyan juice are placed on the mother's right nostril to inhale and she must eat yogurt and grains.

The third *samskara*, performed during the sixth or eighth month of the pregnancy, requires the husband to part his wife's hair three times using a special comb such as the quill of a porcupine. From then on the mother is careful about her diet, rests and tries to remain calm until the birth. The husband must refrain from having his hair cut, taking part in pilgrimages and performing funeral rites.

The second grouping of *samskaras* begins with the birth of the child, when the father writes the sacred *Aum* symbol on the lips or tongue of the child with honey. This ritual marks the child as a new member of Hinduism and so the father whispers a secret name, such as *Brahma,* into the child's ear.

After a time of ritual impurity, the naming ceremony takes place. The mother bathes and is given

Hindu *samskaras*

Parental
1 conception of a child (*Garbhahana*)
2 consecrating a male child in the womb (*Pumsavana*)
3 parting the hair of a pregnant woman (*Simantonnayana*).

Childhood
1 birth ceremony (*Jatakarm*)
2 naming ceremony (*Namakarana*)
3 child's first outing (*Niskramana*)
4 child's first solid food (*Annaprashana*)
5 child's first hair cut (*Choodakarma* or *Mundan*)
6 child's ears are pierced (*Karnavedha*).

Adolescence
1 the sacred thread ceremony (*Upanayana*)
2 the start of formal education (*Vedarambha*)
3 graduation from education and return home (*Samavartana*).

Adulthood
1 marriage (*Vivaha*)
2 retirement (*Vanaprastha*)
3 ascetic life (*Sanyasa*)
4 death and funeral rites (*Antyeshti*).

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FIGURE 2.9
Aum is a sacred symbol in Hinduism

FIGURE 2.10
The ritual head shaving ceremony is a sign of spiritual cleanliness in Hinduism

new clothes and the house is filled with flowers. The father shaves to emphasise the removal of pollution. A priest casts a horoscope to determine the first letter of the child's name then the father writes the name of the family deity, followed by the child's date of birth and the proposed name. The father whispers the name into the baby's right ear.

The final *samskaras* in this group focus on the early development of the child. At four months, the child is taken out of the house to see the sun and the moon for the first time. The baby must face north and the ceremony must be performed within one day: a sacred fire is lit and an appropriate mantra chanted.

When the child has its first solid food another ritual is performed: the mantras used in this ceremony focus on good health and good digestion. Sometime within the first three years of life, the child celebrates the eighth *samskara*. This hair cutting ceremony, a sign of spiritual cleanliness, is performed by the father, who combs some hair from the right side of the child's head, makes a loop with some blades of grass and cuts the hair. The hair and grass are then placed in a container and buried in a remote location. A barber shaves the child's head and rubs in a butter or oil-like substance prior to the child taking a bath.

The final *samskara* in this series is ear-piercing which represents the child's ears being opened up to spiritual truths.

Activity 2.12

Investigating and reasoning

1 Conduct an internet search on the rituals associated with pregnancy and childbirth in Hinduism. Complete the table on Worksheet 2.12.
2 Create a series of information sheets designed for hospital staff in a maternity ward outlining the importance of these rituals to Hindus.
3 Make recommendations for staff to help fulfil the religious requests of new Hindu parents.

Adolescence

During adolescence three *samskaras* take place, marking the transition to adulthood. The first, the sacred thread ceremony (only available to the upper three castes), is when a boy is given the *yajnopaveet* (sacred thread) made up of three strands symbolising the obligations below:

1 to promote knowledge gained from the sages (*Rishi Rin*)
2 to look after and respect his parents and ancestors (*Pitri Rin*)
3 to contribute to the society and nation (*Dev Rin*).

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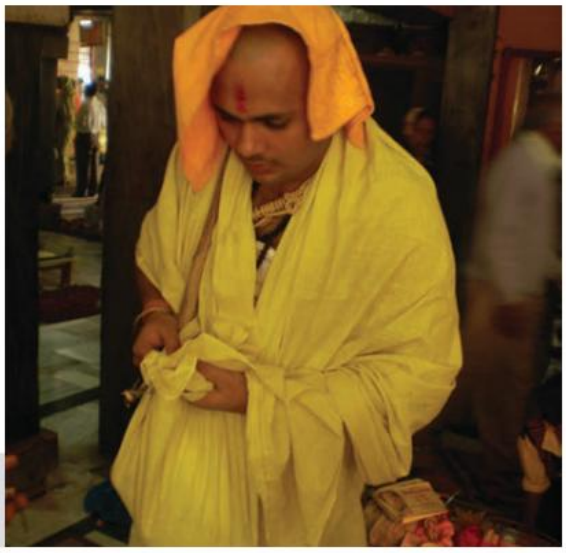

FIGURE 2.11
A Hindu youth at the thread ceremony

The boy's head is shaved, except for a tuft of hair on the crown. He bathes and puts on special white clothes and shares a meal with his mother before she leaves the ceremony. He faces west, opposite his father and a piece of cloth is held between the father and son as blessings are chanted. Offerings of rice and ghee are made to Agni, the god of fire. The boy is then given new clothes and a piece of deer skin on a loop of cotton is placed around his neck. Three strands of white cotton, tied with a sacred knot, are hung diagonally across his chest: the thread is worn for the rest of his life and is renewed annually at a special ceremony for Ganesha's birthday.

tilak
a painted mark on the forehead or other parts of the body that can signify various things, such as sect membership, marriage or the third eye

FIGURE 2.12
A Hindu wedding ceremony

Activity 2.13

Investigating and reasoning

1 Complete the Y chart for the sacred thread ceremony on Worksheet 2.13.
2 What values are reinforced through the sacred thread ceremony?
3 What rites of passage mark the transition to adulthood among non-Hindus in Australia? What values do they reinforce?
4 How are other Australian rites of passage for adolescents similar to and different from the sacred thread ceremony?

Marriage

In Hinduism, marriage is an alliance between two families. In the past, marriages were arranged by the parents. Today, couples are 'guided' in their choice of partner rather than having a marriage arranged. When the couple decides to get married, a priest checks the partners' horoscopes to find a good time for the wedding, which normally takes place in the bride's home.

On the wedding day, both the bride and groom dress lavishly and the bride's hands and feet are decorated in elaborate *mehendi* (patterns) using henna. The ceremony begins with prayers to Ganesha to remove obstacles and bring good fortune. The bride's family welcomes the groom, applies the ***tilak*** to his forehead, showers him with flowers and sprinkles him with perfumed water.

During the ceremony, the groom is brought to a specially decorated altar (*mandap)* where he is offered a drink of milk, ghee, yogurt and honey. Songs of blessing follow, where a silk cloth is held between the bride and groom. The bride is given to the groom by her father and the groom promises to be moderate in the observance of his moral duty (*dharma*), the earning of money (*artha*) and the enjoyment of good things in life (*kama*). Gifts are exchanged, with the groom's mother giving the bride a necklace. The priest lights the sacred fire and the couple makes offerings as mantras in Sanskrit are chanted.

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After the bride's sari is tied to the groom's scarf, the couple exchange vows and offer rice to the sacred fire. The bride steps on a stone, which symbolises her willingness and strength to overcome difficulties in the pursuit of her duties. In the climax of the ritual, the couple takes seven steps around the fire reciting prayers for food, power, prosperity, wisdom, children, health and friendship. The bride's brother pours barley into the couple's hand as a symbol that they will work together and then the husband marks the parting of his wife's hair with red kum kum powder as a sign that she is married. If the wedding is during the day, the couple looks to the sun for a blessing and if it is at night, to the Polar Star.

Activity 2.14

Investigating and reasoning

Find out what takes place at a Hindu festive wedding meal. How do these activities reinforce the meanings of the Hindu wedding ritual?

Death

Many rituals for death exist in Hinduism. These vary according to family and region, though across all regions, bodies are usually cremated rather than buried. A relative of the same gender as the deceased person bathes and dresses the body in new clothes. The corpse is placed on a **pyre** made of sandalwood, saffron, musk and camphor, beside a river. The feet of the body must face south towards the realm of the god of death, Yama. As chief mourner, the son lights the fire and throws rice, nuts and other offerings into the flames.

Cremation fires act as purifying agents and the reduction of the body to ash is symbolic of the transience of life. The ashes are collected and scattered into a river, preferably the Ganges.

Mourning lasts for ten days, after which a series of sixteen *pindas* (special rice balls) are placed in strategic places associated with the death: the place of death, where the corpse was laid, the path of the funeral procession, where the **bier** stopped, the place of cremation and where the ashes were scattered. On the tenth day, the chief mourner shaves, bathes and receives a new sacred thread. The *Shraddha* rites (funeral rites) are prescribed in the ancient law books and the rites reflect a linear understanding of the afterlife.

FIGURE 2.13
A Hindu funeral pyre

Activity 2.15

Investigating and reasoning

1 Use the internet to locate a map showing the location of the Ganges River.
2 What Hindu rituals are performed on the Ganges?
3 In a paragraph of around 150 words, explain how urban design and architecture in cities along the Ganges point to and reflect the river's sacred status.
4 How might environmental issues affecting the Ganges impact on Hinduism's rituals? Express your reasoning using a consequences wheel or a mind map.

Activity 2.16

Investigating, reasoning and judging

1 Review the information on Hindu life-cycle rituals and complete the retrieval chart on Worksheet 2.16.
2 What appears to be the strongest type of 'connection' for each of the ritual groupings?

pyre
a structure, usually made of wood, for burning a body as part of a funeral rite

bier
a stand on which a corpse or coffin is placed

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Buddhism

Birth

Sangha
a Pali word meaning 'assembly' and more generally understood as a group of people who follow the Buddha and his teachings. It also refers to a community of Buddhist monks

Buddhism has very few life-cycle rituals. There is no universal Buddhist ceremony for the birth of a child. In the context of the wheel of life, birth is understood as rebirth and ultimately delays a person achieving their ultimate purpose. Nevertheless, birth is listed in the twelve stages of life and each stage is the cause of the next, which sets up the circle of birth, suffering, death and rebirth.

Buddhists commemorate crucial moments in life and this varies according to local beliefs and customs. When a child is born, offerings are made to local and traditional gods to ward off evil.

Other rites may include repeating mantras, walking around statues of the Buddha or praying before Buddha images. In Tibet, the sacred symbol *dhih*, symbolising the celestial Buddha Manjusri, is painted on the baby's tongue in saffron powder or butter in the hope that the child will grow up to be wise. The child is taken to the local monastery to be named by the *lama* (priest). The father makes a small offering of money wrapped in a special scarf (*kata*).

In Thailand, the naming ceremony involves local monks who chant the *Pancasila*, the five moral principles of Buddhism, before the child is named either by the head monk or the father.

Stages of Life

- ignorance
- intentional acts
- consciousness
- body and mind
- the senses
- sense impressions
- feelings
- craving
- clinging
- becoming
- rebirth
- old age and death.

Activity 2.17

Investigating and reasoning

1 Research the Tibetan symbol for the syllable '*dhih*'. Draw the Tibetan character and write a short explanation of its meaning.
2 What is saffron? List ways in which saffron is used. Why do you think it is used in this ceremony?
3 This ritual is conducted 'in the hope that the child will grow up to be wise'. Create a table showing other religious rituals that are designed to engender wisdom in the participant and the particular symbols used to represent or impart wisdom. Do the rituals in your table have any common elements or characteristics?

Adolescence

One ritual which is common in many lineages of Buddhism is joining the *Sangha*.

In some traditions, young boys spend a few months or a few years within a *Sangha* learning the teachings of the Buddha before completing their education. Various ceremonies mark the entry into the *Sangha*. Sometimes the boy dresses elaborately, like a prince, as a reminder of how Buddha gave up his life as a prince to become a holy man. The boy's clothes are then exchanged for the saffron robe of the monk.

The boy's head is shaved to show that he has given up worldly concerns and as a mark of poverty and self-discipline. He kneels before the senior monk, requests permission to join the *Sangha* and promises to obey the rules while concentrating on overcoming *dukka* (suffering). Once he has made his vows he receives his robes and follows the daily routine of the *bhikkus* (monks) and *bhikkunis* (nuns) living according to the Ten Precepts.

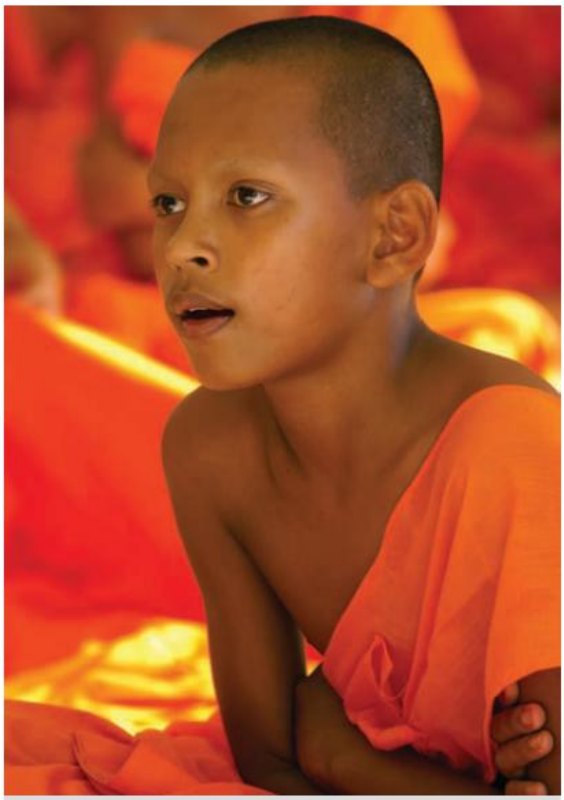

FIGURE 2.14
A young boy in his saffron robes

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Activity 2.18

Investigating

1 Find out where *Sangha* congregations in your state are located. You may find this link helpful: www.buddhismaustralia.org/orgs.htm. Mark the congregations' locations on a map.
2 What are the challenges and benefits of the distribution pattern of these congregations for Buddhists who wish to celebrate their religious and cultural rituals within an established Buddhist community?

Marriage

While monks do not marry, most Buddhists believe family life is important. There is no traditional Buddhist marriage ceremony or ritual and in some traditions it is thought to be ill-fated to have monks attend a wedding because their vow of celibacy might cause infertility for the couple.

Couples may seek the blessing of a monk prior to their wedding by inviting a monk to their home or by visiting a temple. In return, the monk is offered food and gifts for good *karma*. In Thailand, it often a common practice to pour water over a ribbon connecting the monk with the couple. More recently, Mahayana Buddhism, which once had a taboo on monastic involvement in weddings, sometimes allows weddings to be held in temples with the blessing of monks, who also issue a marriage certificate.

Activity 2.19

Investigating and reasoning

Complete the three-way Venn diagram on Worksheet 2.19. Outline the unique and common attributes of Western civil weddings, Christian weddings and Buddhist weddings.

Death

According to Mahayana Buddhist belief, each time a person dies their spirit is reborn into one of the six divisions of the Universe, the realms of: gods, titans, humans, hungry ghosts, animals and hell. For Buddhists, life is a cycle of birth, death and rebirth which is known as *samsara* and funerals concentrate on facilitating the journey of the dead person through the process of death and rebirth.

When the person dies, the family washes the body, places it in a wooden coffin and carries it in procession to the shrine room of the local temple. The funeral procession is often accompanied by cheerful rather than sorrowful music to generate good *karma*.

In most Buddhist cultures bodies are cremated, but in Sri Lanka burial is common and in Tibet 'sky burials', where the corpse is cut into pieces and left for vultures, are practiced.

Buddhist beliefs differ in terms of the time between death and the next life. In Theravada Buddhism, rebirth is understood to be almost immediate. However, in Mahayana Buddhism the mourning rituals suggest that there is an interval of time between death and rebirth, during which offerings are made to earn good *karma*. A well known text, the *Tibetan Book of the Dead*, describes how the dead person moves through three stages (*bardos*).

Activity 2.20

Investigating

Complete a fishbone diagram on the topic of Buddhist death rituals. This can be found on Worksheet 2.20.

1 Write the topic in the box on the left hand end (the 'head') of the diagram.
2 For each of the four main 'bones' emerging from the 'spine' of the diagram, nominate a subtopic explored in the text above.
3 On the horizontal lines provided for each subtopic, record details of that subtopic.

Activity 2.21

Judging

'The nature of rituals celebrated by Buddhists is primarily determined by the culture in which they take place.' List evidence from the text that supports and refutes this claim. Construct a paragraph to either support or reject the statement.

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Islam

Birth

Muslims believe that the gift of life is precious. While the *Qur'an* does not provide specific instructions on how to celebrate the birth of a child, the *Hadith* provides three clearly identifiable rituals linked to infancy.

Adhan
the Muslim call to prayer

aqiqah
to cut or break

The first, which occurs soon after birth, requires the father to say the ***Adhan*** in the baby's right ear.

The second ritual, the ***aqiqah***, which occurs approximately seven days after the birth, involves several ritual actions.

The first action involves shaving the baby's head as a sign of purification. Prior to disposing of the hair, the parents weigh it and give the same weight in silver to charity. The child is also named during the *aqiqah*. The parents usually choose a name which has significance either in the *Qur'an* or the Prophet's family.

The final action in the *aqiqah* is an act of sacrifice. For a boy, two sheep are slaughtered but only one is required for a girl. The meat is divided by the halal butcher into three portions: one for the family, another for friends and the third for the poor, a symbol of sharing the family's good fortune with others.

The third ritual is male circumcision. While some communities circumcise a boy soon after he is born, others wait until he is old enough to recite the *Qur'an* or has reached adolescence. The *Shafi'I* school considers circumcision obligatory while the *Maliki* and *Hanafi* schools only recommend it. Female circumcision, widely practiced in north Africa and parts of the Middle East, is neither required nor recommended by the *Qur'an* or Islamic tradition and instead derives from tribal or cultural practices.

FIGURE 2.15
A Muslim father whispers into his baby's ear during the naming ceremony

Activity 2.22

Investigating and reasoning

1 Investigate and gather specific information about birth rites in Islam to complete the ritual analysis table on Worksheet 2.22 on the Student CD-ROM.
2 Construct a Venn diagram which outlines the common and unique characteristics of birth rites in Islam and Hinduism.
3 What conclusions are you able to draw after comparing the birth rites of the two religions? How do you account for the similarities and differences?

Marriage

According to the *Qur'an*, men and women were created to be partners in life and marriage is intended to bring tranquility, love and protection for both partners. There is extensive material in both the *Qur'an* and the *Hadith* on the essential role marriage plays in the life of the faith.

Many Muslim marriages are arranged (or assisted). The parents are involved to ensure that a suitable partner is found because romantic love alone is not seen as sufficient indication of a successful marriage. Families arrange to meet the couple in each other's presence, and if both parties are interested, then a meeting is arranged at the girl's home so that the couple can talk together. Free consent of both parties is required prior to the wedding. Marriage is seen not just as the union of a couple but as the joining of two families.

Islamic marriage contracts are binding on both parties and include financial responsibility for the wife and children irrespective of the wife's personal wealth.

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A dowry, or *mahr,* in the form of money, education or another asset, must be paid to a wife for the marriage to be valid. The *mahr* remains part of the wife's personal property even if the couple divorce. In Islam, it is relatively simple for a man to get a divorce; all he has to do is tell his wife he wants to leave her on three separate occasions. It is not as simple for a woman. She has to establish grounds for a divorce.

Weddings in Islam vary between cultures but generally have two stages. The first is the signing of the marriage contract, the *nikah*, in a simple ceremony involving the two parties and two witnesses: the bride need not be present, she can act through her father or the *wali* (guardian). The signing of the *nikah* takes place in the presence of an *imam* and is accompanied by readings from the *Qur'an* and a sermon. The second stage is the *walima* or banquet, which is a very elaborate affair when presents are given.

One of the interesting features of Islam is polygamy. The *Qur'an* states:

> And if you fear that you will not deal fairly by the orphans, marry such women as seem good to you, two, three or four; and if you fear that you will not do justice (between them) then (marry) one or what your right hand possesses.
>
> *Qur'an 4:3*

The verse appears to permit men to take up to four wives as long as they are treated equally. Some Muslims argue that this is really only appropriate in exceptional circumstances such as a severe scarcity of males in times of war. Although rare in most Muslim societies, polygamy is popular in Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and parts of West Africa. Some marriage contracts stipulate that the husband must obtain permission from the first wife before becoming married again.

Mixed marriages exist in Islam but they are not encouraged. Muslim men may marry Christians and Jews but a Muslim woman must always marry a Muslim, as the children have to take the religion of the father.

Activity 2.23

Reasoning and judging

1 Classify the above facts about marriage in Islam using the table on Worksheet 2.23.
2 In your opinion, informed by the table you have completed, do Islamic marriage customs protect both parties? Write a structured paragraph (topic sentence, evidence and concluding sentence) defending your claim.

FIGURE 2.16
A Muslim couple on their wedding day

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FIGURE 2.17
Muslim graves

Death

Every day, Muslims remember that there is a life to come after death and what they do in this life will determine what happens to them when they die (*Qur'an* 1:1–7).

For Muslims, death ushers in the next stage of existence known as *barzakh*, life in the grave. The immortal soul separates from the body and is interrogated by two angels *Nakir* and *Munkar*. It is common for Muslims to prepare the dying person for their encounter with the angels by whispering the *shahadah* into their ear: as the last words they will hear it is hoped that they will then be ready to answer the questions from the angels. While there are no directions in the *Qur'an* regarding funeral rites, the example of the Prophet is followed.

According to tradition, the body is washed and clothed in a simple white burial shroud, except for martyrs who are buried in the clothing in which they died as a symbol of the blood they shed for the faith. Those performing the washing should be of the same gender as the deceased, no alcohol is allowed in the perfuming process and embalming is strictly forbidden. The burial should occur as soon as possible after death – the body must be buried not cremated.

The imam leads the service and stands beside the corpse with everyone facing Mecca. As the body is lowered into the grave the following phrase is recited:

> 'From the earth we did create you and into it we shall return and from it shall we bring you out once again'.

sacrament an official Christian ritual that uses symbols such as water, clothing, light, oil and actions to symbolise being washed clean, clothed with new life and strengthened for a life which should be committed to God

The corpse is laid on its right side with the head facing toward Mecca. Mourners sprinkle dirt into the grave while appropriate verses from the *Qur'an* are read.

Funeral processions should be simple to avoid any hint of idolatry. Placing flowers, plants, candles or any objects on the grave is forbidden as the dead person needs nothing. A brief three-day mourning period follows, except for a widow who should grieve for ten days (*iddah*). The widow should not wear jewellery, move house or marry during this ten-day period. Visiting the gravesite is an honourable deed but should not be accompanied with wailing or crying out. In Islam, life after death is called *Akhirah*.

Activity 2.24

Investigating and reasoning

1 Construct a flow chart showing the sequence of individual actions which constitute Muslim funeral rituals.
2 Mark points of similarity to, and difference from, other death rituals with which you are familiar.

Activity 2.25

Investigating, reasoning and judging

1 Locate and read five different sources of information about Muslim rituals (in different modes and from different perspectives) and complete an annotated bibliography. This should include:
   a a full bibliography
   b a brief description of what the source covers
   c a summary of the positive and negative features about the source's treatment of Muslim rituals.
2 In conclusion, write a paragraph about what you consider to be the most useful source on your list for students of Study of Religion explaining why you recommend it.

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FIGURE 2.18
The baptism of pilgrims at the River Jordan

Christianity

The Baptism of Jesus by John the Baptist in the Jordan River is recorded in all four Canonical Gospels. For most denominations of Christianity, baptism is considered a **sacrament**.

While each of the Gospels provides different details of the baptism of Jesus, they all agree on certain ritual actions, which later became central parts of the rite of baptism.

Activity 2.26

Investigating and reasoning

1 Read through the accounts of the baptism of Jesus on Worksheet 2.26.
2 Devise and use a colour code to show where the Gospel accounts agree on what took place. Prioritise these elements according to how significant you think they were in the evangelists' accounts of Jesus' baptism. Record these elements in priority order in your work book.
3 As you read the next section, 'Birth and naming,' tick off the elements on your list that you think are included in Christian baptism rituals.

Activity 2.27

Investigating, reasoning and judging

1 Read the extracts on Worksheet 2.27 about how baptism was conducted in the second and third century.
2 In two columns, list the required order of service for the second century and then the order of service for the third century.
3 Create a visual (diagram or picture) showing the requirements for baptism in each century.
4 Identify differences between baptism in the second century and baptism in the third century.
5 Write a statement about the nature of the differences or changes from the second to the third century.
6 Construct a structured paragraph of 250 words about the development of the rite of baptism in early Christianity. Your paragraph should have: a topic sentence, evidence sentences and a concluding sentence.
7 Locate a contemporary service for baptism from within mainstream Christianity. Compare it to the second and third century documents. What is common? What is different?
8 Create a hypothesis about baptism in early Christianity and contemporary Christian tradition.

FACT

In the Catholic, Orthodox and Anglican traditions, there are seven sacraments: Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist, Reconciliation, Anointing of the Sick, Marriage and Holy Orders. In most Protestant churches there are only two sacraments: Baptism and Eucharist. The Salvation Army and the Society of Friends do not have any sacraments.

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Birth and naming

The term 'baptism' (from the Greek 'to immerse, to dip, or to bathe') became a common initiation practice in early Christianity. Initially a ceremony for adults, gradually infant baptism became the norm. Infant baptism is normal practice in Orthodox, Anglican, Lutheran and Roman Catholic denominations.

Baptism is seen as a statement of faith. When children are baptised the parents or god-parents speak on behalf of the child. This also indicates the commitment of the parents and god-parents to bring the child up within the faith and to teach the child the fundamentals of Christianity. In the baptism ceremony, the profession of faith, based on the *Creed*, is generally presented as a series of questions and answers.

FIGURE 2.19
A Christian baptism ceremony

FIGURE 2.20
An adult full-immersion baptism

The central moment is when water is poured over the head of the person as the priest says, 'I baptise you (name of child) in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit'.

In the Greek Orthodox tradition, several additional ceremonies mark the birth of a child. Prayers are said on the day the child is born and on the eighth day after the birth, the child is officially received as a member of the church, receives its name and prayers are said for the mother and child.

The mother brings the child to be 'formally introduced' to the church in a ceremony called the forty-day blessing (*sarantismos*) which remembers Mary bringing Jesus to the temple on the fortieth day after his birth. This is the first time that the new mother and the baby are allowed to enter the church. After the forty-day blessing, close family members say, 'Na mas Zisi' ('May s/he live for us'). Baptism in the Orthodox tradition requires that the baby be fully immersed three times in water as well as being anointed with oil and dressed in a white robe.

Activity 2.28

Investigating

There is much in common between Orthodox and other Christian infant baptism rituals but also some interesting differences. Research the gestures and symbols used in baptisms in the Orthodox tradition compared with baptisms in one other Christian denomination. Record what you believe to be the three most significant differences and account for these differences.

Baptisms are sometimes called Christenings as a sign that one is brought to 'Christ' during the ceremony. The child is given their 'Christian' name, often from the *Bible*. Also during the ceremony the child is anointed with consecrated oil. Baptists, Seventh-Day Adventists, Jehovah's Witnesses and Pentecostals believe a person should make an informed

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choice about whether they want to be baptised. Therefore, these groups only conduct adult baptism called 'the believer's baptism'. The person is lowered backwards into the water as believer's baptisms generally require them to be fully immersed.

Childhood and adolescence

Confirmation

In the early Christian church, Confirmation was part of baptism but later it became a separate ceremony. Confirmation, meaning 'to make firm', provides the opportunity for the child to speak for him or herself. In the Catholic Church, the time for confirmation varies: some children are confirmed prior to their first communion; others are confirmed around the age of twelve or thirteen. If confirmation is administered at thirteen, then it is likely that the rite is considered as a rite of passage to adulthood within the tradition.

In the Catholic and Anglican traditions, confirmation is usually performed by a bishop, although it is not a requirement of the sacrament itself.

Marriage

Christian marriage draws on three ideas from Genesis:

1 that humans are relational people and therefore intimate relationships are fulfilled in marriage
2 that children are a gift
3 that, while they are not the sole purpose of marriage, children should be loved and accepted as an outcome of marriage.

Orthodox and Catholic traditions include marriage as one of the seven sacraments and while Protestant groups do not call marriage a sacrament they nevertheless agree that it is an important and sacred ritual.

Generally, wedding ceremonies are held in a church or place of worship and the bride and groom are attended by witnesses (i.e. groomsmen and bridesmaids) in the presence of a priest or minister. The marriage service can vary considerably, but includes hymns, readings from sacred scripture and a sermon. The climax of the ceremony involves the bride and groom stating their vows and exchanging blessed rings, at which point they are declared 'husband and wife'.

FIGURE 2.21
A confirmation ceremony

FIGURE 2.22
Crowns for an Orthodox wedding ceremony

In the Orthodox tradition, the bride and groom wear crowns (*stephana*) and they circle the wedding table following the priest who holds the book of the Gospels aloft as a sign that they are to follow the word of God in all that they do and say.

Divorce and remarriage within Christianity varies according to denominations. Protestantism allows for divorce but stresses the permanence of marriage. The Catholic Church has the strictest interpretation about the permanence of marriage and, while it has a process of annulment whereby a person is able to remarry

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within the church, the couple must be able to state how elements were lacking in the original marriage and therefore prevented the marriage from being a sacrament. Examples of grounds on which annulments have been granted include unwillingness to have children or psychological immaturity.

Death

Christians believe that death is not the end of life but the beginning of a new life with God. A Christian funeral is a celebration of hope as well as a time of sadness. Care of the dying is important within Christianity and people often stay with the dying person praying for them and reading the *Bible*.

Unlike Judaism and Islam, there is no rush to bury the person immediately, so funerals often occur two or three days after death. Many Christians 'view' the body and offer final prayer and farewells. Generally the funeral service is led by a priest or minister and is conducted in a church. The coffin is covered in a white cloth called a pall and a cross or crucifix is placed on the coffin reminding people of the death and resurrection of Jesus.

FIGURE 2.23
A Christian burial ceremony

Depending on the denomination, symbols of baptism are often part of the service; for example, the coffin is sprinkled with holy water, incense is used as a sign of reverence for the body and the Easter candle is lit as a symbol of the resurrection. In some traditions, flowers are also placed on the coffin. Generally, the funeral service consists of hymns, readings from the *Bible*, a sermon and often a eulogy.

Traditionally, burial has been the preferred method of disposal for Christians. Given that Jesus was buried, this method became popular among the Christian community. More recently Catholic and Protestant churches have allowed cremation. Originally, cremation was forbidden because it was believed that the burning of the corpse inhibits resurrection.

Christian graves normally have a cross on the tombstone and sometimes they are highly decorated with angels. In Orthodox and Catholic traditions, prayers for the dead are offered on the fortieth day and on the anniversary of the death. Catholics also pray for the dead on All Souls Day (November 2).

Activity 2.29

Investigating and reasoning activity

1 Develop an information leaflet appropriate for hospitals and nursing homes that details the main requirements at the time of Christian death and in preparation for Christian burial.
2 Design a series of questions that could be addressed to a priest or minister asking what they do for the dying and in preparation for funeral services.
3 Why is a Christian funeral a time of hope as well as sadness? Ground your explanation within the sacred texts of Christianity.

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Activity 2.30

Investigating, reasoning and judging

Review the information on Christian life-cycle rituals and complete the retrieval chart on Worksheet 2.30.

1 What appears to be the strongest type of 'connection' for each of the ritual groupings?
2 If you have completed this task for the rituals of Hinduism, compare and contrast your conclusions about the rituals of Hinduism and the rituals of Christianity.

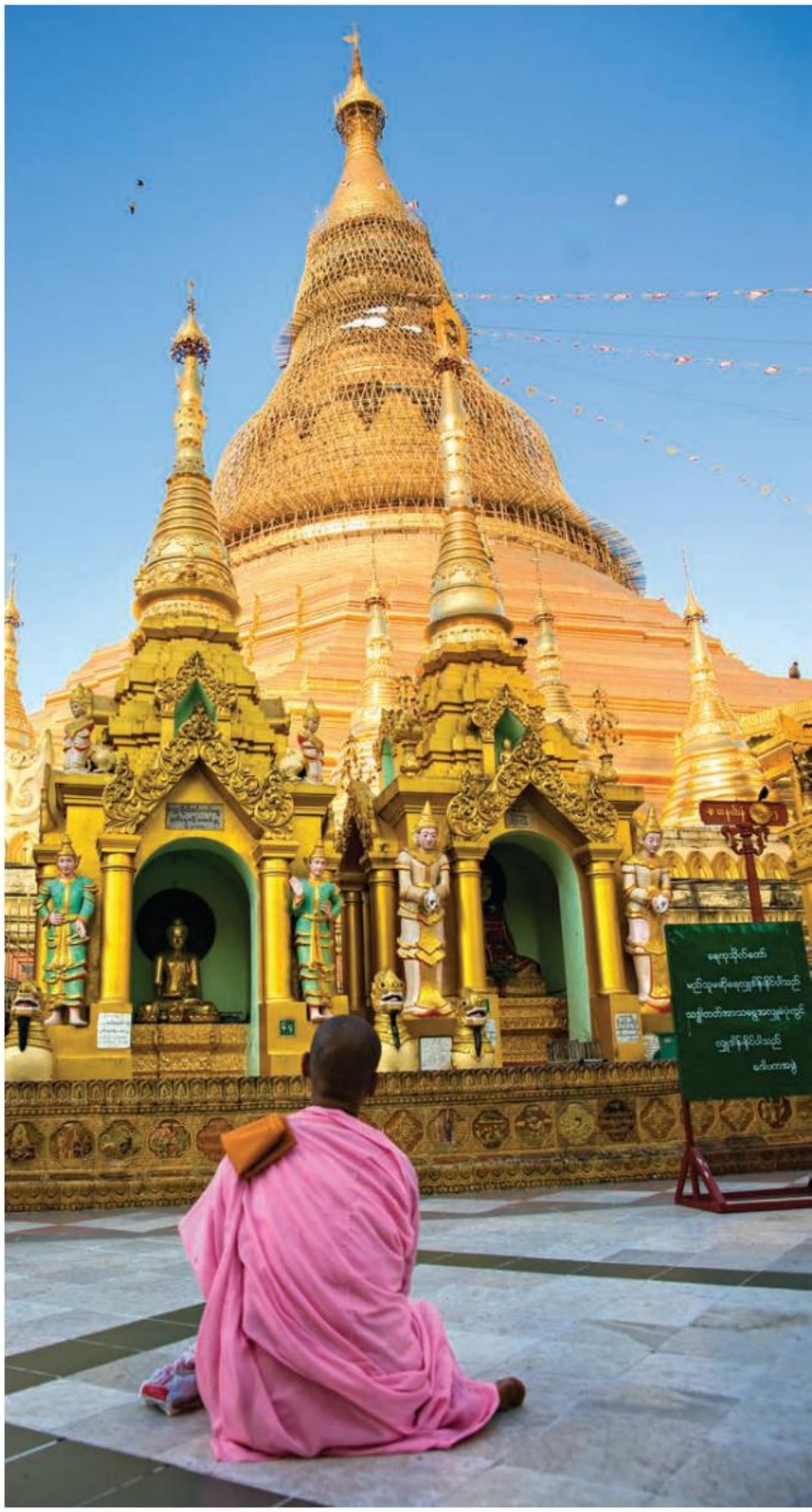
Activity 2.31

Reasoning and judging

1 How do Christian rituals play a role in maintaining, promoting, challenging or changing world views and values in contemporary Australian society?
2 Form groups and have each group consider one area of investigation (birth/naming, childhood–adolescence, marriage and death).
   a Each group reports its conclusions to the class.
   b Individually write a feature article based on the material presented.

Conclusion

Ritual gives concrete and dramatic expression to beliefs within social and cultural settings. Some rituals instill order in the world and make present the transcendent. Ritual space and objects enable the believer to move beyond the ordinary functions of life and to communicate with other members of the group and with the tradition.



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End of chapter activities

Activity 2.32
Framing

1 Compose an alphabet list of secular and sacred rituals.
2 Describe what happens between when you wake up in the morning and when you arrive at school. What aspects of this behaviour would you consider to be ritualistic? Why?
3 Think about certain events that take place at school (assembly, going to the tuckshop, signing in/out, athletics carnival etc.). Describe one event and explain whether it is a ritual and why.
4 Consequences wheel: if ritual were banned then …

Activity 2.33
Investigating

1 Present a two-minute info-break on a ritual of your choice, supported by visual texts.
2 View DVD recordings or a series of images showing various secular and sacred rituals (e.g. the Oscars ceremony, the Steve Irwin memorial, a game show, a wedding). For each ritual, describe the ways in which different individuals and groups are involved. Explain how objects and time are used in the rituals. In what ways are the arts used, if at all?
3 Investigate the rituals of a Buddhist marriage in either the Theravada or Mahayana tradition. Using one of the theoretical frameworks presented in this chapter, complete an analysis of the ritual and write a paragraph (topic sentence, evidence sentences, concluding sentence) explaining your findings.
4 Create a visual storyboard (either with photos or drawings) that traces the important phases, elements and symbols of a Christian baptism. Annotate each photo or picture with important details so that it can be understood by a non-Christian.

Activity 2.34
Reasoning

1 How does naming a child differ in each religious tradition explored in this chapter?
2 In a T-Chart, provide arguments for and against infant baptism.
3 Why might birth be considered a sad event in Buddhism?
4 How might people who don't belong to any religious tradition celebrate rites of passage?
5 Create a classification system for the rituals you listed in the first framing activity.
6 Construct a diagram showing the relationship between 'ritual' and 'rite of passage'.
7 Using ritual structure and elements as explored in this chapter, design a ritual and enact it.

Activity 2.35
Judging

1 To what extent are religious rites (or the rites of one religion) related to key religious beliefs?
2 To what extent are religious rites (or the rites of one religion) based on sacred texts?
3 How do religious rites (or the rites of one religion) consolidate or strengthen social structures?
4 Write an opinion column about the importance of ritual in society.

Activity 2.36
Reflecting

1 What have I learned about ritual through this inquiry process?
2 What has challenged or surprised me about ritual?
3 What religious rituals appeal to me? Why?
4 What do I still wish to find out about ritual?

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Ethnographic investigation: ritual

For an overview of the ethnographic investigation section of the course, refer to page x.

Investigation 2.1

This might be used at the beginning of a course in Study of Religion. The findings may be presented in a multi-modal presentation, essay, report, or feature article.

Framing

Before starting this ethnographic investigation you need to have established the idea of ritual, its nature and purpose. Be clear about the concept of a rite of passage and also ideas about sacred/profane, religious experience etc. You should already have considerable knowledge about the religion/s under investigation.

1 Identify interview candidates suitable for this task.

Investigating

1 Choose one person to interview (or access a documentary) about a rite of passage that they have participated in (either as observer or subject).
2 Devise open-ended interview questions carefully to find out useful information.
3 Conduct the interview, taking detailed notes.
4 In addition, before and after the interview you may wish to gather further data (booklets, photographs, more general information about the type of ritual, law and civil ceremony, religious denomination etc.) to assist in your understanding of the ritual and the interview subject's experience of it.
5 Organise and sort all your material.

Reasoning

Using your interview subject's responses, analyse how the ritual in question matches with any of the models presented at the beginning of this chapter. How have different elements of the ritual functioned to create a 'shape' or structure for the rite of passage? Is there one model that is most suitable to show and explain the structure of the ritual in which your interview subject participated?

1 What elements of the rite of passage signalled a separation from the ordinary/profane?
2 What elements of the rite of passage signalled a change in status for those involved?
3 What elements of the rite of passage served to reflect, reinforce and/or construct the identity/beliefs of those present, or the community in which the rite was held (school, culture, religion, denomination, for example)?

Judging

To what extent has this ritual been successful in drawing participants beyond the ordinary into the special/transcendent?

Investigation 2.2

This might be used later in a Study of Religion course (Year 12) when skills in evaluative processes are more highly developed. The findings may be presented in a multi-modal presentation, essay, report or feature article.

Framing

Before starting this ethnographic investigation you need to have established the idea of ritual, its nature and purpose. Be clear about the concept of a rite of passage and also ideas about sacred/profane, religious experience etc. You should already have considerable knowledge about the religion/s under investigation. Identify interview candidates suitable for this task

Investigating

1 Choose one person to interview about two different rites of passage in which they have participated (either as observer or subject). *Or* choose two people to interview, each about a rite of passage in which they have participated. It would perhaps be most effective to find out about two different forms of a similar kind of ritual.
2 Devise open-ended interview questions carefully to gather the most useful information.
3 Conduct the interview, taking detailed notes.

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4 In addition, before and after the interview you may wish to gather further data (booklets, photographs, more general information about the type of ritual, law and civil ceremony, religious denomination etc.) to assist in your understanding of the ritual and the interview subject's experience of it.
5 Organise and sort all your material.

Reasoning

1 Using your interview subject's responses, analyse how the rituals in question match with any of the models presented at the beginning of this chapter. How have different elements of the rituals functioned to create 'shape' or structure for the rites of passage? Is there one model that is most suitable to show and explain the structure of the rituals in which your interview subjects participated? Do different ritual analysis models work better with one ritual than the other? What is it about the rituals in question that mean they are more suited to one of these frames of analysis?
2 Compare and contrast the rituals as to what elements of the rites of passage signaled a separation from the sacred/profane? How similar/different are the rites in this regard?
3 Compare and contrast the rituals as to what elements of the rites of passage signaled a change in status for those involved? How similar/different are the rites in this regard?
4 What elements of the rite of passage served to reflect, reinforce and/or construct the identity and beliefs of those present, or the community in which the rite was held? Where the rituals effective in this regard? Was one ritual more effective than the other in this regard? Why?

Judging

1 To what extent have these rituals been successful in drawing participants beyond the ordinary into the special or transcendent?
2 Of the commonalities between the rituals, which seem to be culturally specific? Which seem to be universal? In what way/s might the rituals be considered as sacred and secular rituals?

Taking it further: extension questions

1 How is the nature and significance of religion reflected in the ritual/s you have investigated?
2 In what ways have secular rituals taken on elements of sacred rituals?

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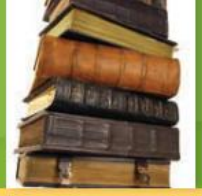

CHAPTER THREE

SACRED TEXTS

'All human beings have an innate need to hear and tell stories and to have a story to live by. Religion, whatever else it has done, has provided one of the mains ways of meeting this abiding need.'

Harvey Cox

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

This chapter discusses:

- Investigating sacred texts
- Sacred texts of the world's major religions
- Oral traditions and sacred texts
- Ways of reading and interpreting sacred texts

KEY *terms*

Canon	hermeneutics	discourse analysis	form criticism
monism	*Quelle*	source criticism	reader response criticism
exegesis	synchronic approaches		

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Introduction

All religions have some way of recording and retelling stories which are significant for the believers within their tradition. Usually these stories are recorded in special books which are given great authority and considered holy or sacred. In some religious traditions, sacred texts are also believed to be divinely inspired. Muslims, for example, believe that God spoke to Muhammad and that the words of God are recorded in the *Qur'an*.

Christianity's sacred book is the *Bible*, which literally means 'book' although it is a collection of books. Sometimes the *Bible* is referred to as 'scripture' (writing) and this general term 'scripture' is often used to describe the sacred texts of all religions. Religions that depend on oral traditions often express and transfer their sacred stories through body painting, masks, tattoos, carvings, rock paintings, ritual objects and even sand paintings.

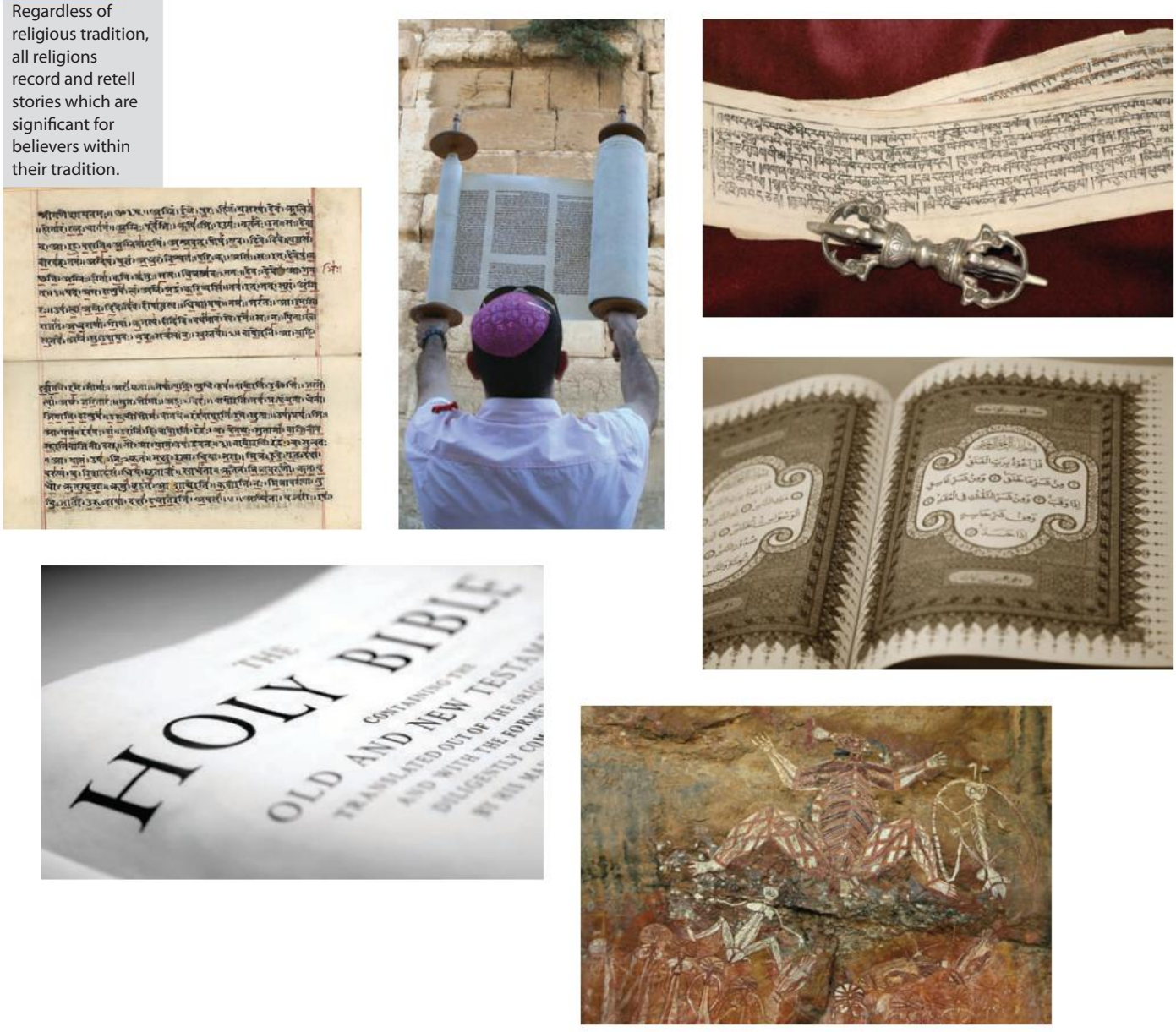

FIGURE 3.1
Regardless of religious tradition, all religions record and retell stories which are significant for believers within their tradition.

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Activity 3.1

Framing

1 Recall a really good story or book you have read. Why was it good? What made it interesting?
2 What types of texts exist?
3 Create a mind map of the different kinds of texts found on the internet.
4 Create a mind map of the different kinds of texts that make up sacred texts.
5 What are sacred texts?
6 In what way/s is sacred text similar to or different from other texts?
7 What constitutes 'truth' in sacred texts?

Investigating sacred texts

To study the sacred texts of a religion, we need to find out how the texts are composed, regarded, experienced, used and interpreted within that tradition. The following questions are one way of discovering some of the answers:

- Are the sacred texts in an ancient language? Is only the original language version considered sacred?
  - If a sacred text is translated into the vernacular, is the translation still regarded as sacred text?
  - Is the original language still taught?
- What is taught and said about the origins of the sacred texts?
- What role does sacred text play in the public face of the religion?
- How do adherents encounter the sacred text?
- What role does sacred text play in followers' public lives?
- What role does sacred text play in followers' private lives?
- Does the sacred text play a significant role in forming the identity of its followers?
- Do followers view the sacred text as the 'final word' or can it be changed or altered?
- How is sacred text used in contemporary culture?
- How does sacred text present past life and cultures?

Think about these questions as you consider various sacred texts. While they will apply strongly to some religious traditions, they may appear less relevant when applied to others.

Sacred texts of the world's major religions

Judaism

Jews are often described as 'the people of the book' because sacred texts are core to Jewish law, belief and worship. The sacred texts of Judaism are traditionally divided into the *Torah* (Law), *Nev'im* (Prophets) and *Ketuvim* (Writings) collectively known by the acronym TaNaK. There are thirty-nine books in the Jewish **Canon**.

Canon
'list' or 'measuring rod'. Canon of scripture is the title given to the official list of writings which constitute the sacred texts of a tradition

1 *Torah* (Law)	2 *Nev'im* (Prophets)	3 *Ketuvim* (Writings)
Genesis (*Bereshit*)	Joshua (*Yehosua*)	Psalms (*Tehillim*)
Exodus (*Shemot*)	Judges (*Shofetim*)	Proverbs (*Mishle*)
Leviticus (*Vayiqra*)	Samuel (*Shemuel*)	Job (*Iyyov*)
Numbers (*Bemidbar*)	Kings I & II (*Melakhim*)	Song of Songs (*Shir Hashirim*)
Deuteronomy (*Davarim*)	Isaiah (*Yeshayahu*)	Ruth (*Ruth*)
	Jeremiah (*Yirmeyahu*)	Lamentations (*Ekhah*)
	Ezekiel (*Yehezaqel*)	Ecclesiastes (*Qoheleth*)
	Twelve Minor Prophets (*Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum. Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zachariah, Malachi*)	Esther (*Ester*)
		Daniel (*Daniel*)
		Ezra-Nehemiah (*Esra-Nehemyah*)
		Chronicles I & II (*Divre Hayamim*)

The Jewish scriptures are written almost entirely in Hebrew, except for a few passages which are in Aramaic, an ancient language common at the time the scriptures were written. Within the Jewish scriptures we can find **genealogies**, histories, folktales, poetry, proverbs, prayers and narratives. The covenant between G-d and the Jewish people is at the heart of these scriptures and they emphasise the two facets of G-d: mercy and justice.

genealogies
history or accounts of the descent of a person, family, or group

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FACT

'When Moses demanded to know the name of God, God said to Moses "Ehyeh-asher-ehyeh" (I am who I am, YHWH)' (Exodus 3:14).

Traditionally rather than uttering the sacred name, Yhwh, Jews say Adonai, Lord. This respect, or prohibition, is expressed in English as G-d.

The *Torah*

The *Torah* is the cornerstone of Judaism. The narrative in the five books of the *Torah* begins with creation and continues to the death of Moses, just before the people reach the Promised Land. Genesis *(Bereishit)* consists of 50 chapters and when read in synagogues today is divided to 12 *parashiyot*. While it begins with the stories of Creation, the main part of the book is devoted to the story of the patriarchs and matriarchs who founded the Hebrew people: Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah, Jacob, Leah and Rachel, Joseph and his brothers. In some instances, central figures are given new names by G-d, Abram becomes Abraham, Sarai becomes Sarah. The second book, Exodus (*Shemot* or Names) which begins 'These are the names of …'

The book of Exodus consists of 40 chapters divided into 11 *sidrot* or portions. The events cover from the death of Joseph to the building of the Ark of the Covenant (130 years). Exodus introduces the story of Moses, who liberates the Jews from slavery in Egypt and leads them to the Promised Land. The 613 commandments of Judaism are recounted in Exodus.

The laws of Judaism are found in the following three books. Leviticus (*Vayikra*, And He Called), the third book of the *Torah*, contains 27 chapters divided into 10 *sidrot*. The bulk of this book is made up the 613 *mitzvot* (commandments) and continues the laws that Moses began in Exodus. The focus of Leviticus is mainly on ritual and ethics, the observation of *Yom Kippur* and the system of vows and tithes.

FIGURE 3.2
Torah scroll

Numbers (*Bamidbar*, In the Wilderness), the fourth book, contains 36 chapters divided into 10 *sidrot*. Numbers begins with Moses taking a census of the Israelites. God then divides the people into tribes with the Levites becoming the servants of G-d. The book contains stories of the struggles of the people and even their rebellion. In the second half of the book, G-d informs Moses that he will not be allowed to go into the Promised Land.

Deuteronomy (*Devarim,* Words), the final book in the *Torah*, consists of 34 chapters divided into 11 *sidrot*. Almost the entire book of Deuteronomy describes Moses giving an address to the Hebrew people: he reminds them of the foundations of their faith, the covenant with G-d, the Ten Commandments and other fundamentals of Judaism such as the *Shema*.

Followers are not meant to read the *Torah* silently, the scripture is meant to be chanted and sung. In synagogues, the *Torah* scrolls are written in 'unpointed' Hebrew, that is, without vowels, punctuation marks, or any indication of the melodies to which the text is chanted. Generally, people learn to read the *Torah* from a book that provides both the unpointed version and the *Masoretic* translation with markings. The *Torah* takes precedence over the other two sections of the Hebrew scriptures because it contains the very foundations of Judaism.

Nev'im (Prophets)

The first books of the Prophets continue the history begun in the *Torah*. The Book of Joshua begins with the death of Moses, when Joshua assumes command and leads the twelve tribes into the land of Canaan. Judges, the second book, recounts part of the history of ancient Israel and includes the stories of Deborah, Eli and Samuel. It also recalls the people's temptation to wickedness. Samuel I and II, which includes the story of David and Goliath, was once a single volume but was divided into two in the sixteenth century. First and Second Kings, once a single book, begins with the last days of David's reign and concludes with the story of Solomon and the building of the Temple in Jerusalem. After Solomon's death, the kingdom is divided into Judah in the south and Israel in the north. The northern kingdom fails and only the tribe of Judah is left.

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The first book of the Latter Prophets, Isaiah, is reported to be the work of Isaiah, son of Amoz, but modern biblical scholars believe it to be the work of three authors each with a slightly different style. Isaiah's prophecies include the prediction of the coming Messianic Age. The book of Jeremiah includes the biography and prophecies of Jeremiah.

Ezekiel begins his prophecies by denouncing Judah and Jerusalem for their wickedness. This book, while difficult to understand because of its apocalyptic images, contains the prophecy of the restoration of the Temple. The remainder of the *Nev'im* is devoted to the twelve minor prophets, only considered minor because of the length of the books.

Ketuvim (Writings)

The final fourteen books include wisdom literature, proverbs, psalms, a love song and historical writing. Some of these books have liturgical significance: the Five *Megillot* (scrolls) (Song of Songs, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes and Esther) are read in the synagogue on specific holidays. The Psalms are read frequently and found through the *siddur* (prayer book).

Reading sacred Jewish texts

For Orthodox Jews, the words of the TaNaK are revealed truth dictated by G–d to Moses at Sinai. Liberal forms of Judaism interpret the scriptures as being written by human beings but divinely inspired. Either way, sacred texts are at the heart of Judaism.

Activity 3.2

Investigating

1 The texts of Leviticus 16 and the Book of Jonah are read during the solemn ritual of *Yom Kippur* (Day of Atonement), the holiest day of the Jewish year.
2 Read the texts and complete the table on Worksheet 3.2.
3 Identify three reasons why the reading of Leviticus 16 precedes the reading of Jonah.
4 Why are these two readings paired in this way on *Yom Kippur*?

Hinduism

Vedas

The oldest sacred texts in Hinduism are the works of the **Aryans** called the *Vedas*. The *Vedas* consist of four collections of works, which are divided into four sections. Beginning with the oldest, the *Vedas* are the *Rig, Sama, Yajur* and *Atharva Vedas.* The four sections of each of the *Vedas* are:

1 *Samhitas*: hymns of praise to various deities
2 *Brahmanas*: texts describing methods of performing ritual animal sacrifices
3 *Aranyakas*: texts addressing meditative visualisations
4 *Upanishads*: philosophical texts on the nature of ultimate reality.

Aryans
an early European people who are thought to have invaded India several thousand years ago

FIGURE 3.3
Hindu devotees reading the holy texts for early morning prayers

The *Rig Veda Samhita* contains over one thousand hymns to the gods. The *Rig Veda* frequently mentions a mysterious power called *Brahman.* While the *Vedas* are still recited in rituals today, the *Vedic* gods no longer form part of the religious life of Indian people and the *Upanishads*, a later addition to the *Vedas*, are more valued in Hinduism.

Upanishad means 'session' and refers to the act of a student sitting at the feet of the master, who teaches the student secret doctrine. The *Upanishads* consist of around 200 documents of varying lengths, written from the seventh century BCE and appended to the *Vedas*. About 10 of the texts are considered classical.

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They recount the beliefs of the Aryan peoples, which developed as they moved east and south into Indian territory.

The hymns focus on *Brahman* as pure being, pure consciousness and ultimate reality. *Brahman* is not a god but is above all the gods, who derive their being and power from *Brahman*. The *Upanishads* seek to uncover the 'real self' (*atman*). The religion presented in the early *Upanishads* is a form of **monism**, but later the conception of *Brahman* is more personal and changes from 'it' to 'he', 'the Lord.' This significant change makes it possible to pray to *Brahman* and to hope for an answer to one's prayers.

A second development relates to the understanding of the Universe as deceptive because it conceals its true nature from us (called *maya*, which means 'conjuror's trick'). To achieve salvation, the believer must pierce the veil of *maya* to reach the truth and reality of the essential nature of the **Godhead** concealed within. When salvation is achieved, the illusory world of *maya* disappears and *Brahman* alone exists. In the later *Upanishads*, the concept of *yoga* appears, which means 'setting to work' or 'pursuing a goal'. It is defined as a movement towards spiritual liberation and the termination of the individual ego. The *Katha Upanishad* is a dialogue between *Nachiketa* and *Yama*, the King of Death. The text explores whether there is life after death.

monism
the physical belief that there is ultimately only one reality and that all forms of plurality or individuality are an illusion

primordial deity
ancient god or goddess

Godhead
the unknowable aspect of God, deity or divinity

Activity 3.3

Investigating and reasoning

Read the extracts from the *Katha Upanishad* on Worksheet 3.3 and answer the following questions:

1 What is the literal meaning of the word '*Upanishad*' in Sanskrit? How is the meaning of '*Upanishad*' evident in this particular text?
2 What is the purpose of the text? How are the *Upanishads* a tool for instruction and contemplation?
3 Explain how the imagery of the chariot in the *Katha Upanishad* provides instruction to Hindus on how to live their lives. Use examples from the text to support your answer.
4 How does the text support the fundamental teachings of Hinduism on issues such as life, death and reincarnation?
5 Provide three examples of 'instructional texts' from other religions which function similarly to the *Upanishads*.

For thousands of years, the *Upanishads* were passed verbally from teacher to student because it was believed that writing the text down would compromise its sacredness. Orthodox Hindu belief in the divinely inspired origin of the *Vedas* gives these texts levels of 'truth', which for many is unquestionable.

The origin of the four classes within Hinduism is found in the *Vedic* creation hymn in which Purusha, a **primordial deity**, was sacrificially dismembered by the gods. The priestly class was created from his mouth. The ruling class was created from his arms. The merchant class from his legs and the servant class from his feet. Because of the authority given to the sacred texts, it is difficult to make changes to the Hindu class system.

Shruti and *smriti*

Hindu texts which are considered to come direct from the divine are called *shruti.* All other scripture is called *smriti,* 'that which is remembered'. *Smriti* holds less authority than *shruti.*

Shruti literature is restricted to a specific audience. According to the Law of *Manu* only adult males from the upper three classes are worthy enough to read these sacred texts. The men who belong to this group are known as 'twice-born' because they participate in a ceremony at the end of childhood which is like a second, spiritual birth. Since women, children, and all people in the fourth class are excluded, the majority of believers do not have access to the holiest set of writings in Hinduism.

The two epics poems *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* are important *Smriti* texts. The *Ramayana*, which tells the story of prince Rama from the northern Indian kingdom, is written in Sanskrit. The *Ramayana* consists of 24 000 verses over six books. The story is summarised as follows.

Prince Rama wins the hand of the princess Sita but is exiled for fourteen years before his coronation. His wife Sita and his half-brother, Lakshmana, go with him out of loyalty. Sita is kidnapped by the demon Ravana and taken to Lanka. Rama and Lakshmana search for her with the aid of Hanuman, the leader of the monkey kingdom. Rama kills Ravana and Sita proves that she has remained faithful to Rama. They return to Ayodhya where Rama becomes king.

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Activity 3.4

Investigating and reasoning

Read the extract from *Bhagavad Gita* (Chapter 9:1–3, 27–34) located on the Student CD-ROM, then answer the following questions.

1 What is the genre of this text?
2 Identify the characters of the text and complete the character map (included on the Student CD-ROM) which briefly describes their relationship/s to other characters.
3 Using examples from the text, describe the nature of the relationship with the divine.
4 From your knowledge of Hindu teachings and beliefs, identify and list the main themes in this sacred text.
5 How does interaction with this sacred text provide followers of Hinduism with guidance for living?

Many of the characters in the *Ramayana* are regarded as gods and serve as models for Hindus. Rama is seen as the ideal husband and ruler and is understood to be the incarnation of the god Vishnu. Sita is viewed as the ideal wife who supports her husband even when confronted with danger. She is associated with the goddess Lakshmi, Vishnu's consort. Hanuman is the ideal follower who serves Rama devotedly.

Another classical Hindu text is the *Mahabharata.* In approximately 100 000 verses, it tells of the clash between the princes of the northern kingdom, the Pandavas and their cousins the Kauravas. It is a story of good versus evil. The conversation which takes place between them is known as the *Bhagavad Gita* (Song of the Lord).

Hinduism has no universally accepted Canon and is unique among the world religions because access to its most sacred writings is limited by age, gender and class.

Buddism

Studying Buddhist texts is one of the most important religious activities a Buddhist can perform. After the Buddha's death, the religious community (*Sangha*) began to compile his teachings. The rule of the *Sangha* (*Vinaya*) and the Buddha's sermons (*Sutra*) were recited in the Pali language. Out of respect for the teachings, these rules and sermons were not written down for many centuries. Because Pali was only a spoken language, the texts were recorded in other languages.

FIGURE 3.4
Rama and Sita

When the *Sangha* divided, Mahayana Buddhists used Sanskrit, an ancient Indian language, for their scriptures. They also added some of their own *Sutras* in Sanskrit. The Theravada Buddhists studied the *Tipitaka* in Pali. As Buddhism spread, the Canon was translated into other languages and expanded.

FIGURE 3.5
Buddhist monks reading sacred texts

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FACT

Sutra (or *sutta*) means thread and refers to the Buddha's teachings being sewn together into collections.

Over time, the circumstances of the teachings were forgotten. Buddhists later interpreted and explained them. Eventually, the *Abhindhamma* (higher teaching) were composed as the third section of sacred writings. The three sections of the Pali Canon – *Vinaya, Sutra* and the *Abhidhamma* – became known as *pitaka* (baskets) and eventually the Pali Canon was called the *Tipitaka* (Three Baskets).

The image of the three baskets has been explained in several ways. Some argue that the scriptures were originally written on palm leaves stitched together at the edges and kept in three separate baskets.

Vinaya Pitaka (Basket of Discipline)

The *Vinaya Pitaka* is the smallest basket and consists of 227 rules for monks (*bhikkhus*) and 311 rules for nuns (*bhikkhunis*) covering subjects such as simplicity and celibacy.

The *Vinaya* is divided into three sections:

1 *Sutra-vibhanga* – contains rules, explanations and commentaries for *bhikkhus* and *bhikkhunis*.
2 *Khandhaka* – deals with regulations for communal living (*kamma-vacana*) as well as rules for clothing and food
3 *Parivara* – contains extra precepts that vary from school to school.

The rules are recited every two weeks in monasteries and are designed to ensure harmony in the *Sangha.*

Sutra Pitaka (Basket of Threads)

The *Sutra Pitaka* is a collection of myths, stories, sayings and teachings related to the Buddha. It is usually divided into five *nikayas* (sections). The *Digha Nikaya* contains 34 *sutras* including a *sutra* which describes the last three months of the Buddha's life and is thought to record some of the actual words of the Buddha. The *Majjhima Nikaya* contains 152 *sutras* grouped in fifteen *veggas* or sections. The *Samyutta Nikaya* contains 7762 *sutras* in 56 groups, arranged according to subject. It also includes the Buddha's first teaching after his enlightenment. The *Anguttara Nikaya*, the one-at-a-time teachings, contains 2308 *sutras* arranged in eleven groups. The *Khuddaka Nikaya* or minor teachings, contains 15 *sutras* that do not easily fit into the other *nikayas*. These *nikayas* include some of the most well known *sutras* such as the *Dhammapada*, on the meaning of love, a collection of 423 verses set in 26 *veggas*, which provides moral guidelines to those following the path to enlightenment.

Tipitaka (The Three Baskets)

1 *Vinaya Pitaka*: Basket of Discipline	2 *Sutra Pitaka*: Basket of Threads	3 *Abhidhamma Pitaka*: Basket of Higher Teaching
Sutravibhanga (fundamental rules)	*Digha Nikaya* (extended teachings)	*Dhammasangani* (phenomena)
Khandhaka (rules and sayings)	*Majjhima Nikaya* (medium teachings)	*Vibhanga* (treatises)
Parivara (summaries)	*Samyutta Nikaya* (grouped teachings)	*Dhatukatha* (elements)
	Anguttara Nikaya (specific teachings)	*Puggalapannatti* (individuals)
	Khuddaka Nikaya (minor teachings)	*Kathavatthu* (points of controversy)
		Yamaka (pairs)
		Patthana (relations)

FIGURE 3.6
Young Buddhist monks living in a community

Activity 3.5

Reasoning

Read the extracts from the first *vegga* of the *Dhammapada* on Worksheet 3.5.

1 What is the purpose of such a text?
2 How might it assist someone on the path to enlightenment? Provide evidence to support your claims.

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The *Sutra Pitaka* also contains the *Jataka*, 547 stories about the previous lives of the Buddha, which emphasise the qualities a person needs to progress towards enlightenment. The themes of the *Jataka* stories are often shown in pictures at Buddhist shrines.

Abhidhamma Pitaka: Basket of Higher Teaching

The third basket, *Abhidhamma Pitaka*, contains seven separate works which not only reflect on earlier doctrine but also explore it from a philosophical perspective. The *Abhidhamma Pitaka* is considered to be a highly advanced form of the Buddha's teaching revealed from the heavenly realm after his death.

Mahayana Buddhism

There is no fixed Canon for Mahayana Buddhism which uses texts in Sanskrit, Tibetan, Japanese and Chinese. The Chinese Canon consists of 2184 texts in 55 volumes with a supplementary 45 volumes. It contains the *Tipitaka*, the *Sutras*, the *Tantras*, the *Sastras*, commentaries, histories and biographies, encyclopedias and dictionaries.

Activity 3.6

Investigating

For a detailed list of the sacred texts for Mahayana Buddhism, refer to Worksheet 3.6.

Mahayana texts such as the *Lotus Sutra* are widely used in East Asia. Zen Buddhism does not use these texts, preferring to transmit truths verbally from one generation to the next.

Tibetan texts

The Tibetan Canon contains much of the Chinese Canon, plus some texts that are unique to Tibetan Buddhism. Texts are added to the Canon continually.

The Tibetan Canon consists of two parts: *bKa'gyar* (translation of the Buddha) which contains *Vinaaya*, *Prajna-paramita Sutras*, *Avatamsaka Sutra*, *Ratnatkutta Sutra*, other *Sutras* (75 per cent of which are Mahayana), *Tantras* and *bStan'gyur* (translations of teachings) which include *Stotras* (hymns of praise), commentaries on the *Tantras* and other commentaries and *Abhidhammas*.

In Tibetan Buddhism, books or texts are considered sacred because they contain the *Dharma*. They are kept in places of honour in shrines. The oldest copies have the greatest place of honour.

Islam

The *Qur'an*

The sacred book of Islam, the *Qur'an*, is looked upon by Muslims as the final word of guidance, given by Allah to the Prophet Muhammad through the Angel Jibra'ail (Gabriel). The *Qur'an* is absolutely central to Islam and Muslims believe the words of the *Qur'an* are the literal, verbal revelation of God. Only by living according to the revealed will of God, can Muslims find true happiness and fulfillment in this life and later in heaven.

FIGURE 3.7
The *Qur'an*

For Muslims, it is important that the sacred text was revealed only to one person and preserved over a short time in oral form before it was written down. They contrast this with the Jewish and Christian scriptures, which they believe became corrupted through being transmitted over a long period of time. The word *Qur'an* means 'recitation', which emphasises the oral character of the text. It is intended to be read aloud and listened to.

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The *Qur'an* (translation) begins:
In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.
All praise is due to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds
The Beneficent, the Merciful.
Master of the Day of Judgement.
Thee do we serve and Thee do we beseech for help.
Keep us on the right path.
The path of those upon whom Thou has bestowed favours.
Not (the path) of those upon whom Thy wrath is brought down, nor of those who go astray.

FIGURE 3.8
The opening verse of one of the chapters of the *Qur'an*

The *Qur'an* contains 114 *surahs* (chapters) and 6616 *ayahs* (verses), beginning with the longest *surahs* and finishing with the shortest. The Prophet was unable to read or write and so he dictated the revealed *ayahs* to a scribe who recorded them on any available material. Of the 114 *surahs*, 87 were received during the thirteen years the Prophet lived in Mecca. The remaining 27 *surahs* were received at Medina following Muhammad's migration from Mecca.

Each *surah* opens with the phrase 'In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful' reminding the reader that the sacred words they are about to hear are directly from God. In addition, each *surah* has a name that is derived from a striking word or incident described in the chapter. This word is used as a popular means of referencing. For example, *Surah* 2: The Cow; *Surah* 4: Women; *Surah* 96: The Clot.

The *Qur'anic* term for the process of revelation is *wahy* and together with the term *tanzil* it means 'sending down' from God. The *Qur'an*, recorded in Arabic, is regarded as unalterable and Muslims believe it cannot be translated into other languages without some loss. The scripture should be experienced aurally in Arabic to achieve its fullest effect. So important is the sound of the text that scholars have developed a special science of it, called *tajwid* (perfection of recitation). Only around 15 per cent of Muslims worldwide speak Arabic. For the rest, the *Qur'an* is memorised phonetically so that it can be recited, even though they may not fully understand its meaning.

Shi'ite Muslims maintain that the *Qur'an* has two levels of meaning, one open to all and one safeguarded by God. The second meaning is only made known to those whom Allah has specially chosen, the *imams*, who had a familiar relationship with him, such as Ali (cousin and son-in-law) and the eleven *imams* who followed him.

The Sunnis approach the *Qur'an* differently, through the *Sunnah* (customs of Muhammad) recorded in many volumes. Six of these works were compiled around the tenth century and are considered authoritative sources concerning all aspects of the Prophet's life through stories, anecdotes and personal observations called the *Hadith* (tradition). According to the Sunnis, the only true interpreter of the *Qur'an* was the Prophet Muhammad. Special attention is therefore paid to the ways in which he put *Qur'anic* principles into practice in his life and teachings. The collections of the *Hadith* help to clarify and extend Muslims' understandings of the *Qur'an*. They also keep alive the memory of God's messenger as an example for all Muslims to follow.

Early *tafsir* (commentaries) written by learned Muslims such as al Tabari (d. 923), al Zamakhshari

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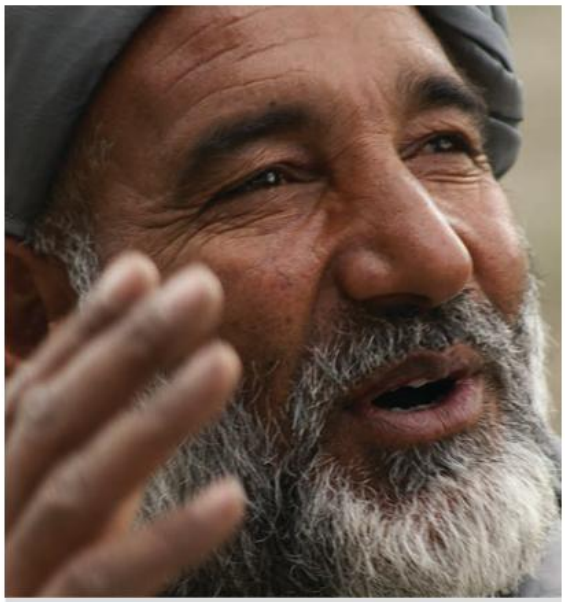

FIGURE 3.9
Many observant Muslims can recite the *Qur'an* from memory

(d. 1144), al-Razi (d. 1209) and al Baydawi (d. c. 1291) contain biographical information. They discuss the origins and grammatical structure and shades of meaning of Arabic words, give cross-references and offer general help in clarifying the teachings of the *Qur'an*. *Tafsir* takes two forms: **exegesis** based on tradition and exegesis based on reason.

Different scholars have different understandings of the Qur'anic text. Some treat the text literally and belong to the *zahiri* or literalist school. Others stress the symbolic meaning of Qur'anic verses and develop commentaries that belong to the *ta'wil* or allegorical school of interpretation. Sufis place emphasis on hidden meanings in the text and hence belong to the *batini* or hidden school of interpretation.

The *Qur'an* is not a narrative like the *Bible* and so it is not easy to follow a theme all in one place. Often a theme occurs in many different chapters so, for the teaching to be fully understood, all related verses need to be drawn together.

The *Qur'an* is treated with deep respect and it should never be put on the floor or any unclean surface. Many Muslims cover their heads when the *Qur'an* is read aloud or when they study the text and they often wash before handling a copy of the *Qur'an*.

Every Muslim has committed some verses of the *Qur'an* to memory for use during prayers and some memorise the whole of the *Qur'an*. When it is memorised, the person is given the title *hafiz* (feminine *hafizah*) which means 'guardian' because they 'carry the *Qur'an* in their heart'.

Islam is unique among the religions because it has only one text in its Canon. The *Qur'an* is tightly woven into Islamic life and practice.

Activity 3.7

Investigating, reasoning and judging

1 Why do Muslims consider it important to learn the *Qur'an* in Arabic?
2 Locate two translations of the *Qur'an*. Compare the same *surahs* from different translations. Explain what happens to the original words of any piece of writing when someone translates them into another language.

Christianity

The *Bible*, from the Greek phrase *ta biblia* meaning 'the books', contains the sacred texts of Christianity. It is a library of books written by different people and collected into two large groupings consisting of Hebrew scriptures (commonly called the Old Testament) and the Christian scriptures (or New Testament).

exegesis
critical explanation or analysis, especially of a text

The first part of the *Bible* appears to be common to Jews and Christians, although some of the stories are read and interpreted differently. Some Christians include seven extra books from the inter-testamental period as part of the Canon. Jews and Protestants recognise thirty-nine books written in Hebrew. Catholics include seven books that were written in Greek sometimes called 'apocryphal' or Deutro-Canonicals. The Christian scriptures contain twenty-seven books.

Scriptures	Protestant	Catholic
Hebrew	39	46
Christian	27	27

TABLE 3.1
Protestant and Catholic collations of scriptures compared

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FIGURE 3.10 The Christian scriptures

Although Christians use the Hebrew scriptures as part of their *Bible*, they divide these differently into the following four sections:

1 The Pentateuch (or Books of Law)
2 Books of History
3 Books of Poetry and Wisdom
4 Books of the Prophets.

The Pentateuch (*penta* equals five, five scrolls) contains the first five books of the *Bible*. The Books of History cover about six hundred years: from the time of the Judges to Kings. The last eighteen books, the Prophets, are books named after people who spoke out and encouraged the people to turn back to God. The Christian scriptures were written down during the seventy years after the death of Jesus and include the Gospels, or good news, of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John; the Acts of the Apostles and twenty-one letters largely ascribed to Saint Paul. The final book, Revelation, uses apocalyptic language.

The Canon of the Christian scriptures was first declared in 367 CE when Athanasius, the bishop of Alexandria, wrote in his Easter letter that these twenty-seven books were not only authoritative for Christians but were also inspired by God.

Gospels

The Gospels provide four versions of the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. These scriptures evolved from an oral tradition, a written source and an edited final version. The diversity of the four different Gospels adds richness to the 'truth' presented, rather than distorting it. The table below offers a perspective on the content of the four Gospels.

The Gospels are statements of faith, for people of faith and should be interpreted within that context,

Quelle a German word for 'source', probably referring to a collection of the sayings of Jesus

TABLE 3.2 Gospel content

	Mark	Matthew	Luke	John
Approximate date composed	65–70 CE	85–90 CE	80–90 CE	90–100 CE
Sources	• Early passion narratives • Popular and controversial stories • Accounts of the Last Supper • Parables • Apocalyptic writings.	Mark (all) + *Quelle* (Q) + Matthew (only).	Mark (all) + *Quelle* (Q) + Luke (only).	• Oral tradition • Knowledge of synoptics (Matthew, Mark and Luke).
Style	• Quick moving account • Not familiar with Palestinian geography • Storyteller.	• Writes using good Greek • Interested in teaching rather than action • More reflective style than Mark.	• Polished Greek • Observant of people's mannerisms	• Theological document • Use of allegories and symbolism • Emphasises community.

Goosen G. & Tomlinson M., Jesus, Mystery and Surprise, 1989

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rather than as an historical document. The Gospels hold a high status within Christianity, as can be seen during rituals or services.

Parables

Jesus did much of his teaching by using parables, which make up one-third of the Gospels. The word parable, from the Greek *parabole* and the Hebrew *mashal*, refers to a story or saying that presents an image that remains in a person's memory. Their literary form contributes to their impact and generally includes:

1 Repetition: imprinting the story on the minds of the listeners.
2 Contrast: pointing out significant elements in the story.
3 Folkloric threesome: the 'rule of three' is used to emphasise the point.
4 End stress: a technique used to achieve a climax at the end of the story.

Activity 3.8

Investigating

Examine the following parables. Identify the four characteristics of a parable within each one.

1 The Sower (Mark 4:3–8).
2 The Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11–32).
3 The Talents (Matthew 25:14–30).
4 Lazarus and Dives (Luke: 16:19–31).
5 The Mustard Seed (Mark 4:30–31).

Parables can also be classified as 'parables of advent', which develop a theme into the future; 'parables of reversal', which turn conventional expectations upside down; and 'parables of action', which require making decisions and taking firm action.

Activity 3.9

Reasoning

Classify the parables above using the categories of advent, reversal or action. Provide a reason for your choice and support it with evidence.

Miracles

Miracle stories feature prominently in the Gospels. There are two main types of miracles described, nature miracles and healing miracles.

Nature miracles are used to demonstrate Jesus' power over the natural world. Healing miracles describe instances where Jesus is reported to have cured physical ailments such as leprosy, blindness or paralysis. Healing miracles generally follow a very stylised pattern:

- a description of the person and the illness
- the method used to cure the person and the cure performed
- the acclaim of the people at the cure's success
- an expression of praise of God.

The miracles of Jesus are not proof of his divinity; rather they are interpreted by believers as signs of God's action in the world.

Activity 3.10

Investigating

Examine the following miracle stories to see if they are consistent with the pattern provided.

1 The Mute Man (Matthew 9:32–34).
2 Restoring the Withered Hand (Luke 6:6–11).
3 Cleansing a Leper (Mark 1:40–45).
4 The Infirm Woman (Luke 13:10–17).
5 Sick man at Bethesda (John 5:1–9).

Epistles

Christian scriptures also contain epistles. Epistles are letters written to communities that the disciples of Jesus visited. These were intended to strengthen the community's spirituality after the disciples had left.

Each of the letters provides an insight into the beliefs and practices of the early Christians. The majority of the epistles carry the name of Paul, who converted to Christianity from Judaism. Paul was a missionary and his many journeys are reflected in the 13 letters that have been attributed to him.

The letters, written in Greek over approximately a ten-year period from the 40s–50s CE, were meant to encourage people in their faith. Paul's letters follow

FACT

Apocalyptic literature is used in both the Hebrew and Christian scriptures and refers to a style of writing which focuses on the end times and uses graphic images.

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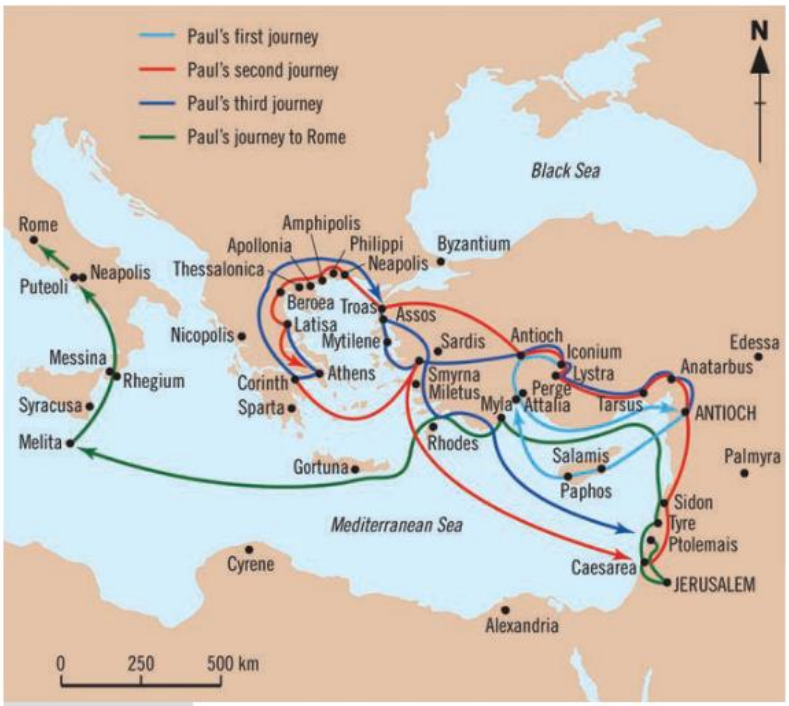

FIGURE 3.11
As this map shows, Paul was tireless in his travels over the lands of the eastern Mediterranean

a particular literary style including the name of the sender and the recipient, greetings to the recipient, the body of the letter, a prayer for the recipient and a closing greeting.

Activity 3.11

Investigating and reasoning

Read Paul's letter to Philemon.

1 Analyse the letter. List the verses which contain the:
   - a name of the sender
   - b name of the recipient
   - c greetings to the recipient
   - d the body of the letter
   - e a prayer for the recipient
   - f closing greeting.

The book of Revelation, probably written towards the end of the first century, has an apocalyptic style. Some of the literary features include dreams or visions, conversations between the revealer and the author and an emphasis on the end of the world. The apocalyptic nature of the book should be taken into account when reading Revelation, to avoid a literal interpretation.

Since the Reformation, Christians have been able to read the *Bible* in **vernacular**. Most Christians consider these translations to be true, only referring to Greek or early versions to clarify or improve their understanding. Most Christian denominations encourage the use of biblical commentaries and contemporary exegesis as aids to interpreting scripture and value the continuing contribution of scholarship.

vernacular a language or dialect native to a region or country rather than a literary, cultured, or foreign language

mandalas Hindu or Buddhist graphic symbols of the Universe

Oral traditions and sacred texts

Religions which depend on oral traditions tend to express themselves and transfer their sacred stories through body painting, masks, tattoos, carvings, rock paintings, ritual objects and even sand paintings.

Dances, for instance, tell significant stories. Masks also have religious significance. When a dancer is wearing a mask, the dancer not only represents the spirit but is thought to become the spirit.

Statues and paintings also record sacred stories. Some cultures use totem poles to depict animals, birds and people representing kinship groups. These have special meanings for individuals and family groups.

Feathers can also play a part in some oral religions because of their powerful association with flight and the world beyond the present. Another important art, which often has religious meaning, is weaving, basketry and clothing decoration. The colour and imagery of these arts are closely linked to nature deities or tribal lore. Many such sacred texts are not permanent. Sand paintings and some ***mandalas***, for example, are made and then destroyed as part of a ritual.

Indigenous Australians tell and record their sacred stories in a variety of ways. Many communities use dance, body painting, song and rhythm sticks to accompany a corroboree, which may tell an ancient story or explain tribal lore. Other communities record their sacred stories in sand paintings, rock art or dot paintings. Each Indigenous group, depending where they are located, record their texts in different ways and via different media.

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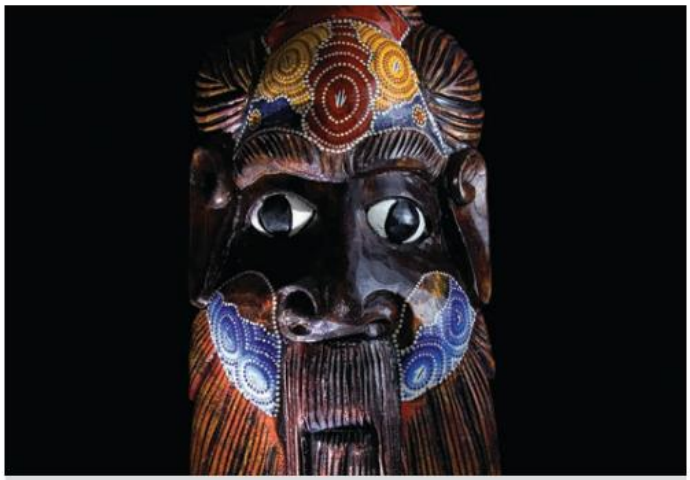

FIGURE 3.12
Indigenous Australians pass on their sacred stories orally and through body painting, carvings and rock paintings

FIGURE 3.14
Totem poles at Broken Hill, NSW

FIGURE 3.13
Dance and mask wearing is an important component of spirituality in Papua New Guinea

FIGURE 3.15
A sand *mandala*

Ways of reading and interpreting sacred texts

Sacred texts are ancient texts that record the faith of the communities from which they emerge. They are often written versions of oral traditions translated from ancient languages. They are derived from cultures very different from the ones we live in today.

In Study of Religion we not only read sacred texts, but also interpret and analyse them. You can use the analytical approaches outlined in this chapter as tools to help you to understand how to read a range of texts, understand their structure and interpret their meanings. The analytical approaches outlined in this chapter were originally developed to assist interpretation of the Christian *Bible* and while they could be applied to sacred texts from other religious traditions, it is not common practice to do so.

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FIGURE 3.16
Studying texts

Exegetical tools

The technical term for textual analysis is 'exegesis', meaning a systematic study of a passage using a range of methods. An associated term is **hermeneutics**. Insights drawn from history, cultural studies and other applicable disciplines should also be part of the interpretative process.

Exegesis can be considered from two points of view: synchronic (with time) and diachronic (through time).

hermeneutics
a method or principle of interpretation

synchronic approaches
a linguistic approach that views linguistic phenomena only at one point in time, usually the present

discourse analysis
a general term for a number of approaches to analysing written, spoken or signed language use

Synchronic approaches

Synchronic approaches begin with the final form of the text, acknowledging that the text has a long history of development. Using the tools of structural linguistics, we examine how the text is structured, how words are used in sentences and how these sentences form larger sections. With a biblical text, for example, we may examine it in the light of Greek or Hebrew literature and grammar at the time it was written. Reading a biblical passage as literature means that we approach the text in a similar way to other texts. We decide what genre or form it is in so that we can read it appropriately. For example, reading poetry requires a different mindset than reading a political speech or an historical text.

Linguistic approaches

Discourse analysis

Discourse analysis, developed in the 1970s, is a useful way of examining a biblical passage because it enables us to explain how we read a text, understand the ways in which it is organised and what it means. The best way to understand discourse analysis is to use it.

Locate an electronic copy of the story of Sarah and Hagar in Genesis 16:1–6.

1 Highlight the main verbs (action words) in the text. Identifying the verbs draws our attention to key actions within the passage.
2 Divide the text so that one verb is in each line.
3 Mark up the linguistic structure of the passage:
   – Separate the lines that stand on their own as complete statements.
   – Underline the subject (the doer of the action) of each sentence (notice changes in subject).
4 Use different colours to mark repeated words and phrases.

Below is a sample of what your analysis will look like.

Now Sarai, Abram's wife, bore him no children.
She had an Egyptian slave-girl
whose name was Hagar,
and Sarai said to Abram,
'You see that the Lord has prevented me from
bearing children;
go in to my slave-girl;
it may be
that I shall obtain children by her.'
And Abram listened to the voice of Sarai.

For a more detailed analysis, refer to Worksheet 3.27 on the Student CD-ROM.

Discourse analysis enables us to identify themes, subjects and actions and assists us in understanding the text. It does not, however, provide us with information as to why this text was significant for earlier readers.

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Literary approaches

Literary approaches are helpful because they enable readers to see patterns within and between books. When we do this we ask questions such as:

- Where is this text located within the *Bible*?
- What genre is used? What effect does this have? What types of narrative techniques are used? Is the sequence of events significant?
- What persuasive strategies are used?

Narrative criticism

Narrative criticism concentrates on the story being told and includes a wide range of reader-centred approaches, such as reader response criticism, feminist criticism and political criticism.

Narrative criticism invites readers to question the way the story is told and from whose perspective. This type of criticism encourages readers to note how they are positioned as readers. The following headings are useful for such analysis.

Events

- Ordering
- Length
  - Links
- Where and when?

Characters

- Who?
- What happens?
- who is important?
- minor characters and role? motivation?

Narrator

- Whose voice?
- What values?
- Is the narrator's perspective reliable?

Literary form

- What literary devices are used to tell the story?

Implied readers and the narrative world

- Who are they?
- How should they read?

Activity 3.12

Investigating, reasoning and judging

Apply narrative criticism to the following texts:

1 Birth of Jesus in Luke 2:1–20; Matthew 1:18–2:12.
2 The Journey to Emmaus in Luke 24:13–32.

Diachronic approaches

Diachronic approaches examine text through time and look for the changes that have appeared. However, readers should use synchronic approaches first, so that the text has been read carefully. Questions to ask include:

- How did the text get to its present form?
- What influenced the formation?
- How has the text been edited?

Ideally, we would read the *Bible* in Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek to uncover its meaning. However, much information from biblical commentaries regarding how Hebrew or Greek words are used may assist us in interpretation and analysis.

In Genesis 2:4–7, for example, the Hebrew word for earth is *adamah;* so the Hebrew *adam* refers to a creature made from the earth. This earth creature is both male and female and does not refer to man (Adam). Only later in Genesis is *adam* divided into *ish* (male) and *ishah* (female). Knowledge of even these few Hebrew words enables the reader to interpret the text in a very different way. Various translations of the *Bible* exist and it is often useful to work with more than one translation.

Activity 3.13

Investigating and reasoning

Read the four translations of Genesis 1 available on the Student CD-ROM and complete the questions.

1 What aspects of the four translations of Genesis 1:27–28 are similar?
2 Using the four translations of Genesis 1:27–28, highlight any differences.
3 What can you conclude from a textual analysis of these translations?
4 How does the use of inclusive language change the text? In what way does it make the text more accessible?
5 Which translation of the texts do you prefer? Why?

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Textual criticism

source criticism a type of biblical criticism that looks for evidence of written sources

Textual criticism aims to reconstruct the original working of the text and to trace its history and development to the present day. This is one of the oldest forms of biblical criticism and offers ways of examining how biblical texts have been copied and recopied and how they were read in earlier periods. Textual criticism does not deal with variations in translation, but is concerned with deciding which versions of manuscripts are more likely to reflect the original written text.

Activity 3.14

Investigating

Using a New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) of the *Bible* (one that includes study or footnotes), compare the Lord's Prayer in Luke 11:2–4 with that in Matthew 6:9-13 and the Lord's Prayer as it is commonly said.

Form criticism

form criticism a type of biblical criticism that studies the patterns of biblical texts and classifies them according to literary forms and genres

Form criticism studies the patterns of biblical texts and classifies them according to the literary forms and genres. This method attempts to go behind the text to trace its history to the oral tradition. Form critics ask how this word or story was passed on or modified prior to its final written form. They are not trying to get to the original version but are looking at the *Sitz im Leben* (German for 'life situation') which shaped it.

The following four steps may be used as a guide for applying form criticism:

1 Decide the beginning and end of the text and how it is structured.
2 Determine the genre/s used. Historical commentaries will assist with this.
3 Consider the literary, historical and social settings of the text.
4 Decide how this information assists you to think about the oral tradition of the text.

Form criticism is a useful tool of exegesis but it should not be the only method used to analyse a sacred text.

Source criticism

Like form criticism, **source criticism** has a long tradition as a type of biblical criticism that looks for evidence of written sources. When an original written source is found, often it has quite a different character from the passage in which it is now embedded, so the reader can question why a passage with different views has been incorporated.

Activity 3.15

Investigating, reasoning and judging

Locate the following Gospel passages of the story of the Plucking Grain on the Sabbath: refer to Matthew 12:1–8; Mark 2:23–28; and Luke 5:12–16.

1 Paste the three versions of the story into three parallel columns.
2 Highlight in yellow all the words common to all three versions.
3 Highlight in green all words that are common to two versions only.
4 What conclusion can you draw based on the evidence you have gathered?
5 In the same way, complete the Cleansing of the Leper recorded in Matthew 8:1–4; Mark 1:4–45 and Luke 5:12–16.
6 Develop a hypothesis based on your findings.

Redaction criticism

Redaction criticism emerged as a reaction against form criticism, which tended to break the *Bible* into small sections. This approach asks the reader to look at the text as a whole and examine in particular, evidence of the final editor. Redaction critics use two forms of analysis. First, they compare the work of the evangelist with the sources to identify a consistent pattern across the material. Second, they analyse the evangelist's arrangement of the material, which often reveals their perspective and insights.

Impact history

Another approach that looks outside the text is impact history. The approach looks at what the text has meant

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to people over time and how the text has been received and influenced human life.

Activity 3.16

Investigating, reasoning and judging

1 Read the story of Delilah in Judges 16:4–22. The Delilah we know is a montage of images from art, music, film, literature and common parlance.
2 Look up the word Delilah in a dictionary.
3 Research the story of Delilah in a contemporary biblical commentary.
4 Complete the following sentences, which begin with alternate assumptions about Delilah. What alternative readings of the text might be offered?
   a If we presume that she is a Philistine …
   b If we presume that she is a prostitute …
5 What image of Delilah is presented in paintings, film and song?
6 How do these other interpretations influence our reading of the biblical text?

Reader response criticism

Reader response criticism recognises the place of the reader in interpreting texts. As a reader, we bring to the text who we are, our background, life experience, culture, nationality, gender and previous exposures to the text.

Feminist criticism

The Bible, because it is a text written by men for men, often presents a hierarchal model of relationships and even omits women from the narratives. Also, we read texts as gendered people so that when men and women read texts of freedom or friendship, their understanding is nuanced by differing experiences of freedom or friendship. Women who have experienced oppression read the Bible with less expectation of liberation partly because of how stories of women are presented.

Feminist interpretations of sacred texts are often characterised by:

- focusing on women's experience
- drawing attention to gaps and silences in the text and to the role of marginal characters
- exposing violence against women within texts and interpretations of texts
- willingness to apply a variety of methods to critique sacred texts
- using non-biblical sources to critique biblical texts
- collaborating with other interpreters.

Feminist scholars critique the **androcentric** and patriarchal nature of the Hebrew and Christian scriptures, which sometimes describe females as 'other' and the opposite of males. In the Christian and Hebrew scriptures, for example, God is frequently presented as male and male figures dominate texts and matrilineal genealogies (female bloodlines).

androcentric
male centred

Activity 3.17

Investigating and reasoning

1 Read the following texts from the Christian scriptures and identify male-centred and patriarchal elements contained in them.
   a Mark 5:25–34.
   b Timothy 2:11–15.
   c Matthew 1:1–17.
2 Now read Acts 1:15–26, substituting female terms for male terms.

reader response criticism
an approach which emphasises the reader's role in creating meaning

In many ways, biblical scholarship has also been androcentric and patriarchal because it has failed to explore how gender is constructed. Feminist interpretations of sacred texts do not privilege the text or any particular retelling. Rather, they question how stories of biblical women are presented and how gender ideology of the biblical text can be challenged. Feminist readings are not neutral readings. They challenge people with counter-readings of texts. When stories of women are uncovered and explored through a feminist lens, a very different interpretation is possible.

To achieve this, a hermeneutics of suspicion needs to be applied when reading sacred texts in order to discover the effects of patriarchy on both the author and the interpretation of scriptures through time. When reading with a hermeneutics of suspicion, we look for hidden clues, gaps and silences and alternative interpretations.

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Activity 3.18

Investigating, reasoning and judging

Fact File: What do the scriptures say about Mary Magdalene? Complete the Fact File on Mary Magdalene on Worksheet 3.18 on the Student CD-ROM. Answer the questions that accompany the Fact File.

Activity 3.19

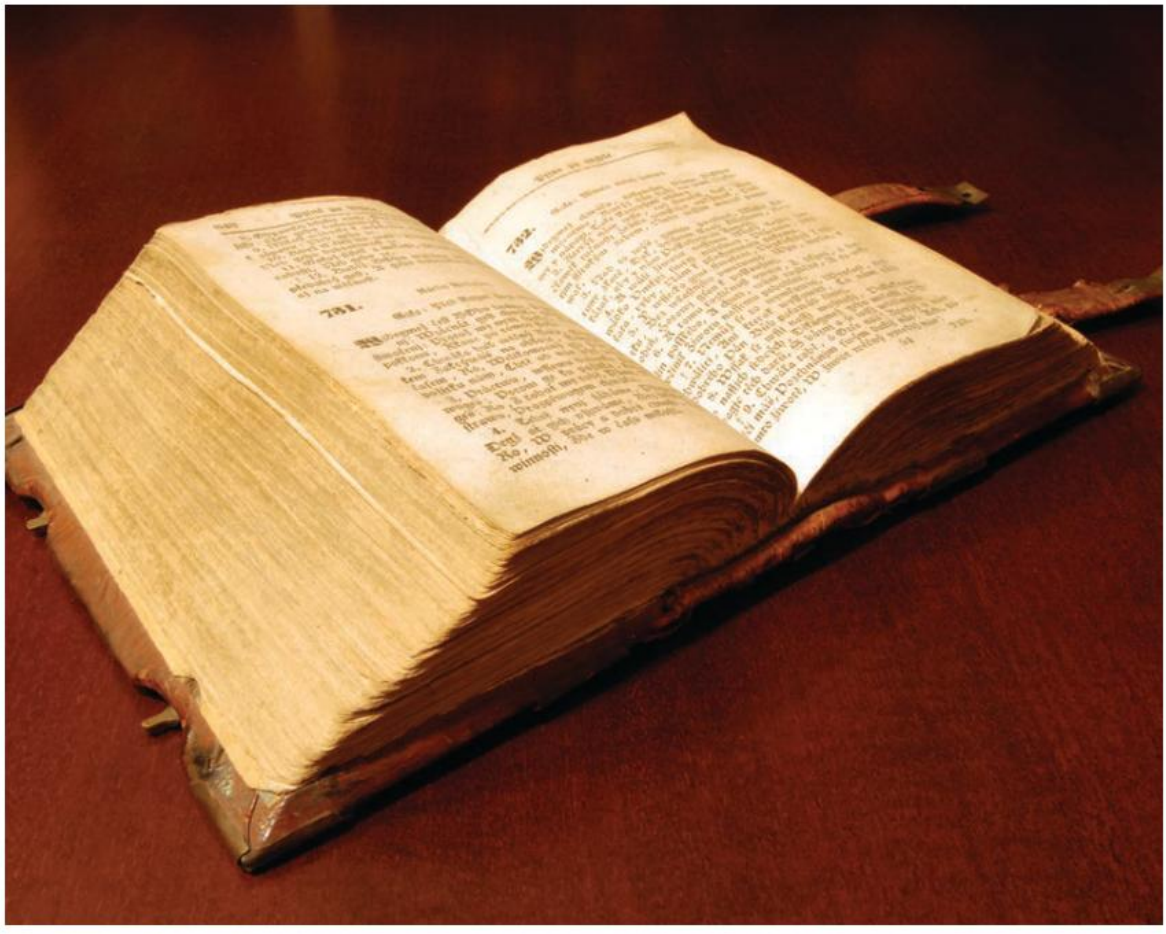
Judging

Evaluate and compare each of the methods of biblical exegesis using one of the following:

- SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) Analysis
- Compare and Contrast chart
- PMI (Plus, Minus, Interesting) chart
- Multiple Venn diagram
- De Bono's Six Thinking Hats.

Conclusion

Sacred texts serve many functions. A number record the story and teaching of religious founders, the history of a people and the faith journey of early followers. Some clearly delineate doctrines and teachings and provide guidelines for living. Other texts are used for ritual and prayer and some even uplift the spirit. By using a variety of approaches when analysing these texts, we gain valuable insights into the meaning of the text and can read texts anew.



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End of chapter activities

Activity 3.20

Framing

1 Create a collage or mind map of different kinds of texts found on the internet.
2 Draw a table with four columns. In the first column, list different types of writing. In the second, list the people who use this kind of text. In the third, list the uses to which the text might be put. In the fourth, list some of the features of this kind of text.
3 Write your insights in sentences beginning with the words 'A sacred text is like … because …' and 'A sacred text is not like … because …'.
4 Study newspaper and magazine articles and create a mind map of views about what constitutes good news.
5 Begin a glossary of terms for the sacred texts you are studying.

Activity 3.21

Investigating

This chapter has surveyed the sacred texts of the major world religions.

1 Find out the names of the sacred texts of three other religions.
2 Give a brief explanation of the nature of each text or set of texts.
3 What rituals or practices exist in the major world religions that demonstrate followers' respect for their sacred texts?
4 Modern Western culture relies heavily on the written word and people's access to ideas in written form has repeatedly sparked social change.
   a Collect referenced notes about the link between the printing press and the Protestant Reformation.
   b Then, construct an expository paragraph with a topic sentence, elaboration, evidence and a concluding sentence to present your findings.

Activity 3.22

Investigating and reasoning

1 Estimate how many copies of the *Bible* are sold each year. Then, using the internet, find out three other estimates of how many are sold.
2 Which do you think is the most accurate estimate and why?
3 Why do you think the *Bible* is a 'bestseller'?

Activity 3.23

Reasoning

1 Choose one of the religions explored in this chapter. Design a diagram clearly showing how a number of sacred texts, or parts of one sacred text, are grouped to form a sacred body of work.
2 Consider a building with which you are familiar (this could be a religious building, school building or a civic building). Sketch it, then annotate the sketch to show how the building displays its purpose and illustrates its traditions.
3 Transformation of text: choose a text from those referred to in the chapter, or use one provided by your teacher and transform it into a different genre while retaining its underlying theme and message.

CHAPTER REVIEW

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CHAPTER REVIEW

Activity 3.24

Reasoning and judging

What criteria do you think are applied to texts to determine whether they become part of a Canon? What criteria do you think should be applied?

Activity 3.25

Judging

1 'Ancient texts have little to offer people in the twenty-first century.' Write one or both sides of the argument that might emerge when debating this statement, using examples and evidence to support your point/s of view.
2 Which mode of communication (e.g. written, oral, visual or physical) do you think is most useful for communicating deep religious truths and why? Give examples to support your opinion.
3 Drawing on the tools of reader response criticism, write a letter to a character in a sacred text communicating your interpretation and opinion of that character's actions. You may wish to point out to the character the significance the text holds for you because of your gender, class or ethnicity.

Activity 3.26

Reflecting

1 What have I discovered about sacred texts?
2 What have I learned about religion as a result of this inquiry?
3 How is this area of inquiry relevant to my life?
4 What further questions do I have?

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CHAPTER REVIEW

Ethnographic investigation: sacred texts

For an overview of the ethnographic investigation section of the course, refer to page x.

Investigation 3.1

This investigation might be used at the beginning of a course in Study of Religion. You may present your findings in a multi-modal presentation, essay, report, or feature article.

Framing

Revisit what you have learned about sacred texts so far. You should have already followed an inquiry process focused on the nature, role and significance of sacred texts in one or more religions and learned different ways of reading and interpreting sacred texts. In this ethnographic investigation, you will consolidate, apply and expand this knowledge and understanding.

1 Consider who might be a suitable subject or subjects to interview. They need to be adherents of a religion and have at least some knowledge of that religion's sacred texts. Alternatively, watch a documentary about followers of a religion.
2 Before the interview, research the sacred texts of the interviewee's religion and the religion's teachings about how the text should be used or read. Select, gather and record this information in an organised manner.
3 Plan your approach to, and timeframe for, this learning activity.

Investigating and reasoning

Devise open-ended questions in order to elicit the most useful data on the following areas of consideration (and others if you wish).

1 Whether the interviewee uses the sacred texts of their religion.
2 What texts the interviewee uses, for what purposes and how they are used.
3 Whether the interviewee values written, visual, oral or physical texts more and why?
4 What the interviewee sees as being of value in their sacred texts.
5 What knowledge the interviewee has of the sacred texts of other religions.
6 Whether there is anything they see as being of value in the sacred texts of other traditions.
7 Whether they think there is anything in common between their religion's sacred texts and those of other religions.
8 How the teachings and stories of their religion's sacred texts are communicated via other modes, (for example calligraphy, music, stained glass windows, films, symbolism, action, writing, art …) and what the interviewee thinks about the value of this.

Interview your subject and take detailed notes. You may wish to ask for permission to record the interview. If you do so, etiquette would demand that you provide a copy of the transcript to the interviewee for approval afterwards. Organise your notes and see whether there are any connections between the interview data and your background research. Carry out further research if necessary.

Reasoning

If you have interviewed more than one person, what are the differences and similarities between the way they use and interpret their sacred texts?

Judging

Draw conclusions about how your interviewee/s relate to the sacred texts of their religions and other religions. For example, does your interviewee read or use their sacred text/s in a traditional/conservative or innovative/radical way?

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Investigation 3.2

This might be used later in a Study of Religion course (Year 12) when skills in evaluative processes are more highly developed. You may present your findings in a multi-modal presentation, essay, report or feature article.

Framing

1 Revisit your learning about sacred texts so far.
2 Plan your approach to and timeframe for this learning activity.
3 Consider what ritual might be best to visit for this ethnographic investigation.

Investigating

1 Carefully choose a religious ritual to attend or choose someone to interview about a ritual they have taken part in.
2 Research the sacred texts of the relevant religion and information about the ritual to inform yourself before the observation. Select, gather and record your information in an organised manner.
3 Prepare to view a documentary of the ritual, or conduct the interview, to discover the extent to which the ritual and the religion's sacred texts are congruent (i.e. how much they 'agree' with each other).
4 Devise research questions to help gather evidence so you can make your judgment. For example, how are sacred texts used during the ritual? How are aspects of the ritual based on instructions or stories within the religion's sacred texts?
5 View the documentary of the ritual or conduct the interview and take detailed notes.

Reasoning

1 Organise your notes looking for connections between the religion's sacred texts and the ritual you observed or heard about.
2 Carry out further research if necessary.
3 Plan your response

Reasoning and judging

1 To what extent did this ritual reflect the sacred texts of its religion?
2 What similarities and differences exist between this ritual and other rituals of its type (e.g. other Hindu weddings)?
3 Are these similarities or contrasts due to the way the ritual used, or drew upon, sacred texts or are there other reasons for the similarities and differences?

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CHAPTER FOUR

ULTIMATE QUESTIONS

'Being religious means asking passionately the question of the meaning of our existence and being willing to receive answers, even if the answers hurt.'

Paul Tillich

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

This chapter discusses:

- Considering religion
- How did the Universe begin?
- Why do people suffer?
- What happens after death?
- What is the common good?
- Seeking answers

KEY terms

religion	suffering	polytheism	afterlife
science	*mysterium tremendum et fascinans*	quantum theory	common good
animism		mortality	spiritual quest
creation	monotheism		

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imponderable unable to be weighed up or evaluated with exactness

religion a personal or institutionalised set of attitudes, beliefs and practices which may include a system of prayers and religious laws

science knowledge, or a system of knowledge, or the operation of general laws, especially obtained and tested through scientific methods

Introduction

Have you ever been annoyed by someone asking: 'Why has this happened?', 'Why me?' or 'Why is it so?' Even when we seem to answer the question, another occurs and they ask 'why' again. Yet we never really stop asking questions. **Imponderable** questions come back to us time and again and, just when we think we have a workable answer, something else happens and another aspect occurs to us.

People have been asking some of these questions for centuries, such as: 'Why am I here?', 'Why do people die?', 'Why are the good rewarded and the bad punished?', 'What do I believe in?', 'Can I survive on my own?' and 'Do I need community?'

Philosophers and theologians spend a lifetime pondering such questions deeply. Bookstores are well stocked with commercially oriented 'self-help' books, however, many people find that **religion** provides satisfactory answers or explanations.

Let's explore some of life's imponderable questions together.

Activity 4.1

Framing

1 Create a graffiti wall of 'ultimate questions'.
2 In a group, create a list of 10 'ultimate questions' and, for each question, make a note of more than one answer proposed by disciplines such as science, religion, psychology or philosophy.
3 Name one popular 'self-help' publication or author and explain how they seek to answer ultimate questions in their work.
4 Write your own account of a time when you were puzzled by an 'ultimate question'.

In earlier times when less was known of **science**, religious observance was seen as a way of controlling the elements, bringing good fortune or at least warding off ill fortune and especially in gaining good harvests from crops. Despite advances in science and learning, people still pray that all will be well and their basic needs will be met.

Through religion, we are also often challenged to look outside ourselves to the needs of others, particularly the poor and disadvantaged. At times,

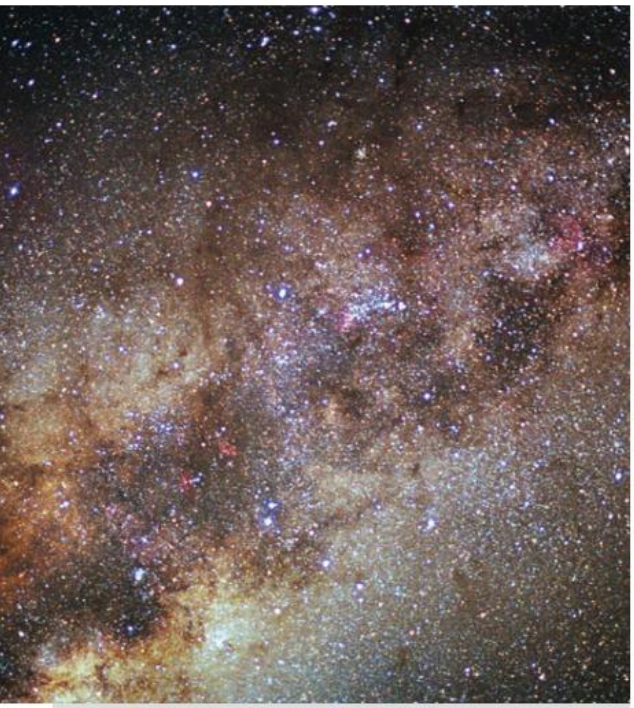

FIGURE 4.1
The vastness of the Universe can sometimes prompt us to ask imponderable questions of ourselves

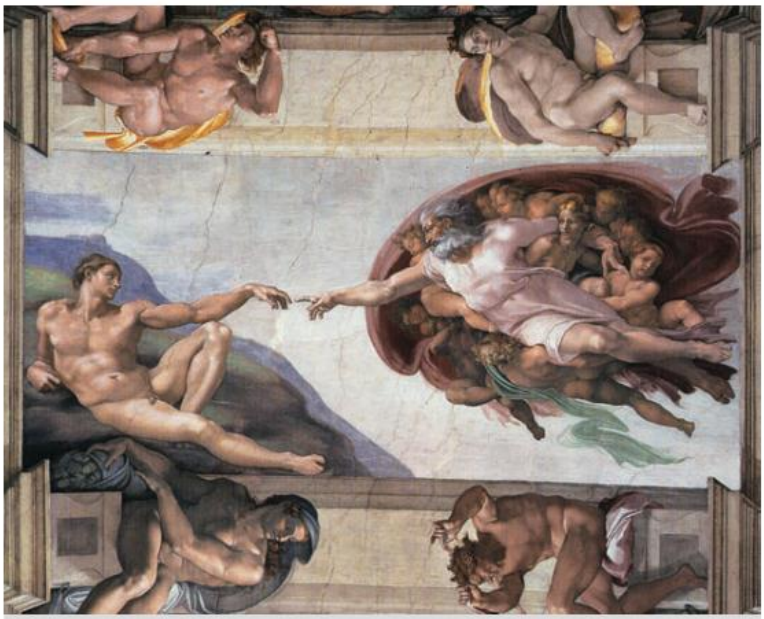

FIGURE 4.2
Creation of Adam, by Michelangelo, was commissioned in 1508 by Pope Julius II. It is a representation of the creation of humankind.

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religions might even invite us to think of the social and political structures that cause injustice and oppression.

Religion can also inspire creativity in the fields of art, music and architecture by encouraging us to appreciate the wonder of the world around us. Some religious traditions, aware of the power of the arts to evoke emotion and to teach truths that touch the human condition, have even been patrons of the arts. Indeed, in earlier stages of Western civilisation, the only art that was commissioned was religious.

Considering religion

Some early discussions on how religions developed centred on people's fear of the elements and of those aspects of life that could not be controlled. The world was sometimes seen as being inhabited by spirits that were often capricious and so had to be appeased. This is an approach the English anthropologist E. B. Tylor (1832–1917) took, while James Frazer (1854–1941), a Scottish anthropologist, saw religion as a stage between believing in magic and science in his classic text, *The Golden Bough* (1922). Today we do not agree with his inaccurate description of Aboriginal civilisations. Consider whether his conclusion is justified as you read the following extract:

> The conclusion which we have thus reached deductively from a consideration of the fundamental ideas of magic and religion is confirmed inductively by the observation that among the aborigines of Australia, magic is universally practised, whereas religion in the sense of a propitiation or conciliation of the higher powers seems to be nearly unknown. Roughly speaking, all men in Australia are magicians, but not one is a priest; everybody fancies he can influence his fellows or the course of nature by sympathetic magic, but nobody dreams of propitiating gods by prayer and sacrifice.
>
> But if in the most backward state of human society now known to us we find magic thus conspicuously present and religion conspicuously absent, may we not reasonably conjecture that the civilised races of the world have also at some period of their history passed through a similar intellectual phase, that they attempted to force the great powers of nature to do their pleasure before they thought of courting their favour by offerings and prayer – in short that, just as on the material side of human culture there has everywhere been an Age of Stone, so on the intellectual side there has everywhere been an Age of Magic?
>
> *The Golden Bough*, Chapter 4, Section 10.11

The full text of *The Golden Bough* is available at: www.bartleby.com.

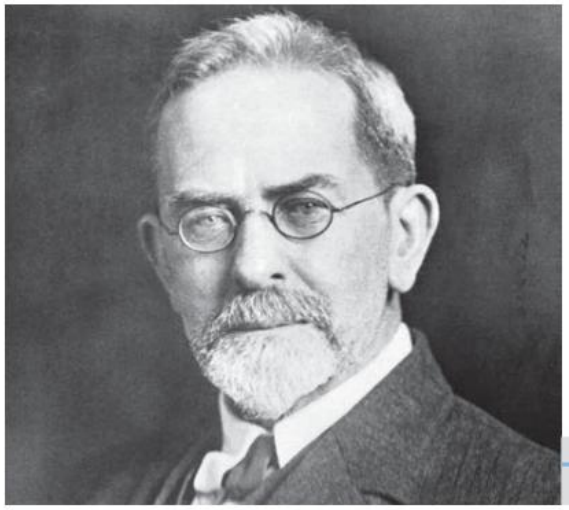

FIGURE 4.3
James Frazer

Activity 4.2

Investigating, reasoning and judging

Answer the following questions in response to this extract from *The Golden Bough*.

1. List words and phrases employed by Frazer that imply that Aboriginal culture is 'less than' European culture.
2. Increased understanding allows us to refute the claim that 'religion is nearly unknown' in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture. Explain how this is so.
3. Construct a Venn diagram showing the unique and shared attributes of religion and magic.
4. How might a twenty-first century atheist develop Frazer's hypothesis?
5. How might a twenty-first century scholar of religion refute Frazer's hypothesis?

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FIGURE 4.4
Sigmund Freud

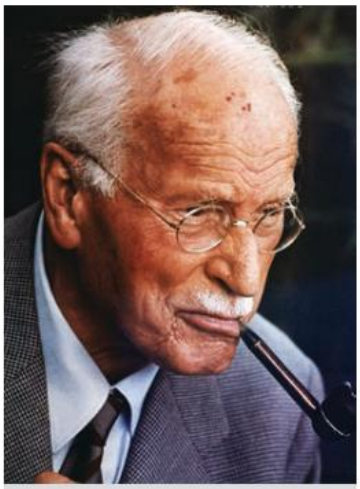

FIGURE 4.5
Carl Jung

FIGURE 4.6
A *mandala*

Sigmund Freud (1856–1939), the founder of psychoanalysis, spoke of religion as the adult's way of dealing with fear and insecurity. He argued that it is a process that parallels the way people related to their parents or other powerful figures when they were young. Freud theorised that religion would decline as people became better acquainted with science and gained greater security.

Psychologist William James (1842–1910) saw religion as growing out of psychological need. James viewed religion as a positive way of filling needs and praised its positive influence on people's lives. He wrote that religion brings excitement to living and gives a sense of security and of being in harmony with the world.

In *The Idea of the Holy,* Rudolf Otto (1869–1937) argued that religion is a response to what people experience as essentially mysterious. He called it the ***mysterium tremendum et fascinans.*** He recognised that people live with wonder every day but sometimes what happens is so unusual that it disturbs us. In general, we take our existence for granted, but occasionally something happens that is beyond the ordinary – this is what Otto referred to as mysterious or 'numinous awe'. Coping with death, especially of a family member, may be an example of this.

Carl Jung (1875–1961), a psychoanalyst, considered religion derived from personal need. He viewed many religious symbols as signs of integration and wholeness – symbols such as the circle, the cross and the *mandala,* which features both circle and square. It is interesting to note the current interest in the ancient labyrinth, which leads the pray-er in quiet reflection to the centre and out again. Jung considered that this process assisted many to make sense of their place in the Universe.

Scholars have made a number of attempts to identify 'stages' in the development of religions. William Schmidt (1868–1954) argued that all humankind once believed in a single high God and that to this **monotheism** (belief in one God) later beliefs in lesser gods and spirits were added. The reverse has also been suggested, namely that **polytheism** (belief in many gods) led to monotheism.

Whether religion evolved from **animism** to polytheism to monotheism is difficult to establish. What is easier to confirm is that most people in the history of the world developed some form of religion.

mysterium tremendum et fascinans
mystery that causes trembling and fascination (from Latin)

monotheism
a belief in only one god

polytheism
a belief in many (*poly*) gods (*theos*)

animism
a belief that spirits inhabit nature and have influence over people and natural events

Activity 4.3

Investigating and reasoning

Using information from the text along with information gathered from your own research, complete the table on Worksheet 4.3 about the theorists discussed above.

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How did the Universe begin?

What religions say

Many ancient peoples told stories that explained how the world came into being. Religious traditions also have such stories, which explain how their god or gods came into being and how the world and human beings came to exist. Frequently, these stories grew out of different lived realities. People living in violent societies, for instance, had a **creation** story that mirrored this violence. The Assyrian/Babylon creation story below is an example.

Enuma Elish, the oldest creation account, was written at about 1800 BCE on seven tablets that total about 700 lines. The story says the gods arise from the primal deep or chaos – the great deep. Conflict leads to a battle between Marduk, god of the city of Babylon, and Tiamat, the great serpent of the sea. Tiamat is beaten but from her body earth and sky are made. Humans are formed from the blood of her general Kingu and are told to till the earth to grow food for the gods. In this Babylonian epic, humanity is born of chaos and conflict and this appears to characterise the human condition.

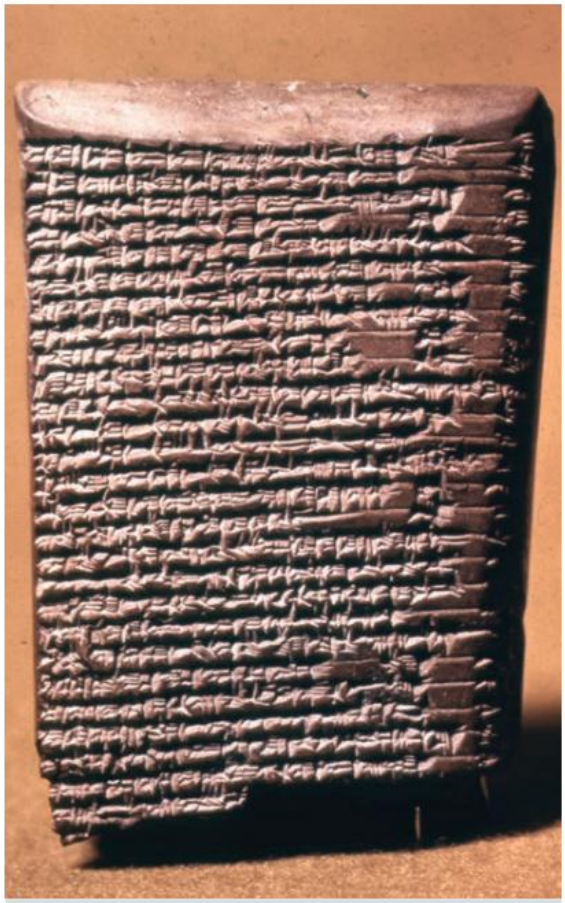

FIGURE 4.7
Enuma Elish

Below is a translated excerpt from *Enuma Elish.*

> When on high heaven was not named,
> And the earth beneath did not yet bear a name,
> And the primeval Apsû, who begat them,
> And chaos, Tiamat, the mother of them both,
> Their waters were mingled together,
> And no field was formed, no marsh was to be seen;
> When of the gods none had been called into being.

For a full translation of *Enuma Elish* visit: www.sacred-texts.com/ane/enuma.htm.

creation
the act of making, inventing, or producing

The Jewish account of creation recorded in the Book of Genesis (1:1–2:3) also talks about the great deep or chaos. In the Jewish account, the Universe is created because God commands it. Nevertheless, there is a hint of the formless void in Genesis 1:2.

> In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.
> Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.
> And God said, 'Let there be light,' and there was light.

Although the biblical account reflects something of the Babylonian epic, in Genesis, God is personal. God creates order by command and the creation is good or beautiful. In fact, the repetition of good or beautiful may indicate that God creates the Universe

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because it is good or beautiful (Genesis 1:31). At each stage of creation, God reflects on the work as an object of contemplation.

Activity 4.4

Investigating and reasoning

Read Genesis (1:1–2:3).

1 List any repeated phrases.
2 List what is created each day.
3 What does God say at the conclusion of each day?
4 Summarise the main ideas communicated by this text in a series of dot points.

The Babylonian and Jewish accounts are not in agreement on whether creation occurs by chance or purpose. In the Babylonian mythic poem, the gods materialise and achieve power, as if by chance. Chance plays an important role in the gods' decision making, suggesting that they should be appeased to ensure the good fortune of humanity.

In the biblical story, the Universe is created with the conscious intention to bring goodness and beauty into being. In this telling, what occurs is more ordered and structured. Humans do not emerge from chaotic circumstances, but are created in God's image.

The biblical view of origins, even though it is **mythopoetic** in form, is easier to comprehend than *Enuma Elish*. Its main claim is that creation is ordered by God, who sees what is created and declares it to be good.

Nevertheless, at least three aspects of the biblical account have been questioned:

1 The innate goodness of the Universe – some people have difficulty believing that the world is good because of the pain and **suffering** they see around them
2 The reason the Universe exists – this has been questioned in light of how much space exists beyond Earth and because, according to current scientific evidence, the Universe will run out of energy at some point in the future.
3 It does not explain how God came into being – while this question remains unanswered, the 'big bang' theory also does not explain how initial matter came into being.

Other religions especially Buddhism, Confucianism and Taoism say that it is not necessary to ask such questions. For these religions, such questions distract from eliminating suffering, trying to live in harmony with the Universe and living without hatred, greed and self-delusion.

Buddhism

Buddhism does not claim to know the origin of the world. Rather, it teaches that humans have lived many lives and the life each Buddhist is now leading is a culmination of previous lives. In contrast, Confucians see a moral order in the Universe referred to as the Way of Heaven. For Buddhists and Confucians, the world is not just materialistic but has a spiritual element, which is neither indifferent to the lives of human beings nor accidental. A moral law, Way of Heaven or nirvana is the reward for obeying these rules.

Hinduism

The question of the beginning of the Universe is not a difficult one for most Hindus. The *Upanishads* say that the Universe is a manifestation of ***Brahman***, the inner nature of the Universe. *Brahman* 'is the life that shimmers through all contingent beings' and 'consists of all things' (*Mundaka Upanishad* 3:1 and *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* 4:3).

In short, *Brahman* is the reality. Because everything else is appearance, the question of the Universe's creation is not important. The world that we experience is only one of an infinite series of spaces and times. The *Upanishads* see creation as a part of the divine being.

Despite the differences in explanations, religions generally suggest a spiritual basis for human existence. Judaism, Christianity and Islam have a **theistic** explanation of creation – God created the world with a conscious intention and purpose.

In this view, the believer should strive to complete the work of creation. It should be noted that Christianity accepts and uses the Hebrew texts of Genesis 1 and 2. Christianity draws its explanation of creation from these texts, though the interpretation may differ slightly from that of Judaism.

mythopoetic related to the creation of myths

suffering a physical or mental experience of unpleasantness and aversion associated with harm or threat of harm

Brahman the Supreme Cosmic Spirit in Hindu *Vedanta* philosophy, sometime known as 'the great world soul'

theistic belief in the existence of a god or gods

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Hindu traditions suggest absolute idealism where the Universe originates in one spiritual (intelligent or conscious) reality from the essential nature of *Brahman*. In this view, believers strive to be liberated from the illusionary belief of being a separate self.

Another explanation is the dualism in some forms of Buddhism. In this approach, the origin of the Universe is unknown and may always have existed as a fundamental fact but the spirit exists in addition to matter or as an aspect of matter. Accordingly, the religious quest is either to seek liberation from matter in a realm of pure spirit (to achieve liberation from the wheel of rebirth and enter into nirvana) or to apprehend and live in harmony with the moral and spiritual aspect of the material world (the way of *Tian* – 'heaven').

Activity 4.5

Investigating and reasoning

Develop a set of images representing the origins of the world according to the five major world religions.

What does science say?

Scientists largely agree that the Universe began about 13.7 thousand million years ago. The big bang theory, a **cosmological model**, says that there was a very small area of heat and energy that exploded into being. It expanded and cooled, forming the first wave-particles. Eventually atoms formed, condensed to form stars and forged the heavy elements such as carbon, which became the building blocks of life.

In **quantum theory**, particles flash into and out of existence and the early Universe is small enough to act in accordance with quantum laws. In this theory, the whole Universe may have 'quantum-fluctuated' into existence and 'frozen', at least for a few billion years, into a physically enduring material system. The theory, however, does not explain how the initial event occurred, but rather what is likely to have happened after that.

cosmological model a mathematical description, which tries to explain the origins and dynamics of the Universe

quantum theory the theoretical basis of modern physics that explains the nature and behaviour of matter and energy on an atomic and subatomic level

FIGURE 4.8 The wheel of rebirth

FIGURE 4.9 Scientists largely agree that the Universe began about 13.7 thousand million years ago

According to big bang theory, human beings evolved through the same process; but what caused the final evolution of humanity remains unanswered. Some theorists argue that a reason is necessary to back up this theory, or the science rests on a false premise. The modern cosmological search seeks a mathematical explanation for the Universe's existence.

Other theorists argue the idea of Intelligent Design. This theory argues for the existence of a 'designer', most commonly believed to be the Christian God, who instigated the process of creation.

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Paul Davies, a Professor of Mathematical Physics, has written on the question of the Universe's origins. He researches black holes, cosmology and quantum gravity. The following extract is from his book, *The Mind of God* (1992):

'Through my scientific work I have come to believe more and more strongly that the physical Universe is put together with an ingenuity so astonishing that I cannot accept it merely as a brute fact. There must, it seems to me, be a deeper level of explanation. Whether one wishes to call that deeper level 'God' is a matter of taste and definition. Furthermore, I have come to the point of view that mind – i.e., conscious awareness of the world – is not a meaningless and incidental quirk of nature, but an absolutely fundamental facet of reality. That is not to say that we are the purpose for which the Universe exists. Far from it. I do, however, believe that we human beings are built into the scheme of things in a very basic way.'

Activity 4.6

Investigating, reasoning and judging

Construct a concept map showing scientific ideas about the origin and construction of matter in the Universe.

1 On what do religion and science agree?
2 On what do religion and science tend not to agree?
3 How could religion and science's explanations of the Universe's origins be complementary?

Religion and science have approached the question of the Universe's origin from very different angles. While each approach has provided a number of possible explanations, many questions still remain unanswered.

Why do people suffer?

Suffering seems to be an unavoidable component of human life. While some people appear to have an extraordinary amount of suffering, others experience little or none.

FIGURE 4.10
The extreme suffering inflicted upon the Jewish people during the *Shoah* caused some to question their faith

All people cope differently with suffering. Some people cope better with suffering as they have more resilience than others. For some, this resilience rests on perceiving a purpose or meaning greater than themselves. In a way, a large part of suffering is linked to how people react to it. Some people take it badly, others find it easier to deal with.

Although few people enjoy it, some people interpret suffering to be a mark of God's favour. Certainly it is possible to gain strength of character and even to become more compassionate to others because of one's suffering.

When people ask why there is suffering in the world, they are also asking how God can allow suffering. There are no easy answers to this but life, and for some, religion, is about grappling with such questions.

Sometimes suffering leads to loss of belief in God, for example, some Jews could not believe that God could permit such tremendous suffering as that of the *Shoah* (Holocaust) and they lost faith in God, while for others belief in God helped them survive.

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Judaism

Elie Wiesel, a Professor of Humanities at Boston University, survived the death camps of Auschwitz and Buchenwald. His writing is shaped by his experiences. His book, *Night*, recounts the time he spent as a young boy in the death camps of Auschwitz and Buchenwald in Nazi Germany.

FIGURE 4.11
Elie Wiesel

> Never shall I forget that night, the first night in camp, which has turned my life into one long night, seven times cursed and seven times sealed. Never shall I forget that smoke. Never shall I forget the little faces of the children, whose bodies I saw turned into wreaths of smoke beneath a silent blue sky.
> Never shall I forget those flames which consumed my faith forever.
> Never shall I forget that nocturnal silence which deprived me, for all eternity, of the desire to live. Never shall I forget those moments which murdered my God and my soul and turned my dreams to dust. Never shall I forget these things, even if I am condemned to live as long as God Himself. Never.
>
> Elie Wiesel, 1981, *Night*, p. 45

Sacred texts of religions may incorporate a consideration of suffering. These considerations are intended to assist believers to deal with the suffering they experience. The Book of Job in the Hebrew scriptures is such a text. It offers a long meditation on the meaning of suffering, why people suffer and whether there is any way of understanding it.

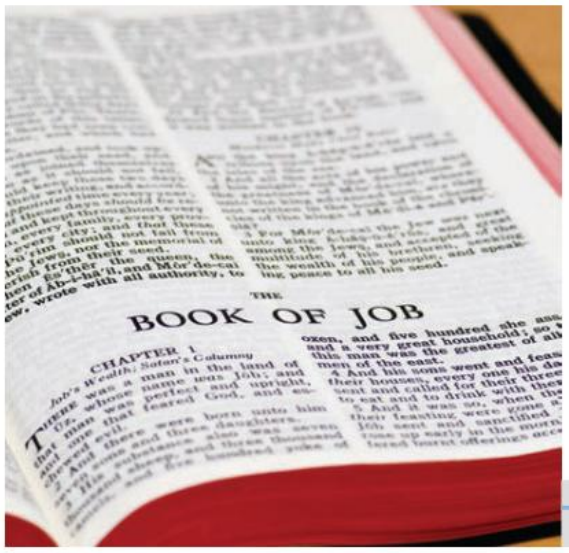

FIGURE 4.12
The Book of Job

Job is a good person who has been blessed with family and wealth. Satan challenges God to test Job – Satan claims the only reason Job has tried to lead a good life is because he thinks God will protect him from suffering. Satan encourages God to test Job, to see if Job will abandon his faith in God.

All of Job's possessions are destroyed and his children killed. As God continues to test Job, he maintains his faith and never curses God. The Book of Job poses questions about the nature of God and, indeed, the purpose of existence. Why does God test Job? Does God have a plan or does God act arbitrarily?

In the dialogue he has with God, Job learns that God's purposes are greater than our own. Job also suggests that God's justice may be beyond human understanding. Job asks, 'Shall we accept good from God, and not trouble?'

One of the difficult questions the Book of Job raises is why good people (as well as bad people) must suffer. Good people appear to experience even more suffering than those who do not live good lives. This leads some to ask why they should keep trying to do the right thing, to strive to achieve the **common good**.

common good
a term describing a specific 'good' that is shared and beneficial for all members of a given community

The Book of Job reveals a number of different perspectives on the nature of human suffering, none of which seem easy to reconcile. While Job is adamant that he has not sinned, his friends cannot understand

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why God would punish him in this way unless he had sinned.

Suffering is ultimately presented as a test of Job's faith. Suffering appears to be part of the human condition. Some people may grow through suffering but suffering can hardly be intended, as God suffers in and with the world.

From a theological perspective, the Book of Job reveals the ways in which God suffers when we do. Perhaps the role of religion is not to provide answers to such imponderable questions, but to provide frameworks from which people can gain strength to deal with these questions. Yet when we fail to consider others and do not try to help where we can, often our own lives become more miserable.

Wisdom Literature a genre of literature that offers insights into how to live a virtuous life

The Book of Job is part of **Wisdom Literature**, yet its discussion of suffering goes beyond the idea that this genre normally offers – that the good prosper and the evil are punished.

Islam

The *Qur'an* acknowledges that there is suffering and that suffering is a part of life. The *Qur'an* does not interpret suffering as a problem. Instead, it emphasises Allah's (God's) omnipotence and love and says that all things come from Allah. Therefore suffering too comes from Allah.

iii. 159 (165).

What! When the blow strikes you, and you have already struck with its like,
Will you say, 'why has this happened?'
Say: 'it is from your own selves.'
Truly, God has power over every single thing.

afterlife an existence after death

If suffering is a test then it helps to create a faithful disposition and to discriminate the sincere from the insincere.

Buddhism

Dukkha in Buddhism is often translated as suffering but the word also means sorrow, physical and mental pain, dissatisfaction or unease. Suffering is an unavoidable fact of life. Pleasure also brings suffering as a person realises that the pleasure will not last.

The Buddha taught that a person cannot escape suffering but should instead develop ways of responding to it by following the Four Noble Truths (for more information on the Four Noble Truths, refer to page 234).

Activity 4.7

Investigating and reasoning

1 Nominate a situation in which great human suffering took place. What would each of the five major world religions offer as:
   a an explanation of the reasons for the suffering?
   b advice about what people should do in response to the suffering.
2 Complete the table on Worksheet 4.7.

What happens after death?

The fundamental question of what happen after death, is one that many people consider throughout their lives. The approaches and attitudes to death and the **afterlife** held by different religions vary considerably.

Judaism and the afterlife

The Hebrew scriptures do not teach of an afterlife, but rather convey the idea that the only life after death is through one's children. Some texts, like 1 Samuel 28, suggest that the spirit lingers on but that this belief could not have a central place in biblical concepts. After the Exile, followers developed a belief in the bodily resurrection of the dead.

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The Book of Daniel, for instance, says that some who sleep shall awake (12:2–3) while 2 Maccabees (not in the Jewish Canon of scripture, but a story that is well known to most Jews) tells the story of a soldier who makes a 'sin offering' for a fellow soldier who died unexpectedly (12:43–45). The text is unusual, as the offering or prayer indicates that there is life after death, yet no earlier text indicates this.

Sources from the first century CE such as Josephus, the Christian Gospels and Jewish rabbinic writings, agree that three main Jewish philosophies disputed the afterlife:

1 the Pharisees proclaimed the after-life of the soul
2 the Sadducees rejected all survival after death
3 the Essenes believed that death released the soul for eternal life.

None of the *Qumran* or Dead Sea Scrolls reflects this Essene idea. Ben-Sira (Ecclesiasticus) wrote of the finality of death. Some passages in the *Talmud* warn against 'one who denies the resurrection of the dead' (Mishnah, Sanhedrin 10:1).

Modern Orthodox Judaism (from around 1750) acknowledged physical resurrection, but the Jewish reform movement of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries rejected a literal belief in resurrection while maintaining that immortality of the soul could be demonstrated. Non-Orthodox twentieth-century religious discourse stresses a commitment to building a better world now. Even responses to the *Shoah,* by authors like Elie Wiesel, have not called for retribution in the world to come. The concept of building a better world also includes Judaism being restored to the land of Israel.

Christianity and the afterlife

Christians believe in life after death. Jesus followed the Pharisees in believing in the resurrection and spoke of a final judgment and an afterlife (Luke 16:19–31; 23:39–43).

Paul wrote strongly of his belief in Jesus' resurrection. This is the central tenet of Christianity. Jesus' resurrection is connected to the belief that Christians will also rise after death and be accepted into heaven (1 Corinthians 15:18). According to Christian teaching, when the world ends, Christ will come again to judge the living and the dead and to bring about the reign of God in a new heaven. In this concept of the afterlife, those who have led faithful lives will enjoy eternal happiness with God in heaven. Those who have chosen evil will suffer in hell.

FIGURE 4.12
Jewish cemetery in Prague

FIGURE 4.13
The Ascension by Giotto depicting Jesus Christ rising to heaven

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The precise nature of this resurrection has been debated by many Christians. What sort of body will be raised from the dead?

For Paul, it is a spiritual body. Later creeds declared a belief in the resurrection of the body; however, precisely what is meant by this has also been debated. Christians believe that the choices they make during this life will influence what happens in the next. Some believe that it is major life orientation either towards good or evil which affects the afterlife; while others see that all of life's decisions which involve choosing between good and evil affect eternal life.

Islam and the afterlife

For Islam, it is Allah who gives life and takes it away. Death is a passageway to eternal life with Allah.

FIGURE 4.14
This illustration of the Prophet's night flight to heaven is from Shiraz in Persia, c.1560 CE. Muhammad is guided by the Archangel Gabriel and six other angels. He rides al-Buraq, a mystical steed. As is conventional, the Prophet's face is not shown.

According to the *Qur'an*, the present life is but the joy of delusion (*Qur'an* 3:185) and death is not a punishment but a natural continuation of life.

The *Qur'an* says: 'Yet give thou good tidings unto the patient [ones] who, when they are visited by an affliction, say, 'Surely we belong to God, and to Him we return' (*Qur'an* 2:156).

Despite the transience of this life, great respect is given to the body of the deceased. Reverence for the dead body includes washing the body and covering it completely. The body is carried to the cemetery but women are not permitted to follow a funeral procession.

Belief in a day of resurrection and a day of judgement finds support in the *Qur'an*. The day of judgement will be sudden and cataclysmic and will take place in this world. The place of eternal life is Paradise which is very vividly described in the *Qur'an*:

> 'Two Gardens, abounding in branches – therein two fountains of running water – therein of every fruit two kinds – reclining upon couches lined with brocade, the fruits of the gardens nigh to gather – therein maidens restraining their glances, untouched before them by any man or jinn – lovely as rubies, beautiful as coral. Shall the recompense of goodness be other than goodness?'
>
> *Qur'an* 55:48–60

Hinduism – after this life

The *Katha Upanishad* begins with the story of Vajasrava and his young son Naciketa. 'Death', a character, teaches Naciketa about death and in doing so teaches him about life – without encountering death, the human search for meaning is incomplete. One must, however, have a reflective mind to learn the meaning of life and death. Naciketa becomes free from death in this life once he is taught the secrets by Death. Hinduism is neither life-denying nor other-worldly. Wealth and pleasure are among the four legitimate, but transient, goals. The third goal, *dharma,* while also transient, is more important and requires that one pay attention to the welfare of other human beings, in addition to meeting personal needs.

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The ultimate goal for a Hindu is *moksha* (freedom and the recognition of the self). Ignorance of the true nature of the human self (*atman*), God (*Brahman*) and the world (*jagata*) causes suffering and bondage. Freedom or liberation cannot be attained without a right knowledge of reality. According to the *dharma*, people should focus on pleasant circumstances and consider how freely made choices might have created those circumstances.

Hindus believe in a cycle of multiple births and deaths (*samsara*), which is closely linked to the doctrine of *karma*. *Karma* affirms that every act produces a certain result, which is determined by the nature of the act and the motives behind it. This concept of *karma* means that most people will experience multiple births and deaths. The cumulative effects of their actions result in the necessity of future births, so that people can experience both the desirable and undesirable consequences of their actions. If a Hindu reaches *moksha*, then the cycle of birth, death and rebirth comes to an end.

For the Hindu, death is the separation of the subtle body from the physical body. The unliberated individual, with the consciousness that is the self and with its own *karma*, will find another appropriate physical body. The *Bhagavad Gita* (2:22) compares death to the changing of clothing: 'as, after casting away worn out garments, a man later takes new ones, so, after casting away worn out bodies, the embodied Self encounters other, new ones'.

For the individual who has come to understand the identity of the self (*atman*) with the ultimate reality of all things (*Brahman*), there is no departure.

When death occurs, the physical body disintegrates and the subtle body merges into the subtle elements without the egocentric characteristics that would perpetuate individuality. Life and death are points on a continuum. One does not attain an experience after the death of the physical body that is better than the quality of one's life in the physical body. Another possibility is the journey to *brahmaloka*, the world of the creator from which there is no return to **mortality**.

In Hinduism there is no judge to whom one gives an account of one's actions. Suffering, pain and sickness result from one's evil karma from past experiences.

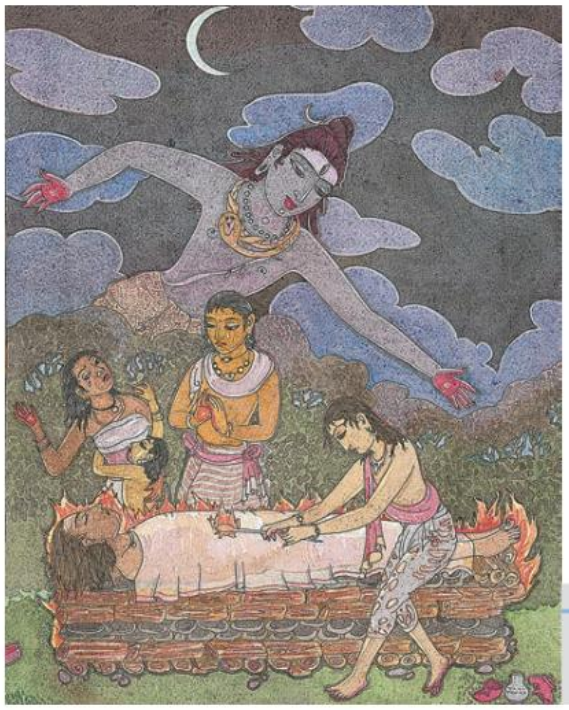

FIGURE 4.15
The cycle of multiple births, a symbol of Hindu re-incarnation

Buddhist teaching of *anatta* (no self) is the opposite of the Hindu concept of self (or soul). Hinduism affirms that the self (*atman*) is eternal and immortal but sees it as moving from one perishable form to another. Buddhism has no such concept of a self separate from the body nor the notion of an immortal self.

Buddhism – after this life

The Buddha was deeply troubled by his first encounter with death and longed for a state of existence without death. He developed the Four Noble Truths partly to overcome the pain and suffering associated with death and the stages of old age and illness that lead to it. Buddha developed his ideas in an environment which assumed that life is an ever-changing but endless process. Life in this view is full of suffering, which is caused by desire. Buddhism seeks to eliminate desire. When desire is dissipated, one has reached nirvana, or freedom from suffering. To achieve this state of being, one should follow the Noble Eightfold Path which includes respect for all that exists, gaining insight into the essential nature of things and cultivating and controlling the mind through meditation.

mortality
the quality or state of being mortal (i.e. subject to death)

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FIGURE 4.16
Nirvana

One way for Tibetan Buddhists to prepare for death is to read the *Book of the Dead* (*Bar do thos grol*). If read and memorised during life, one might remember it at the point of death, avoiding rebirth. The *Bar do thos grol* is intended to eliminate a fear of death.

utilitarian the idea that the moral worth of an action is determined solely by its overall contribution to the happiness or pleasure of society as a whole

Activity 4.8

Investigating, reasoning and judging

1 From what/where has each of the different world religions derived its beliefs about what happens after death?
2 Design and produce a flowchart for each religion showing its beliefs regarding life, death, afterlife and destiny.
3 To what extent are the various religions' explanations similar or different? Suggest reasons for this.

Religion's claim to have an answer to the meaning of life offers the possibility that there will be justice in the next life. It also provides hope that in the next life families and friends shall be reunited.

What is the common good?

The common good is something that benefits the community as a whole. John Stuart Mill (1806–1873), promoted **utilitarianism** as the 'greatest possible good for the greatest possible number of individuals'. He suggested that a consideration of the common good was important when making ethical decisions.

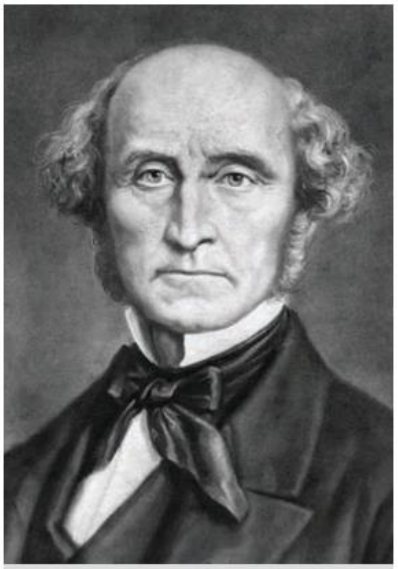

FIGURE 4.17
John Stuart Mill

In political terms, the common good concerns the rights of individuals in society, including the right and responsibility to seek truth and virtue and to order one's life by moral law. The idea of the common good covers the essential elements of social life, including freedom and requires the state to facilitate this endeavour by ensuring the infrastructure necessary for such freedom.

Mill's theory of the common good forms the basis of much Christian Social Teaching which speaks of rights to private property and the provision of a just wage – rights the state should protect.

One of the most important questions that falls into the category of the common good is that concerning the environment. Many people have suggested that the world religions could make a significant difference if

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they worked together to address today's most pressing ecological questions.

Religious citizens could play an important role in addressing these contemporary questions. While ancient sacred texts cannot offer answers to current problems, they can provide general guidelines on how to proceed. Concerned citizens can extrapolate from the general guidelines offered by sacred texts and make significant change.

Seeking answers

Spiritual quest

Many people describe leading fragmented lives and express a desire for internal coherence. They ask how to achieve this coherence as they continue to try to make sense of their lives and live purposefully.

The desire to live a more spiritual life is not limited to participating in traditional religious practices. A spiritual life is often presented as arising without foundation or connection to the past. A **spiritual quest** seeks answers to ultimate questions. Experiences are integrated into an overall view of the world shaped by ideas about individual destiny, happiness, suffering and death.

In the post-modern world, this quest for meaning is more difficult. We all live in a rapidly changing world where many people find that they are no longer supported by family, work and social networks. Late adolescence and early adulthood are times at which many choices and important decisions must be made: such as moving out of home, choosing a career path and starting a relationship. In making these choices, people often also decide whether they will act in their interests alone or in the interest of others.

Activity 4.9

Investigating

1 What are the most important things of your life?
2 Explain whether or not they are interrelated?
3 What gives you meaning and satisfaction?
4 Do you reflect on spiritual issues?
5 What events have influenced your critical decisions?
6 What situations caused you to change?
7 What provides balance in your life?
8 How do you express your true self?
9 What needs to change for you to have a deeper sense of meaning?

Most religions suggest the need for times of quiet and solitude. Modern spiritual advisers also suggest that times of peace and quiet are necessary. An authentic reflective stance can only be adopted if some time is taken for real reflection about one's life. A conscious engagement in a spiritual quest through times of reflection can provide resilience and physical, emotional and spiritual health.

A relationship with God is a vital ingredient in a spiritual quest for religious people. For example, a Hindu may strive for *Brahman*, whereas a Buddhist may strive to reach nirvana.

spiritual quest a personal journey that seeks answers to ultimate questions

New Religious Movements

The search for answers and meaning in life has led some people towards new expressions of religion. Some find new expressions in adaptations of long-existing religions, whereas others find groups that are more appropriately classified as new religious movements.

Entering the world stage in the late 1960s and early 1970s, New Religious Movements (NRMs) became notorious when 922 followers of Jim Jones apparently committed mass suicide at the People's Temple in Jonestown, Guyana, in 1978.

Other NRMs include:

- The Unification Church, also known as Moonies, foundered by Reverend Sun Myung Moon.
- Hare Krishna movement (International Society for Krishna Consciousness).
- The Church of Scientology, founded by L. Ron Hubbard.
- Boston Church of Christ, founded by Kip McKean, which establishes branches using the name of their location, for example, the Brisbane

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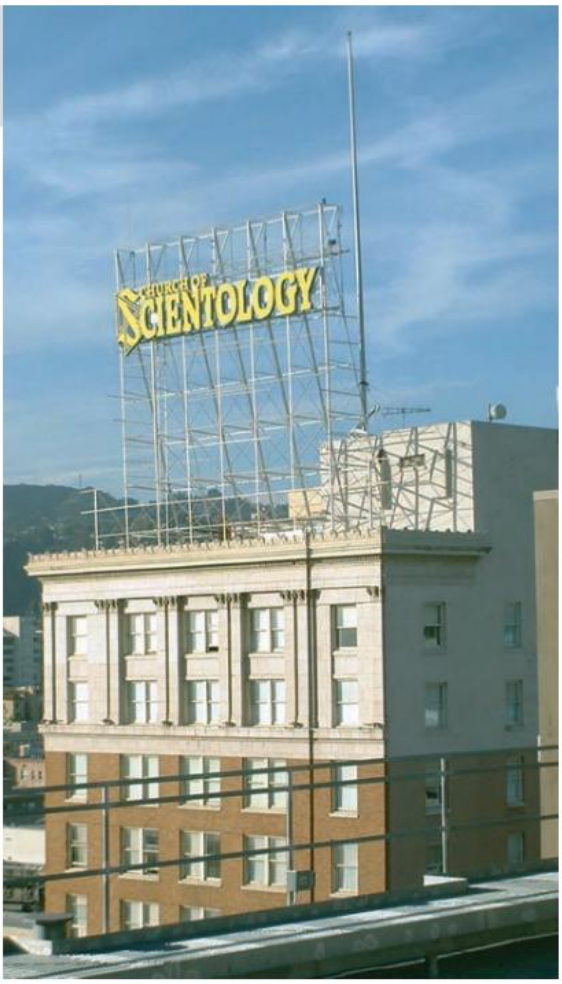

FIGURE 4.18
The Church of Scientology is a large NRM

cults
social groups devoted to beliefs or practices considered to be outside the mainstream

FIGURE 4.19
Members of the Hare Krishna movement

Church of Christ (this church usually meets in schools or parks and should be distinguished from the long-established Church of Christ, which has churches and social welfare agencies).

- Soka Gakkai, a Japanese new religious movement, founded in 1930.
- The Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University, founded in 1937 in Karachi by Dada Lekh Raj. It did not become well-known in America until World War II.

Most NRMs began as community-based organisations that separated themselves from the broader community. NRMs are characterised by hierarchical structures and their beliefs and teachings are often only known in full by their inner circle of followers.

Many NRMs are led by charismatic leaders, some of whom require devotees to surrender to the will of the leader and the group. Often, a group's leaders provides new religious texts or new interpretations of existing scriptures as the basis for the teaching of the NRM.

While a reaction to modern society's materialism and excess, many have embraced the technologies of modernity to disseminate their ideas and organise their networks. Although many NRMs claim to reject mainstream institutions, the new institutions they create are often more authoritarian and excessive.

Many NRMs target young people in their recruitment programs. Family and friends often accuse NRM members of brainwashing new recruits and fear that obsessive commitment to the group could result in violence or the death of their loved one. As a result, some NRMs are referred to as **cults**.

These concerns have lead to an anti-cult movement that is particularly prominent in the US. In Queensland, a number of former cult members help those trying to leave cults. Former cult members often experience loss of confidence and lack a sense of self-worth as they readjust to life in mainstream society.

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Activity 4.10

Investigating and reasoning

1 Listen to the audio recording of or read the transcript of the ABC Radio National program, *The Spirit of Things* at www.abc.net.au/rn/spiritofthings/stories/2008/2417428.htm. It concerns the NRM Kenja Communications.

2 Find evidence in the claims of former members Bevin Hudson and Melissa Maclean, of the features of NRMs at work within Kenja Communications and complete the table on Worksheet 4.10.

Conclusion

Ultimate questions usually do not occur on a daily basis but are likely to be connected with transitions in life or with occasions of high emotional intensity, like the birth of a child or the death of loved one. These moments of transition and emotional intensity, compel us to seek answers about the meaning of life.

The birth of a child, for example, is a life-changing experience for the whole family. Moments such as this open people's eyes to the broader possibilities of life and often there is greater significance in the event than is immediately evident.

Many religions have rites of passage that assist devotees to celebrate transition stages in their lives. The Sacred Thread ceremony in Hinduism, Confirmation in many Christian churches and *Bar* and *Bat Mitzvah* in Judaism ritualise the experience of moving from one life stage to another and seek to contextualise and explain these events.

In their own ways, all religions seek to provide answers to the ultimate questions we confront. While each religion has provided a number of possible explanations, many questions still remain unanswered. Although it may not be possible to answer these ultimate questions, it is possible, through a transition experience of a question – and perhaps pondering the questions is more important than finding answers.

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CHAPTER REVIEW

End of chapter activities

Activity 4.11

Framing

1 Create a vocabulary bank of language used in the ultimate questions discourse.
2 List examples of representations of the afterlife in popular culture. Where do these ideas come from?
3 Graffiti wall – complete the following sentences:
   a Nature often causes people to ponder ultimate questions because …
   b Birth often causes people to ponder ultimate questions because …
   c Death often causes people to ponder ultimate questions because …
   d Technology often causes people to ponder ultimate questions because …

Activity 4.12

Investigating

1 Find out about the work of the following scientists and their interaction with church and society.

Scientist	Dates	Summary of work	Interaction with church and society
Copernicus			
Kepler			
Galileo			
Newton			
Darwin			
Hubble			

2 Create an information leaflet about the afterlife beliefs of an ancient civilisation of your choice.
3 Scan a newspaper and write down current events that might particularly spark people's consideration of ultimate questions.

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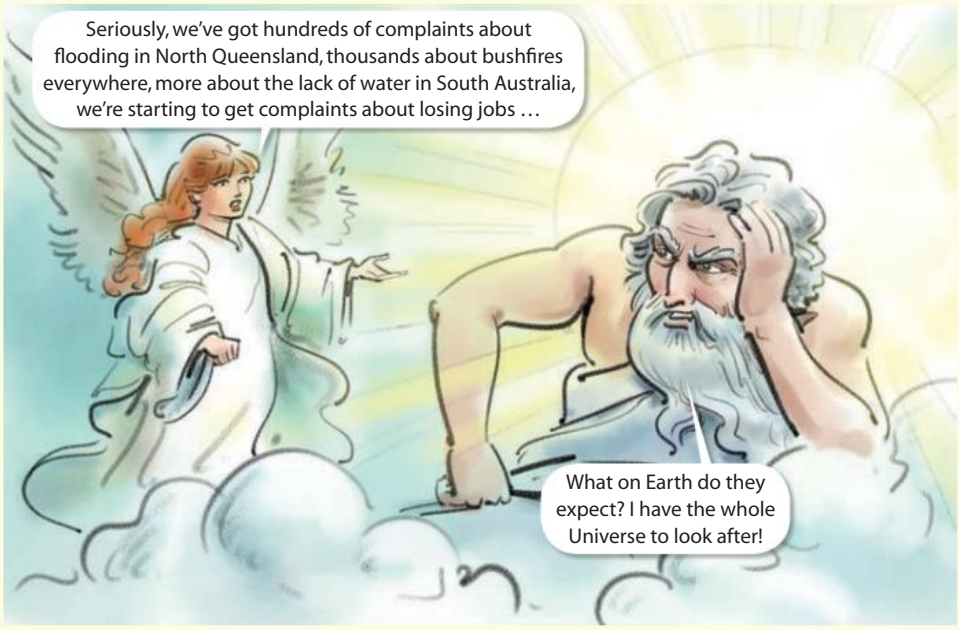
Activity 4.13

Reasoning

1 Complete a consequences wheel to explore possible outcomes of the following statements:
   a If science proved that God exists then ...
   b If science proved that God did not exist then ...
2 Examine the following cartoon and answer the questions which follow.



   a Which religious tradition is drawn upon in this cartoon? How do you know?
   b What does this cartoon suggest about the role and nature of God?
3 Construct a diagram showing the relationship between ultimate questions and ethics.
4 Complete a PMI chart on belief in life after death.

Activity 4.14

Investigating, reasoning and judging

1 Choose one of the following questions and write a mini-essay explaining your point of view and the reasons behind it.
   a Can science and religion's different explanations of the origins of the Universe and humanity be reconciled?
   b Can religion validly justify the suffering of innocents?
   c There is no point hoping for life after death.
   d The twenty-first century world makes spirituality too difficult.
2 Write an editorial based on a news story about a New Religious Movement of your choice.
3 To what extent have the theories that science has proposed in response to ultimate questions affected religious belief?

Activity 4.15

Reflecting

1 What have I learned about the role of religion in providing answers to ultimate questions?
2 Have my views changed and, if so, how?
3 How do my responses to ultimate questions differ from those of adherents of other religions?
4 How has this area of inquiry helped me to understand other points of view?

CHAPTER REVIEW

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CHAPTER REVIEW

Ethnographic investigation: ultimate questions

For an overview of the ethnographic investigation section of the course, refer to page x.

Investigation 4.1

The findings may be presented in a multi-modal presentation, essay, report or feature article.

Framing

Before starting this ethnographic investigation, you need to clearly establish the area of inquiry and be clear on the relevant ideas and concepts. You should already have considerable knowledge about the religion/s under investigation.

Identify interview candidates suitable for this task. They need to be affiliated with a religion.

Investigating

1 Choose one person to interview about a topic that you devise within the area of ultimate questions *or* Choose a number people to interview, about the topic.
2 Devise open-ended interview questions carefully in order to elicit the required information.
3 Conduct the interview/s, taking detailed notes.
4 In addition, before and after the interview, you may wish to gather further data (booklets, photographs, more general information about the research area, religious denomination etc.) to assist in your understanding of the religion's teaching regarding ultimate questions and the interview subjects' responses to your interview questions.
5 Organise and sort all your material.

Reasoning

1 Using your interview subject's responses, analyse points of similarity and difference between their responses to your questions and their religion's or religions' official teaching on these matters.
2 Compare and contrast the interviewees' responses with one another and relative to the religion's or religions' teachings. How similar/different are their ideas in this regard?
3 Based on the data you have collected, propose reasons for such similarity or difference.
4 Does your research suggest that your interviewees' responses are typical of adherents to their religion/s?

Judging

To what extent are the lived beliefs of your interviewee/s in agreement with the teachings of their religion/s about the ultimate questions?

Taking it further: extension question

How is the nature and significance of religion reflected in the responses you obtained from your interviewees?

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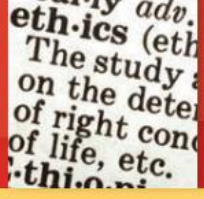

CHAPTER FIVE

RELIGION, VALUES AND ETHICS

'In learning morality, we learn who we are, to whom we are connected and what matters enough to care about and care for.'

Margaret Urban Walker

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

This chapter discusses:

- Ethics and values: what are they, where do they come from?
- Ethical traditions
- Ethics in everyday life
- Ethics in society

KEY *terms*

ethics	normative ethics	duty-based ethics	justice
morality	Decalogue	virtue ethics	integrity
values	Five Pillars	responsibility	covenant
law	Eightfold Path	ethics of care	
custom	Ten Precepts	tolerance	
descriptive ethics	utilitarianism principles	codes of ethics	

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ethics
a major branch of philosophy, encompassing proper conduct and good living

values
the standards by which individuals and groups judge the relative worth of ideas, behaviour and things

law
a framework of rules of conduct or action prescribed or formally recognised as binding or enforced by a controlling authority

codes of ethics
a statement of the ethical principles, values and behaviours expected of members of an organisation or profession

Introduction

For many people, one of the attractions of religion is the practical guidance it can give in both difficult circumstances and everyday life.

In the Australian Community Survey (1998), people were asked what was important about religion.

- 48 per cent said it was the values – particularly the encouragement to care about other people.
- 7 per cent said it was the values embedded in the Ten Commandments
- 12 per cent said it was spending time with God in worship.
- 5 per cent said it was sharing faith with others.
- 28 per cent said religion was not important to them at all.

This chapter explores the nature of **ethics**, **values** and **law** and the frameworks of ethical thinking in our religious and philosophical traditions. We examine how ethics can help in our everyday life and how personal and religious ethics relate to society and secular law. How do we live together in a diverse community informed by the ethical standards of various religious traditions? How do personal and religious ethical points of view relate to the **codes of ethics** that shape so much of professional life today?

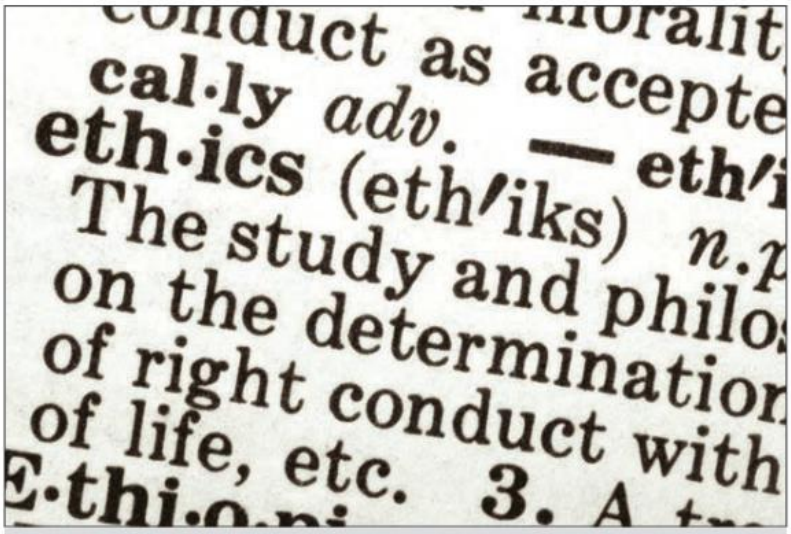

FIGURE 5.1
Ethics defined

Activity 5.1

Framing

1 What is ethics?
2 What does a study of ethics involve?
3 Who are the leaders in the field of ethics?
4 What methods or approaches exist to assist people in making ethical decisions?

Framing religion and ethics

It is easy to see religion as a conservative force, handed down from one generation to another, but these rules and precepts were once part of a new way of living that cast a critical eye over the accepted ways of doing things.

The link between religious experience and ethics is clearly illustrated in the story of Moses in the Hebrew scriptures where Moses encounters God, in the form of a burning bush, and the nature of God is revealed to him. Consequently, Moses leads the Hebrew people out of slavery in Egypt. Despite experiencing God's power in saving them, which is commemorated in the Passover, the Hebrews express their new-found freedom by making up their own rules.

FIGURE 5.2
The Ten Commandments written on stone tablets in Hebrew

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In a dramatic confrontation, Moses returns from Mount Sinai with Ten Commandments, setting the people of Israel apart from the tribes around them and reminding them who liberated them in Egypt. The story dramatically portrays the fact that ethics is not just about rules but is also about identity and relationships. The story illustrates Margaret Urban Walker's point: 'In learning **morality**, we learn who we are, to whom we are connected and what matters enough to care about and care for'.

Activity 5.2

Framing

Ethical decisions and value positions:

1 Describe one decision you made today. What were your options? How did you come to the decision?
2 Was this an ethical decision? Did it involve values? Where do these values come from?
3 Describe one decision of which you are proud. What elements of the situation did you consider? How did you come to the decision?
4 Was this an ethical decision? What values were demonstrated? Where do these values come from?

Similar encounters between personal experiences and the social context have shaped the ethical outlooks of all religions. Think of Arjuna's response to an impending battle against his kin (Hinduism), Siddhartha Gautama's personal encounters with suffering in all its forms after a life of privilege (Buddhism) or Indigenous Australian stories of *The Dreaming*, connecting community to the law and the land. Religious ethics are framed by the intersection between religious experience and social context.

When investigating the ethical dimension of religion we can take two approaches. We can begin with a **descriptive ethics** approach, simply describing the moral beliefs of various religions we encounter and interpreting their meaning as part of that religion's stories, beliefs, rituals and social life. We can also take a **normative ethics** approach using our own understandings of the ultimate purpose of life: what should we do?

In ethics, the object of inquiry is a subject, an inquirer – a human being like ourselves. The study of ethics is not value free, as our own values and beliefs always come into the picture. It is important to admit this. It will be hard to do justice to the ethics and values of others if we do not understand our own values. If we are not aware of them they may distort our investigation.

Activity 5.3

Reasoning: normative and descriptive ethics

1 Look at the following examples of normative and descriptive ethics.
   a It is always wrong to take an innocent human life (normative ethics).
   b Innocent human lives are sometimes taken (descriptive ethics).
2 Decide whether the following statements are normative or descriptive.
   a Drivers should not exceed the speed limit.
   b Many drivers occasionally exceed the speed limit.
   c Buddhists should not earn their livelihood as butchers.
   d Stealing is against the law.
   e Downloading films for free is seen as acceptable by some people.
   f *Sharia* law forbids the drinking of alcohol.
   g Slavery is wrong.
   h Adultery is a grave sin.
   i Devout Jews eat kosher food.
   j You should always demonstrate compassion.
3 Write a descriptive and normative statement for each of the following ethical issues.
   a testing cosmetics on animals
   b corporal punishment
   c war
   d the environment
   e academic honesty.

morality
a code of conduct which is held to be authoritative in matters of right and wrong

descriptive ethics
the study of people's beliefs about morality; an empirical investigation of people's moral beliefs

normative ethics
the study of ethical theories that prescribe how people ought to act

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Ethics and values: what are they, where do they come from?

Ethics and morality

What is the distinction between ethics and morality? They both mean the same thing. One comes from the Greek language, the other from Latin.

Activity 5.4

Investigating

1 Refer to the following websites to investigate the meaning of the words 'morals' and 'ethics'
   a www.etymonline.com
   b www.merriam-webster.com
   c http://ethics.sandiego.edu/LMH/E2/Glossary.asp
   d http://philosophy.lander.edu/ethics/types.html
2 Complete the Venn diagram illustrating the inter-relationship between ethics and morality on Worksheet 5.4.

Activity 5.5

Reasoning

1 Complete a media search for issues which fit into either 'morality or 'ethics'.
2 Using evidence from your sourced material, provide a reason for each of your classifications.

Some people find 'ethics' problematic. They see ethics as concerned with the 'grey areas' – the dilemmas in life that are difficult to solve. Grey areas in ethical life do not mean that there is no right and wrong. Where there is twilight there is also night and day.

Perhaps the view that ethics only involves unresolvable dilemmas is due to the way ethics is taught and presented in the media. We use difficult cases intentionally, to generate debate and discussion. The media usually frames ethics as a dramatic debate between opposing views, rather than a discussion seeking shared answers to shared problems. This is not helped by the fact that ethics news stories usually focus on neon light issues – headline grabbing dilemmas that attract strongly held opposing points of view, such as abortion, euthanasia, stem cell research or genetic engineering.

Activity 5.6

Investigating, reasoning, and judging: ethics in the media

Search a newspaper and list at least 10 excerpts that involve ethics in any way.
1 Identify the ethical issues involved.
2 Categorise each text according to whether it shows dramatic debate between opposing views or discussion seeking shared answers to shared problems.
3 Decide whether the ethical issue is a 'neon light' issue.
4 Provide reasons why/why not?
5 Formulate a hypothesis about the representation of ethical issues in newspapers based on the evidence you have collected.

Ethics is not about morose individuals sitting in a corner contemplating unresolvable dilemmas. It is a communal task, a conversation about preferred courses of action or inaction, based on shared values or principles and considering the impact of our choices on others. Ethics is about asking what *we* ought to do. These decisions determine who we are and who we would like to be. Ethics is about the interaction between identity, values and relationships. Living well requires recognising and valuing others and being recognised and valued in return.

> Common standards, common ideals, common tastes, common priorities that make a common morality possible, rest on shared joys and sorrows and all require active sympathy. Morality needs, not just conflicts, but a willingness and a capacity to look for shared solutions to them.
>
> Mary Midgley, 'The origins of ethics' in P. Singer, ed., 1991, *A Companion to Ethics*, p. 12.

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Values and valuing

Ethics involves making **value judgements**, but not all value judgements we make involve ethics. We make value judgements all the time, some personal and idiosyncratic and some shared. When we value things we make decisions on what we like or don't like. You might like fishing, but not netball. Or, you might like them both, but prefer netball. You might value wealth, but would you sacrifice family or friends to get it?

Values even come into play when you buy a pair of jeans. Aesthetic values might determine the style and colour. Economic values could be a consideration – what you can afford, or what you are willing to spend. You might also be concerned whether the jeans were made using child labour, or whether the dyes and chemicals used are harmful to the environment. It might get even more complicated if one brand of jeans donates a portion of its profits to charity.

It's a complicated world, and ethics doesn't make it easier; it just makes us more involved. Perhaps life would be easier if we didn't have to make choices. But even choosing not to make choices is a choice!

FIGURE 5.3
Ethics and values come into play when making all types of purchases

Values and ethics

Clearly, many decisions we need to make involve conflicting values. Ethics is a conversation in which we prioritise our conflicting values. We may ask:

- Is this fair?
- Will anyone be harmed?
- Is this the caring thing to do?
- Am I being truthful?
- Am I promoting the best for others and for myself?
- Am I being as good as I can be?
- Am I being responsible?
- Would I like others to treat me in this way?
- Is this conduct appropriate to my role?
- Am I treating this person with respect or as a means to and end?

If our values never conflicted, ethical conversation would be unnecessary.

We apply reasoning and sort through what values and principles are important, but we also consider who will be affected. Relationships come into the picture, because ethical reasoning involves regarding others. It takes into account the practical and emotional interests of other people. That is why, at its best, ethics seeks to resolve value conflicts by reasoning *together*. This is also why ethics usually ends up embedded in traditions.

value judgement
a judgement that assigns a value, as to an object or action; a subjective evaluation.

Ethical traditions

Traditions can be viewed as magnified forms of peer pressure, which potentially undermine reason. Certainly, we should not follow traditions slavishly and uncritically but should combine our own thoughts with the guidance of tradition. Our cultural and religious traditions can give us the strength to make informed choices.

Our personal values are always embedded in social relationships. By the time we are morally responsible for our own actions, we have already been shaped by our families and our community. We take on many of our values from our parents, brothers, sisters, uncles and aunts. We might also be influenced by teachers, coaches, persons we admire in public life or religious

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leaders. Such influences may not always be positive; we might form our values in reaction to these figures, choosing to follow a different path.

We often apply different values to different areas of life. We might highly value competitiveness on the sporting field, but value cooperation at work; or competition between schools, but cooperation within our school. We might order our values for our personal life in one way, but find that our job requires a different ordering of priorities.

Activity 5.7

Framing, reasoning and reflecting: values and choices

Influences on values

Use Chart 1 on Worksheet 5.7 to complete this activity.

1 Write your name in the centre circle.
2 In the ring closest to the centre circle, name the people and aspects of cultural and religious tradition that have had a very strong influence on the formation of your values.
3 In the outer circles, show those who have had only minimal influence on the formation of your values.

Influences on particular choices

Use Chart 2 on Worksheet 5.7 to complete this activity.

1 Nominate a situation in which you might be faced with an ethical choice.
2 Write your name in the centre circle
3 In the ring closest to the centre circle, name the people and aspects of cultural and religious tradition that would have a very strong influence on your choice in this situation.
4 In the outer circles, show those with less influence who have only minimal influence on your decision.
5 Account for differences and similarities between the two diagrams.

Ethics in religious traditions

In most religions, living ethically is both a road to **salvation** or enlightenment and the pathway beyond it. This is portrayed in the accounts of the Buddha who, upon achieving **enlightenment** (nirvana), returns to the world to show others the way.

FIGURE 5.4
The Buddha's enlightenment

All religions have practical codes. Islam has **Five Pillars** and ethical teachings; Buddhism has the **Eightfold Path** and Precepts; Judaism has the **Decalogue**; Christians have the Sermon on the Mount. In Australian Indigenous religions, the law is an important link between the land, people and living. The ethical insights of religious founders are elaborated by their followers. Thus we find the interpretation of the *Torah* in the Jewish *Talmud*, an elaboration of the Christian life in the letters of the apostle Paul and the principles contained in the *Hadith*, or sayings, of Muhammad. Current religious communities and leaders also interpret insights from these sources for the circumstances of today.

Throughout this chapter, we will examine how the ethics of each religious community is shaped by its own distinctive religious experiences and history. It is important to keep in mind that within each religious tradition there may be divergent views on practical ethical issues. Religions are dynamic, not static.

salvation saving the soul or preservation from loss or disaster

enlightenment gaining insight or wisdom which informs or instructs the individual

Five Pillars the term given to the five duties incumbent on every Muslim

Eightfold Path one of the principal teachings of Buddhism; the way leading to the cessation of suffering and the achievement of self-awakening

Decalogue the Ten Commandments

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Activity 5.8

Investigating: religious ethics

Compare the attitudes of different religions to a range of ethical issues. Avoid neon light issues such as abortion, euthanasia and stem cell research. Concentrate on topics such as:

1 war and peace
2 sexuality and marriage
3 gender relations
4 the environment
5 social justice
6 poverty and wealth
7 racism
8 slavery.

Write your responses in the table on Worksheet 5.8.

Ideas to explore after completing the activity

1 What common elements exist across religions?
2 What changes have occurred within the religious tradition over time?

Frederick Streng, founder of the Society of Asian and Comparative Philosophy, described how ethics are influenced by four main religious worldviews:

1 Religions in which an external creator God transcends the created world (e.g. Judaism, Christianity, Islam).
2 Religions in which ultimate reality is found in the rhythms and order of creation itself (e.g. Taoism, Confucianism, Indigenous religions).
3 Religions that view the created world as an illusion with ultimate reality lying beyond it (e.g. Hinduism and Buddhism).
4 Secular worldviews that see the physical world as devoid of supernatural or transcendent forces.

Ethics and the relationship with a transcendent God

In worldviews such as Judaism, Christianity and Islam, religious codes derive their authority from an external creator God, known through self-revelation to prophets. Belief in an external God creates a variety of religious and ethical responses. For some, God's law was laid down in the past and must simply be obeyed today; for others, God continues to influence the world and the individual believer and the community must discern God's will now.

Judaism and ethics

Judaism is a monotheistic religion whose ethical framework is derived from the *Torah*. The *Torah* sets out a mixture of ethics and laws that are the conditions for a relationship with God. The core outlook of the prescriptions is the Ten Commandments.

The Decalogue (Ten Commandments)

And God spoke all these words, saying,

'I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

'You shall have no other gods before me.

'You shall not make for yourself a graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them or serve them; for I the Lord your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.

'You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain.

'Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labour, and do all your work; but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God; in it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your manservant, or your maidservant, or your cattle, or the sojourner who is within your gates; for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day; therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.

'Honour your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land which the Lord your God gives you.

'You shall not kill.

'You shall not commit adultery.

'You shall not steal.

'You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour.

'You shall not covet your neighbour's house; you shall not covet your neighbour's wife, or his manservant, or his maidservant, or his ox, or his ass, or anything that is your neighbour's.'

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FIGURE 5.5
A portion of the *Torah*

The Beatitudes

Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and when he sat down his disciples came to him. And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying:
'Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
'Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.
'Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.
'Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.
'Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.
'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.
'Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.
'Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Matthew 5:1–10

FIGURE 5.6
Jesus and his disciples as depicted in Leonardo Da Vinci's *The Last Supper*

With the destruction of the Jewish Temple in 70 CE, the *Torah* became an important focal point for the Jewish faith and a guide to a way of life.

Christianity and ethics

Christianity shares a common history with Judaism. Jesus was a Jew living in Palestine, whose teaching seemed to intensify many aspects of the Jewish faith at the time. When asked to sum up the *Torah,* Jesus chose the commandment to love God and love one's neighbour as oneself. Jesus also claimed that the Kingdom of God was being manifested in his ministry.

The ethical standards of this new kingdom can be found in the Sermon on the Mount and are deeply embedded in the prayer Jesus taught his followers, which asks for daily bread, forgiveness of sins, and the coming of God's Kingdom on earth ('The Lord's Prayer', Matthew 6:9–15). The social intent of the latter was clear to the Romans, who crucified him as a failed 'King of the Jews'. But the pattern of Jesus' ministry

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and his teaching in the Sermon on the Mount seems to suggest a non-violent form of confrontation with wrongdoing, ultimately confirmed by his death on the cross and, for believers, vindicated by his resurrection from the dead.

Another significant event shaping early Christianity's ethical life was the conversion of Paul of Tarsus. The early disciples, like Jesus, were Jewish; they saw faithful observance of the Jewish law as a part of the new Christian faith. But the rapid expansion of the Church among the non-Jewish population led to a crisis of ethics. Should these Gentile (non-Jewish) followers of Christ be required to follow the strictures of the Jewish laws?

The debate on this is recorded in the 'Acts of the Apostles' and the letters of Paul.

Activity 5.9

Investigating and reasoning: Council of Jerusalem

Locate Luke's account of the Council of Jerusalem in Acts 15:1–21

1 What disagreement occurred there?
2 What was the outcome?
3 Support or refute the claim that this represented 'a crisis of ethics?' Justify your opinion.

Eventually, the Gentiles were accepted, but it is doubtful this would have happened if Jesus' ministry had not centred on the command to love God and one's neighbour as the ultimate fulfilment of the law. The unanticipated consequence of this choice, however, was the severing of the historical bonds between Judaism and Christianity.

It is often suggested that Paul's ethical vision was radically different from Jesus' teaching but Paul's letters reaffirm the central thrust of Christian ethics – the command to love God and one's neighbour. *Agape* is the most frequently used word for 'love' in the New Testament. It differs from *eros* (sexual love) and *philos* (friendship). *Agape* is a selfless and other-regarding love, once translated as charity. It refers both to the unconditional love of God for humanity and to the love Christians are to show one another. Without love, moral concerns can be harsh and, ultimately, empty (refer to I Corinthians 13:1–13).

Islam and ethics

Islam, a monotheistic religion, has been successful in uniting culturally diverse people around a basic belief in the absolute unity of God. The ethical demands of Islam are derived from the *Qur'an* and the teaching of Muhammad contained in the *Hadith*. Alms-giving, one of the Five Pillars, underlines the strong sense of social responsibility in Islam.

The Five Pillars

1 Recitation of the creed of Islam.
2 Prayer – five times daily.
3 Fasting during Ramadan, the ninth month of the Muslim calendar.
4 Charity – voluntary and obligatory.
5 Pilgrimage to Mecca.

The *Qur'an* also strongly emphasises the ethics of redressing injustice in economic and social life – including improving the status of women:

> 'I shall not lose sight of the labour of any of you who labours in My way be it man or woman; each of you is equal to the other.'
>
> *Qur'an* 3:195

Islam does not place emphasis on externals. Right attitudes are also important to lead an ethical life and include developing an inner sense of **justice**, patience and dealing with people honourably. Women were not to be exploited, they had the right to choose marriage and to divorce. Polygamy was not to be entered into unless equality could be maintained. Gambling and alcohol were prohibited as disruptive of community life.

justice
the concept of moral rightness based on ethics, rationality, law, natural law, fairness and equity

> 'He is not a believer who eats his fill while his neighbour remains hungry by his side.'
>
> from the *Hadith* of the Prophet Muhammad

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There are many detailed rules that spell out obligations in areas such as worship, alms-giving, fasting, personal hygiene, diet, through to civil law. What is not expressly forbidden is allowed and seen as an expression of God's generosity. Followers have found that an ethical system of clearly defined core responsibilities can tolerate much cultural diversity around the edges.

responsibility the quality or state of being responsible; moral, legal, or mental accountability

custom any agreed, stipulated or generally accepted standards, norms, social norms or criterion

Ethics as the experience of harmony and rhythms of the natural world

In Taoism, Confucianism, Indigenous spirituality and some elements of Hinduism, religious life is framed by tuning in to the harmony and rhythm of the natural world. Such moral codes stress harmony, cooperation and thoughtfulness.

Confucianism and ethics

Confucius (551–479 BCE) stressed social harmony because he thought that the shortcomings of the social and political order were not caused by human wickedness but by the lack of social cohesion. Confucius argued that moral **responsibility** should structure political life and so everyday life is ordered by:

- *li* – conducting ritual and **custom** in the right spirit of respect and restraint
- *ren* – virtue
- *xiao* – familial devotion
- *yi* – rightness
- *shu* – reciprocity.

Practising moderation reflects the Way of Heaven.

Australian Indigenous spirituality and ethics

Reciprocity is also an important value for Indigenous Australians. Social harmony is based on exercising

FIGURE 5.7
The relationship between Indigenous Australians and the land come to embody the law

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FIGURE 5.8
National Sorry Day

responsibility towards the law, the land and each other. The stories and rituals surrounding particular sacred sites and the sites themselves come to embody the law. Features of the landscape become the reminders of *Dreaming* events – interactions between spirit beings.

These stories dramatise what happens when the law is not followed. Telling these stories embodies the moral principles that order life in the community: respect for others and equality and responsibility, for oneself, one's family and the land. Spirit and **integrity** are values that acknowledge the importance of continuity of cultural identity, beliefs and values, from the past into the future.

Based on their long history of dispossession and exploitation, Indigenous people are sensitive to the ways in which the dominant culture can have negative impacts on cultural beliefs and practices. Survival and protection are thus two values that influence Indigenous decision making today. The question is asked: Will this course of action contribute to the survival or the destruction of Indigenous culture?

Ethics as a response to experiencing the world as less than real

In Hinduism and Buddhism, the material world is viewed as an imperfect part of the natural order. Human beings are doomed to cycles of reincarnation (Hinduism) or rebirth (Buddhism). Desires bind human beings to the wheel of suffering, the cycle of sorrows that is this material world. Liberation from this world is gained through becoming enlightened.

In Hinduism this is *Brahman*, a holy power which sustains everything; in Buddhism this is nirvana, or nothingness. The way to enlightenment is through disciplining the body and freeing the conscious mind through yoga or meditation. Freeing the mind, involves freeing oneself from ideas of right and wrong. Enlightenment partly involves achieving a state of mind in which such distinctions are left behind.

integrity
a concept comprising perceived consistency of actions, values, methods, measures and principles

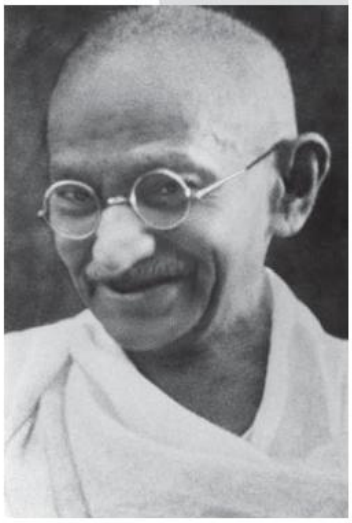
Hinduism and ethics

Hindu ethics are founded on a rich history of influences, reflected in texts such as the *Vedas* and the *Upanishads* (c. 900–200 BCE) and popular epics such as the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*. In modern times, the non-violent activism of Mohandas Gandhi, which he termed *satyagraha*, was intended to show the social power of moral influence.

In Hinduism, each person has an *atman* that can be reincarnated many times. Reincarnation is not seen as a good thing, unless one achieves a better rebirth. The ultimate goal is to achieve release from the cycle of rebirth (*moksha*) and not be reborn at all. Progression in the cycles of rebirth is determined by *karma*, the accumulation of good or bad merit from one's actions.

The rightness and wrongness of one's actions is determined by one's position in society. One progresses by fulfilling one's *dharma*, one's duty in relation to one's caste or stage of life. Consider the story of Arjuna, the warrior trembling in fear before a battle with his kin, in which many will die. His charioteer Krishna, the incarnation

FIGURE 5.9
Gandhi engaged in several famous hunger strikes to protest British rule of India. Fasting was a non-violent way of communicating the message and achieving his goal, while keeping with the rules of *satyagraha*.



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of *Vishnu*, advises him that he must follow his *dharma* as a member of the warrior caste. As Arjuna can only kill the body, releasing the souls of his foes to migrate from one life to another, he should face the battle in an attitude of *nuishkama karma* or 'disinterested action'.

> If any man thinks he slays, and if another thinks he is slain, neither knows the ways of truth. The Eternal in man cannot kill: the Eternal in man cannot die …
>
> *Bhagavad Gita* 2:22

> Not by refraining from action does man attain freedom from action. Not by mere renunciation does he attain supreme perfection.
>
> But great is the man who, free from attachments, and with a mind ruling its powers in harmony, works the path of *Karma Yoga*.
>
> *Bhagavad Gita* 3:4–5

Buddhism and ethics

The Buddha suggested a solution to human suffering in the Four Noble Truths by following a 'middle way' to enlightenment. This middle way was the Noble Eightfold Path, an ethical system characterised by simplicity, frugality and compassion. For laypeople, the Noble Eightfold Path includes Five Precepts and for monks, it has **Ten Precepts**.

Ten Precepts fundamental Buddhist values related to ethical and moral teaching

The Noble Eightfold Path

1 Right Understanding
2 Right Resolve
3 Right Speech
4 Right Action
5 Right Livelihood
6 Right Endeavour
7 Right Mindfulness
8 Right Concentration.

The Five Precepts serve as a guide to living and to the pursuit of nirvana. As with Hinduism, the ultimate goal in the advanced stages of meditation and contemplation is a state of consciousness that lies beyond good and evil but does not lead to a lack of concern. Selfless action and compassion towards all **sentient** beings is mandated.

sentient conscious, aware

From ways of life to ethical theories

Years ago, there was a series of books that introduced every sport and pastime. Imagine my disappointment when I opened one on Rugby League and found it just contained the rules of the game! Just knowing the rules doesn't give you the skills to play well. Similarly, religious ethics are more than rules to be followed. Religious traditions provide a multi-dimensional, interactive experience of ultimate concerns: they interpret the state of the world, offer explanations of its problems, posit solutions and provide guidelines for living within community. Individual judgement, interpretation and application to present circumstances are still needed.

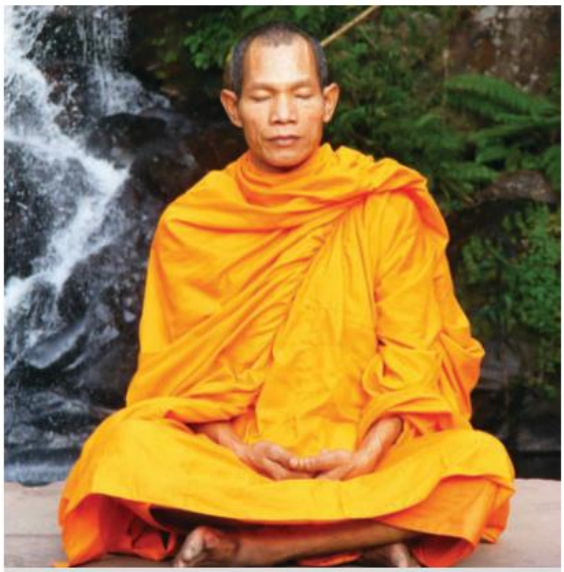

FIGURE 5.10
Buddhists view meditation as a tool for achieving a state of consciousness beyond good and evil

Ethics and the Western philosophical tradition

In Western tradition, the desire to interpret the world without having to refer to religious experiences or teachings gained impetus in the fifteenth century. Many leading thinkers argued that important issues, including ethics, ought to be resolved by appealing to reason rather than faith. This led scholars to search for a set of universal, and abstract, rules to govern the moral universe, similar to the discovery of abstract and universal laws that explained the physical world. Compared to religious traditions, the ethical frameworks of philosophy seem more like analytical tools than ways of life.

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What would you do in the following situations?

Transplant

Imagine you are a doctor in the emergency department of a hospital. You have three patients who are in urgent need of organ transplants. A homeless man arrives at the hospital, who has no relatives or friends. He is diagnosed with a terminal condition that will definitely end his life in the next week. Should you kill the man in order to use his organs to save three lives?

Trolley

Imagine you are in charge of the switches that control a railway intersection. A freight locomotive is out of control, and heading towards the intersection. On one track, there is a lone repairman; on the other, there are three repairmen. The runaway train will kill one or, at least, the other three. Which way will you send the train?

Consequentialist approach

Most of us would find 'Transplant' shocking. Even though we could save three lives, our intuition is that it would not be the right thing to do. In this case, we would be directly violating a principle, or duty, that we ought not to kill another human being – even if a greater good may come of it.

Yet, most people's intuition in 'Trolley' is to divert the train to kill only one worker. Suddenly, numbers do count. In this case, we seem to accept that a consideration of consequences is important and we should attempt to do the greatest good for the greatest number. This concept is known as **consequentialism**.

The two dilemmas reveal something important about ethical frameworks. Our intuitions seem to provide some support for each framework or can lead us to be critical of each framework. Philosophers think our intuitions, if shared, can be an important starting point for ethical reflection, preventing us from taking our theories to logical, but impossible conclusions. Interestingly, in religious ethics the idea of individual conscience prevents the believer from over emphasising the authority of the scriptures or religious leaders.

One way of deciding the right thing to do, without reference to divine commands, is to consider the consequences of each action. For utilitarians, this meant doing that which would bring the greatest good to the greatest number of people, thus maximising happiness and minimising suffering. An early proponent was Jeremy Bentham (1748–1832) who defined happiness in terms of pleasure and the avoidance of pain.

> Nature has placed mankind under the governance of two sovereign masters, pleasure and pain. It is for them alone to point out what we ought to do, as well as determine what we shall do.
>
> Jeremy Bentham, 1871, *On the Principles of Utility*

Utilitarianism involves much calculation. Bentham had utilitarian rules for punishment, for example, 'When two offences come in competition, the punishment for the greater offence must be sufficient to induce a man to prefer the less'.

utilitarianism the idea that the moral worth of an action is determined solely by its overall contribution to the happiness of society as a whole

Utilitarianism's practical flaw is that it assumes people act rationally, even when they are breaking the law. People in public roles cannot simply consider their own interests but must have a heightened concern for the impact of their decisions on the lives of others. The consideration of consequences seems appropriate, thus utilitarian frameworks continue to be influential in political and business life.

Peter Singer, a well-known Australian philosopher, has written about what he calls welfare utilitarianism. He argues that animals share with humans a capacity to suffer, so we ought to recognise that animals have an interest in not being killed. Some critics worry that the notion of a radical equality between humans and animals devalues the uniqueness of human beings.

Ironically, animal rights rest not on the shared capacity of sentient beings to feel pain, but on the unique capacity of human beings to think that this counts. Controversially, Singer argues that an animal capable of suffering may have more rights than a human baby born without a brain, that is incapable of pain and will shortly die.

consequentialism a term referring to moral theories that stress that only the consequences of a particular action form the basis for any valid moral judgement

Principlist approach

There are those who see Singer's welfare utilitarian framework as violating certain principles that ought to be followed regardless of the consequences. They argue that Singer's position violates a duty not to take life. This concept has become known as **duty-based ethics**. A Buddhist, for example, who believes in expressing compassion towards all living beings would refrain from taking animal life. However, a Christian

duty-based ethics a branch of ethics concerned with what people do, not with the consequences of their actions

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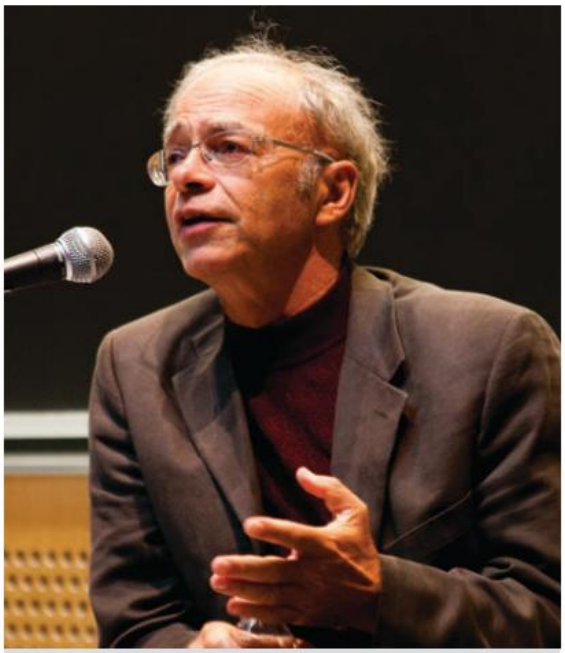

FIGURE 5.11
Peter Singer

might limit the prohibition on killing to human life only, or even just to innocent human life.

On the surface, the Buddhist and Peter Singer appear to have the same attitude to not killing animals, but they result from very different frameworks. The Buddhist prohibition against taking life is not derived from a utilitarian consideration of pain but from the Five Precepts, which say all forms of life must be treated with compassion.

In the principlist approach, often referred to as deontology, or duty-based ethics, we have a duty to tell the truth – telling a lie is always wrong, regardless of the consequences. We cannot control the consequences, but we can choose to fulfil a moral duty. Critics argue that this would be difficult to apply in all circumstances. Would we tell a man with an axe in his hand that his battered and bruised wife is in our kitchen? Would it not be better to tell a lie and try to divert him? Of course, we do not know where our lying might lead – he might end up killing someone else instead – and that is the point the principalist is making: we cannot control consequences, we can only control our actions, so we should do our duty at all times.

virtue ethics a branch of ethics that is person rather than action based; exploring the virtue or moral character of the person carrying out an action, rather than the ethical duties, rules, or consequences of particular actions

ethics of care a more practical branch of ethical theory that stresses importance of relationships and an appreciation of practical needs

Principlists argue that moral duties are universal – they are duties that should be followed by everybody in similar sets of circumstances. So, for example, we support equal justice for all and the application of our laws to all. While the consequentialist approach has us calculating what will happen next in any situation, principlists try to read the situation from an outside point of view, from an external set of rules.

Virtue ethics

Virtue ethics looks to what lies within a person. Achieving a good outcome depends upon the character of the person involved. One doesn't have to decide to tell the truth in a particular situation or fulfil one's duty to tell the truth, one comes to the situation as an honest person. Character virtues can be cultivated through practice. There are many virtues that we can cultivate, including truthfulness, courage, compassion, self-control, generosity, gentleness and modesty, to name but a few.

Bobby Jones (1902–1971), a famous US amateur golfer, once lost a tournament by one stroke. His ball had moved while he was adjusting his club to hit it – a two stroke penalty. No one else had seen it move. When handing him second prize, the tournament officials praised him effusively for his good sportsmanship. But Jones would have none of it. 'You may as well praise people for not robbing banks', he said.

Care ethics

Carol Gilligan was a student of the moral psychologist, Lawrence Kohlberg, who theorised that moral development proceeded through several stages: from concrete thinking to working with abstract ideas and universal principles. Kohlberg's research subjects were all men. Gilligan's research subjects were all women. She found her subjects focused on relationships and needs rather than rights and universal laws For Kohlberg this indicated a 'lower' stage of moral development, but for Gilligan it indicated a different approach altogether.

Gilligan referred to Kohlberg's abstract approach as an ethics of justice. She called the approach her female subjects took an **ethics of care**. This approach involved asking a different set of questions when

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FIGURE 5.12
Carol Gilligan

faced with an ethical dilemma, although it might not necessarily lead to different solutions.

A care ethic is more practical than traditional philosophical approaches because it adds to reasoning a sensitive appreciation of practical needs and caring responses to those needs. An ethics of care focuses on alleviating hurts while maintaining connectedness. A caring person weighs consequences by consulting those involved.

The concreteness of an ethics of care can be summed up in the concept of 'voice'. A voice is an embodied reality. Voices can be different, but they can learn to harmonise. Voices combine emotion and content. Voices are not so much right and wrong or true and false; but they can be strong or weak, hesitant or confident. Most importantly, the concept of voice encourages us to ask: 'Have all voices been heard on this issue?'

Virtue ethics, care ethics and our intuitions

Looking again at the transplant and trolley hypotheticals, how would virtue ethics or care ethics shape our intuitions?

Certainly, the virtue of courage would be required in the 'Trolley' example. Virtue ethics would also make us think twice in the 'Transplant' example, because we might not want to be the kind of person who killed someone to do 'good' for the greater number. Care ethics would make us think deeply about our obligations to care for all those involved in both cases, particularly what happens after we make our momentous decision – a consideration often left out of traditional hypothetical dilemmas.

Ethics in everyday life

The insights of the ethics of care framework can be helpful when exploring ethical issues in everyday life. Not all ethical issues involve dilemmas in dramatic situations. To unlock everyday ethics issues, a toolbox of abstract principles or theories will be of limited use. We also need a series of questions that can help us better appreciate practical needs and foster and maintain connectedness.

Moral responsibility demands *intellectual skills, skills of perception, discursive skills* and *responding skills*. Acting responsibly requires good communication, because morality is always interpersonal.

Applying ethics: a multidimensional approach

According to ethicists Peter Isaacs and David Massey, applying ethics in everyday life is not about being an expert in theories but about creating and sustaining relationships which mutually recognise the needs, interests, and aspirations of all participants.

1 **Explore meanings**
First we need to ask questions which will help us to understand the frameworks of all participants, individual and institutional. Who are the participants? From their point of view: what is at stake? What are their assumptions, insights and limitations? What is going on here? What meanings does this have for the participants?

2 **Appreciate particulars, including constraints on choices**
The second set of questions we should ask acknowledges the richness, complexity and particularity of others. Do I understand the factors that enable or constrain them? Is engagement

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Applying ethics: a multidimensional approach

with others being promoted, or are solutions being advocated from a distance without a deeper understanding of the situation? Are relationships, practices, individuals, institutions and communities being morally enriched?

3 Explore ethical frameworks
We can now bring in appropriate ethical frameworks from our religious and philosophical traditions. We can ask: What values, principles, and virtues should inform our response? What would be the caring thing to do?

4 Do something about it
Our inquiry should not end with an intellectual appraisal. We need to ask: What can we do about this? What strategies for change are appropriate? What strategies are other participants already using to promote their values? What possibilities are there for informing, educating, mobilising, mediating or, if necessary, resisting?

Ethics and society

Religious ethics and secular law

Morals are not only codified in religious traditions; they are also codified into laws. We tend to treat moral issues and legal issues differently. If people act unethically, they can expect the disapproval of their fellows, but when people break laws they can expect to be punished. The boundary between law and ethics is changing constantly. In Australia in the past, for example, the law could punish people for committing adultery. Today, we no long put people in jail for committing adultery, but it is still not considered to be ethical. Ethical issues have also crossed into the law. In the past, men often harassed women in the workplace with impunity, but in Australia today they would be breaking the law and liable to legal sanctions.

Ethics is an 'outlaw' phenomenon – we need ethics to help us decide what to do in situations not covered by laws; for example, areas beyond the reach of the law, such as personal relationships, but also in situations, such as biotechnology or the internet, that are so new that the legal system has yet to catch up. We even need ethics to determine whether the laws that govern us are good or bad.

FIGURE 5.13
A study of ethics has much to offer the legal and medical professions when dealing with new technologies

Activity 5.10

Investigating, reasoning and judging: your school community and shared ethics

Identify and list elements in your school that demonstrate conversation about preferred action or inaction and shared values or principles. Your list might include:

1 the school rules
2 the school crest and motto
3 the school song
4 the uniform
5 the school mission statement
6 any symbolic objects or gestures which are part of your school tradition.

Activity 5.11

Reasoning and judging

Look at the answers you gave for Activity 5.10.

1 What values do the elements promote?
2 How do they shape the identity of the school?
3 What actions do they encourage?
4 What impact might these actions have on others?
5 Do they represent a shared conversation about common values?
6 How does your school community look for shared solutions rather than conflict?

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The ethics of tolerance and inclusion of minorities

How far ought our 'other-regard' go? Most of us can comfortably extend our other-regard to include our family or a group we identify with. But we may also be called upon to consider the common good; that is, the good of the whole community, not just our section of it. How do we determine the common good?

The concept of democracy is important to our political process, but we should be wary of 'fifty-one percent-ism', the idea that the common good can be defined simply according to the wishes of the majority. As a guide to moral issues, the common good ought to be a common *good*, not just the common preference. An alternative view is that the common good ought to be defined in terms of common needs, those things we value and which we need to affirm in order to live together as a community. **Tolerance**, for instance, would be a key value in building and sustaining the community, as would respect for the law, so long as all sections of the community have an equal potential to determine what those laws ought to be. Respect for the common good may necessarily involve a commitment to respect and protect minority groups and minority opinions.

Ethics and the professions

Professions have traditions with strong values and beliefs, often reflected in their codes of ethics and conduct. A good example of is the Hippocratic Oath, associated with the medical profession. While doctors often no longer swear this oath, they are still required to uphold the standards expressed in their more contemporary codes of ethics.

Each profession has its own distinctive values related to the overall good that is pursued on behalf of clients. These can be identified by examining the profession's code of ethics and noting the values and principles it contains. But principlism is only one way to frame ethics. We could also examine a code of ethics and identify which relationships are included and which are left out. For example, a code of ethics for teachers might mention the teaching professions, the school and the student. Does it also mention parents and the community? What about the environment?

FIGURE 5.14
A newly qualified doctor

tolerance
a term used in social, cultural and religious contexts to describe attitudes which are respectful of practices or group memberships

Activity 5.12

Reasoning and judging: analysing a code of ethics

1 Choose a code of ethics from the list provided and look it up on the internet.
   a Queensland Education
   b AMA
   c Queensland Police
   d Australian Journalists' Association
   e Early Childhood Education
   f Advertising Federation of Australia.
2 Underline words or phrases which express a value or principle.
3 In a different colour, highlight words that identify a relationship.
4 Which values have been left out?
5 Which relationships have not been included?

The nature of the relationship between the professional and the client is important. It is not a contractual relationship between two equally powerful self-interested parties. A professional–client

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relationship is a fiduciary relationship; that is, a relationship founded on trust. The client expects the professional to keep his or her promise to act in the client's interest. This type of relationship has been called a covenantal relationship. A **covenant** sets out the terms of the agreement, the standards to be met, but it also marks the beginning of an ongoing relationship of trust between the parties concerned.

covenant
a formal, solemn and binding agreement

Conclusion

We have arrived again at the theme introduced at the beginning of this chapter: ethics is not only about values and principles; it is also about identities and relationships – a view that, as we have seen, is summed up in the words of Margaret Urban Walker: 'In learning morality, we learn who we are, to whom we are connected and what matters enough to care about and care for.

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End of chapter activities

Activity 5.13

Framing

1 In pairs, list ways in which people determine what actions are right and wrong (for example, if someone were given $10 extra change at the local newsagent).
2 Write your own account of a situation in which you and a friend disagreed about what was morally right and what was morally wrong.
3 Think – pair – share: locate two different kinds of religious ethical guidelines represented in the media as 'extremely strict'. Pair with a classmate to enlarge your list to four, then share these four answers with another pair so that each student has a list of eight.
4 Conduct a Google images search using the word 'ethics'. Of the first 20 images provided by the search engine, choose one image to deconstruct. Explain what the elements of the image mean and how the image overall relates to the search term. Repeat this activity using the word 'values.'

Activity 5.14

Reasoning

1 Create a mind map to organise the ideas covered in this chapter, showing their relationships to each other. Use one of the templates on Worksheet 5.14.
2 Complete the consequences web on Worksheet 5.14 for one of the following statements:
   a If everyone acted according to Buddhist ethics on war and peace, then …
   b If women and men were genuinely treated equally, then …

Activity 5.15

Reasoning, judging and reflecting

Choose an ethical issue in the news recently and write a letter to the editor of the *Courier Mail* starting with a normative statement about this issue. This should be justified with reference to a particular ethical framework and/or religious ethical code.

Activity 5.16

Reflecting

Complete the 'I learnt' email template on Worksheet 5.16.

1 In your email consider what you have learnt in this unit, how you feel about it, what action you might take as a result.
2 In pairs, share the information in your email, rotating several times.

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Ethnographic investigation: religion, values and ethics

For an overview of the ethnographic investigation section of the course, refer to page x.

Investigation 5.1

This investigation might be used at any stage of a course in Study of Religion. The findings may be presented in a multi-modal presentation, essay, report or feature article.

Framing

1 Revisit your learning about religion, values and ethics so far. You should already have followed an inquiry process focused on an area of inquiry within this topic. In this ethnographic investigation you will consolidate, apply and expand this knowledge and understanding.
2 Consider who might be a suitable subject or subjects to interview for this ethnographic investigation.
3 Choose and research an ethical issue around which to base this process of inquiry. This may be a 'neon light' issue but remember you may obtain equally interesting results about an 'everyday' ethical issue.
4 Research the ethical code of the interviewee's religion and the religion's teachings about how this code should be applied to inform yourself before the interview.
5 Select, gather, record and sort all your information in an organised manner.
6 Plan your approach to, and timeframe for, this learning activity.
7 Carefully choose an interview subject. The interviewee needs to be an adherent of a religion. Because of the nature of this topic, you may need to offer your subject anonymity.

Investigating and reasoning

Carefully devise open questions in order to elicit the most useful data on the following areas of consideration (and others if you wish).

1 What the interviewee knows about the ethical issue in question.
2 What the interviewee knows about their religion's ethical code and how it applies to the ethical issue in question.
3 Whether the interviewee agrees with their religion's standpoint on the issue in question.
4 What reasons the interviewee has to agree or disagree with their religion's standpoint.
5 Whether the interviewee disagrees with their religion's ethical code on this particular issue, whether there is a 'bigger picture' ethic at play e.g. love.
6 Whether the interviewee agrees with their religion's ethical code on this particular issue, what they see as being the 'bigger picture' ethical principle underlying the code.
7 Interview your subject and take detailed notes. You may wish to ask for permission to record the interview. If you do so, provide a copy of the transcript to the interviewee for their approval afterwards.
8 Organise your notes and determine the nature of connections or contrasts between the interview data and your background research.
9 Carry out further research if necessary.

Reasoning

1 Do your interviewee's personal views on this issue align with their religion's ethical code?
2 What are the points of similarity and difference?
3 Based on evidence you have gathered, suggest reasons for these points of similarity and difference (for example, profession, age, gender, background, ethnicity, lifestyle …)

Judging

1 Draw conclusions about the extent to which your interviewee's personal ethics align with the ethical code of their religion.
2 Are the reasons for their following or non-following of their religion's ethical code in this regard valid, in your opinion and why or why not?

Taking it further

Following a similar process, interview or survey a larger sample of people who belong to a particular religious community. Identify any trends and then draw conclusions about the ethical ideas and behaviour of people in this community, relative to their religion's official teaching.

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CHAPTER SIX

SCHOOL-BASED TOPIC — RELIGION AND HUMAN RIGHTS

'There is no higher religion than human service. To work for the common good is the greatest creed.'

Albert Schweitzer

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

This chapter discusses:

- The *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*
- The Krishnaswami study
- Covenants on human rights
- The *Declaration on Intolerance and Discrimination based on Religion or Belief*
- Human rights and the world's major religions
- China and human rights
- Australia and human rights
- Religious freedom

KEY terms

human rights | religious freedom | discrimination | covenants

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Background

For the first time since the commencement of Study of Religion in the late 1980s, schools have the option of offering a school-based topic. According to the syllabus, this may be offered for at least half a semester and for no more than a whole semester. The school-based topic must align with the rationale and objectives of the 2008 Study of Religion syllabus, use the inquiry process outlined on page 11 of the syllabus and integrate the core into the chosen topic.

This chapter explores one of the options available for the school-based topic: religion and human rights.

Introduction

The United Nations *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* expresses hope for an end to the scourge of war and oppression. But it has also provoked heated arguments about whose rights matter more – the individual's or the community's. The concept of **human rights** becomes even more complex when religion is considered. Where Christianity has made significant contributions to the Declaration and subsequent human rights documents, many Islamic countries believe that the assumptions underpinning human rights are alien to Islam and are solely the product of Western liberalism.

human rights basic rights that belong fundamentally to all humans, such as civil and political rights, right to life and liberty, freedom of expression, equality before the law, the right to participate in culture, the right to food, work and the right to education

This chapter opens up conversations around human rights and religion and the complexities involved in investigating religion and human rights.

Activity 6.1

Framing

1 What are human rights?
2 How are they similar to, or different from, other rights?
3 What responsibilities accompany human rights?
4 How are human rights administered?
5 How do human rights relate to religion?
6 What gave rise to the UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights?
7 Name and describe any of the 30 articles enshrined in the UN document.

The *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*

After World War II, the United Nations (UN) took a leading role in formulating a charter of rights, which was not just guaranteed in their members' constitutions but also secured by international law. In 1945, the UN Charter called for respect for human rights and fundamental freedom but did not specify what these entailed. Under the leadership of Eleanor Roosevelt, the widow of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, the new Commission of Human Rights worked to develop the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (UDHR), which was proclaimed by the UN Assembly in 1948.

To a large extent, human rights can be traced to Judeo-Christian concepts and European Enlightenment philosophies. Human rights emerged from Western traditions of justice that valued the individual, humanism, rationalism and legal principles that protected individual rights.

According to the preamble in the UDHR, human rights are the 'recognition of the inherent dignity and

FIGURE 6.1
Eleanor Roosevelt with the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*

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of the equal and inalienable right of all members of the human family [and] the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world.' This statement is grounded in a Western notion that rights belong equally to all people by virtue of the fact that they are human.

FIGURE 6.2
United Nations Headquarters in New York

Activity 6.2

Investigating

Read the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* below. Note the articles that specifically deal with religion. Find examples of how they are applied in different countries and cultures.

Activity 6.3

Investigating and reasoning

Make a class list of situations in which human rights have not been upheld and discuss how the rights in question have been violated. Has religion been a factor in any of these situations and, if so, how?

The United Nations *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*

(Abridged version)

Article 1. All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.
Article 2. Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.
Article 3. Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.
Article 4. No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms.
Article 5. No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.
Article 6. Everyone has the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law.
Article 7. All are equal before the law and are entitled without any **discrimination** to equal protection of the law.
Article 8. Everyone has the right to an effective remedy by the competent national tribunals for acts violating the fundamental rights.
Article 9. No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile.
Article 10. Everyone is entitled in full equality to a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal.
Article 11. Everyone charged with a penal offence has the right to be presumed innocent until proved guilty according to law in a public trial.
Article 12. No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence.
Article 13. Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state.
Article 14. Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution.
Article 15. Everyone has the right to a nationality.
Article 16. Men and women of full age, without any limitation due to race, nationality or religion, have the right to marry and to found a family.
Article 17. Everyone has the right to own property alone as well as in association with others.

discrimination prejudiced outlook, action, or treatment of, or against, a person or group based on class or category rather than individual merit

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The United Nations *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* continued

Article 18. Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.
Article 19. Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression.
Article 20. Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association.
Article 21. Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country.
Article 22. Everyone, as a member of society, has the right to social security.
Article 23. Everyone has the right to work.
Article 24. Everyone has the right to rest and leisure.
Article 25. Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being.
Article 26. Everyone has the right to education.
Article 27. Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community.
Article 28. Everyone is entitled to a social and international order in which the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration can be fully realized.
Article 29. Everyone has duties to the community in which alone the free and full development of his personality is possible.
Article 30. Nothing in this Declaration may be interpreted as implying for any state, group or person any right to engage in any activity or to perform any act aimed at the destruction of any of the rights and freedoms set forth herein.

For the full version of the UN *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* refer to: www.un.org/Overview/rights.html

Objections to the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*

While no state voted against the Declaration, Saudi Arabia, South Africa and the Soviet-bloc countries abstained from the vote. Saudi Arabia abstained because it objected to Articles 16 and 18. Saudi Arabia's objection to Article 16 was that it gives women and men equal right to marry and to have a family; equal rights during marriage; and at its dissolution. In full, Article 16 reads:

> (1) Men and women of full age, without any limitation due to race, nationality or religion, have the right to marry and to found a family. They are entitled to equal rights as to marriage, during marriage and at its dissolution.
>
> (2) Marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses.
>
> (3) The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State. (Article 16)

covenants formal, solemn and binding agreements

For Article 18, Saudi Arabia said that the idea of changing your religion was in direct conflict with a true understanding of Islam.

A number of Islamic countries such as Pakistan supported and accepted the Universal Declaration, but Yemen did not turn up for the vote because it agreed with Saudi Arabia's criticism.

While the Declaration set out a number of basic human rights, it took another eighteen years for UN members to agree upon how to give legal force to its principles. Eventually, two international **covenants** were agreed:

1 the *Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*
2 the *Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*.

These two covenants were required because Western liberal democracies wanted to stress liberal rights of the individual and the Soviet-bloc wanted to stress group and class rights of an economic and social nature.

Since then, the UN has developed four documents which relate to religion and belief:

1 the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (1948)
2 the Arcot Krishnaswami study (1959)
3 the *International Covenants on Human Rights* (1966)

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4 the *Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief* (1981).

The *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* and religion

The UDHR, as the founding document for all international human rights treaties, has played an important legal and intellectual role for over 60 years. Specific articles of the Declaration refer to religion: Article 2 forbids distinctions of any kind, including religion, Article 26 refers to religious groups and covers the right of education and Article 29 addresses the limitation of proclaimed rights and protecting religious rights.

Article 18, which specifically relates to religious rights, was not only incorporated into the 1966 Covenants, but was influential in the 1981 Declaration. Article 18 can be divided into two parts: the first guarantees the right to freedom of thought, conscience religion and the second spells out the specific rights included within the Article.

The term 'belief' has a particular meaning in the Declaration and relates specifically to religion. It does not refer to political or scientific beliefs and was incorporated to protect non-religious convictions such as atheism or agnosticism.

One of the difficulties with Article 18 was the recognition of the right to change one's religion, a right which is denied in some countries and by some religions. Article 18 also makes reference to religious groups and how religious rights can be exercised by a community rather than just acted upon individually.

Activity 6.4

Investigating, reasoning and judging

Examine the cartoons presented at www.un.org/events/humanrights/udhr60/exhibit.shtml as part of the sixtieth anniversary of the UDHR.

1 Choose two cartoons to analyse and, for each cartoon, explain who or what is represented and how these representations help to construct a message about human rights.
2 Choose one cartoon and explain what alternate or resistant reading/s might be possible.
3 Are there any cartoons in which you think the cartoonist's country of origin has particularly influenced the message their cartoon communicates? If so, which ones and how?
4 Choose one cartoon and assess whether its message is fair and/or accurate? Give reasons for your answer.
5 According to these cartoons, how much difference has the publication of the UDHR made in the world? Provide evidence from the cartoons to support your answer.
6 Extension activity: Design your own cartoon to communicate a message about international human rights.

The Krishnaswami study

The Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities commissioned Arcot Krishnaswami, from India, to examine the subject of religious human rights. The study was based on the experiences of 82 countries. It included a detailed list of the components that make up the freedom to manifest religion or belief. Krishnaswami argued that freedom to manifest religion or belief included protecting a religion's words, teachings, practice, worship and observance.

FIGURE 6.3
Kebkabiya mother and malnourished child in North Darfur

Some of these religious practices could be subject to permissible limitations, as in the case of human sacrifice, **self-immolation**, mutilation, slavery, prostitution, subversion activities, polygamy and other practices that clash with the requirements of Article 29.

self-immolation
suicide by fire

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FIGURE 6.4
Three women hold up signs at a Darfur rally, 2006

Krishnaswami also wrote a short chapter showing the possible relationships of a religion to the state. These included states with either an established church or a state religion; states that recognised several religions; and states that mandate a separation of religion and state. In a footnote, he referred to anti-Semitism and other forms of racial prejudice. The report ended with sixteen rules that he believed the United Nations should approve.

Activity 6.5

Investigating and reasoning

Read the Krishnaswami study extracts located on Worksheet 6.5 and complete the following tasks:

1 Summarise in your own words the religious freedoms protected by the first 15 rules.
2 How should governments discharge their duty to protect people's religious rights, according to the Krishnaswami study?
3 Describe three imaginary scenarios in which people might call on the Krishnaswami study rules to defend their rights.

Krishnaswami's rules formed the basis of the *Draft Principles of Freedom and Non-Discrimination in the Matter of Religious Rights and Practices.* The Draft Principles are divided into four parts that promote freedom of thought, conscience and religion. Part I affirms the right of all people to follow, or not to follow, a religion or belief according to their own conscience. Part II applies 13 principles that serve as a catalogue of rights.

1 To worship, with equal protection to be accorded to all forms of worship, places of worship and objects necessary for the performance of rites.
2 To journey to sacred places.
3 To observe dietary practices prescribed by the religion or belief.
4 To acquire or produce materials and objects necessary for the prescribed practices, including dietary practices.
5 To have marriage rites performed in accordance with his/her religion or belief and the right to seek marital dissolution and obtain it solely in accordance with the acceptable law, without any discrimination.
6 To have the prescriptions of the religion or belief of a deceased person followed in all matters affecting burial, cremation, or other methods of disposal of the dead
7 To have due account taken of religious holidays and days of rest.
8 To teach or disseminate his/her religion or belief, in public or in private; and to be free from being compelled to take religious or atheistic instruction, contrary to his convictions or, in the case of children, to those of their parents or legal guardians.
9 To train personnel or bring teachers from abroad and to be free from permanent limitations on training abroad.
10 To exemption from compulsory oath-swearing of a religious nature contrary to his/her convictions.
11 To exemption for genuine objectors to military service.
12 To exemption on similar ground from participation in certain public ceremonies.
13 To exemption for priests or ministers of religion from having to divulge information received in confidence in the performance of their religious duties.

Part III addresses restrictions on religion. Part IV states that public authorities should not make

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distinctions about the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion and prevents individuals or groups from doing so. When there is a conflict between two or more religions, public authorities should try to find solutions, reconciling those demands in a manner ensuring the greatest measure of freedom to the whole society.

Activity 6.6

Investigating, reasoning and judging

Consider the *Draft Principles*, as you read the article 'Court upholds law on prisoners' religious rights' online. Answer the questions below:

1 Complete a 'who, what, where, when and why' chart about the legal decision on which this article is based.
2 Why were some people opposed to the statute under consideration by the US Supreme Court?
3 Under what circumstances could prisoners' religious requests be refused under the old law?
4 Under what circumstances can prisoners' religious requests be refused under the new law?
5 In what ways does the ruling uphold the *Draft Principles*? Use evidence from both texts to support your answer.
6 In what ways does the ruling contravene the *Draft Principles*? Use evidence from both texts to support your answer.
7 Is the 2005 US Supreme Court ruling fair? Why or why not?

FIGURE 6.5
People who wear Muslim dress have sometimes been subject to discrimination

there are no problems here regarding the religious practice of the major religions, there have been some difficulties with *shehitah,* the slaughtering of animals according to Jewish tradition (and similar practices in Muslim traditions). Issues related to wearing turbans, skullcaps or veils, or growing facial hair have required adjudication. Inevitably, some religious rites, customs and rules of behaviour clash with public norms, health or morals and judicial intervention becomes necessary.

Article 20 (2) of the ICCPR provides, 'Any advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence shall be prohibited by law'. Importantly, Article 20 does not require intent.

Covenants on human rights

The *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* (ICESCR) and the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* (ICCPR) were adopted in 1966. The most relevant provisions in the ICCPR are Articles 18, 20 and 27.

Article 18 states that 'no one shall be subject to coercion that would impair his/her freedom to follow or to adopt a religion or belief of his choice'. While

The *Declaration on Intolerance and Discrimination based on Religion or Belief*

The *Declaration on Intolerance and Discrimination based on Religion or Belief* was proclaimed on 25 November 1981. It is currently the most important international instruction regarding religious rights and the prohibition of intolerance or discrimination based on religion. The declaration was created in response

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to outbursts of anti-Semitism in several locations in 1959–1960 with many fearing the revival of Nazism. The UN proposed that two declarations be drafted after lobbying by Third World countries who wanted a document on racism but who were largely indifferent to religious discrimination, the Cold War, the Arab-Israeli conflict and the issue of anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union.

FIGURE 6.6
Anti-Semitism and racism in Russia is on the increase

As a result, discussion developed over the term 'religion'. Communist spokespeople argued that 'religion' did not sufficiently cover atheistic beliefs. Western delegates saw the declaration as protecting religious human rights, while also protecting the rights of people without a religion. The word 'whatever' was inserted before 'belief' in the preamble and Article 1(1). Discussion over the right to convert (Article 18(2)) led to the deletion of explicit reference to the right to change one's religion. Article 6 contains a list of freedoms of thought, religion and belief.

The 1981 Declaration was an important breakthrough in the struggle to extend international protection to religion. Unfortunately, the Declaration is not a treaty and therefore is not binding. Nevertheless, it does carry weight and members of the international community are expected to support and obey it under international law.

Activity 6.7

Investigating, reasoning and judging

1 Conduct an internet search and compare ICCPR Article 18 (3) with Article 29 (2) and (3) from the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. What is stated? What conclusions can you draw from the evidence?

2 Examine Article 6 of the *Declaration on Intolerance and Discrimination based on Religion or Belief.*
   a What rights have been included?
   b What rights have been omitted?
   c What might be the reason/s for the omission?

Article 6

In accordance with article I of the present Declaration, and subject to the provisions of article 1, paragraph 3, the right to freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief shall include, inter alia, the following freedoms:

(a) To worship or assemble in connection with a religion or belief, and to establish and maintain places for these purposes;
(b) To establish and maintain appropriate charitable or humanitarian institutions;
(c) To make, acquire and use to an adequate extent the necessary articles and materials related to the rites or customs of a religion or belief;
(d) To write, issue and disseminate relevant publications in these areas;
(e) To teach a religion or belief in places suitable for these purposes;
(f) To solicit and receive voluntary financial and other contributions from individuals and institutions;
(g) To train, appoint, elect or designate by succession appropriate leaders called for by the requirements and standards of any religion or belief;
(h) To observe days of rest and to celebrate holidays and ceremonies in accordance with the precepts of one's religion or belief;
(i) To establish and maintain communications with individuals and communities in matters of religion and belief at the national and international levels.

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Human rights and the world's major religions

Christianity

Christianity is based on the life, teachings and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth. Over the past two thousand years, Christianity has become very diverse. Christians share an extensive literary heritage including the Jewish scriptures, the Christian scriptures, extra-canonical writings and doctrinal writings. The *Bible* has been fundamental in establishing Christian thought and the Christian understanding of humanity and human rights flows from the stories of creation in the book of Genesis, the development of justice in the Hebrew scriptures and the teachings of Jesus in the Christian scriptures. Christian theologians and philosophers have also contributed to understandings of human rights. They have shaped the way in which conversations about human rights have developed over time.

Despite its foundational teachings, historically Christians have not had a perfect record in respecting human rights (e.g. treatment of heretics, slavery, post-Reformation religious intolerance and conversions of Indigenous peoples). On the other hand, Western Christianity was the first religion to recognise and promote religious liberty and freedom. While religious liberty is primarily concerned with individuals, it has group application and community benefits.

The first move towards religious liberty is seen in the *Edict of Milan*, in 313 CE, when the Emperor Constantine provided citizens with the authority to observe the religion they preferred.

> When I, Constantine Augustus, as well as I, Licinius Augustus, … so that we might grant to the Christians and others full authority to observe that religion which each preferred … that no one whatsoever should be denied the opportunity to give his heart to the observance of the Christian religion, … Therefore, your Worship should know that it has pleased us to remove all conditions whatsoever, which were in the rescripts formerly given to you officially, concerning the Christians and now any one of these who wishes to observe Christian religion may do so freely and openly, without molestation. … this regulation is made that we may not seem to detract from any dignity or any religion.
>
> Lactantius, *De Mort. Pers.*, p. 288

A complete version of the Edict of Milan is available at: http://gbgm-umc.org/UMW/Bible/milan.stm

Activity 6.8

Reasoning

Design a poster promoting the sentiments contained in the Edict of Milan.

FIGURE 6.7
Christian missionaries with Indigenous Australians

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The years immediately after 1945 are known as the golden age of religious liberty declarations. The dominant declaration of the time, the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, had direct input from leading Christian thinkers including Monsignor Roncalli, who later became Pope John XXIII, and O. Frederick Nolde, a Lutheran professor from the US. The World Council of Churches' *Declaration on Religious Liberty* (1948) and the Catholic Church's *Declaration on Religious Liberty* (*Dignitatis Humanae*) (1965) made a substantial contribution to the recognition of the human right of **religious freedom** for Christians.

religious freedom a principle that supports the freedom of an individual or community, in public or private, to manifest religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance

The Roman Catholic Church, representing the majority of Christians, has made slow but steady progress in responding to the human rights agenda. The theological case for human rights is rooted in *imago dei* ('human beings are made in the image of God') and human beings must be understood in relation to other individuals. Although hints of the Catholic Church's position can be found in earlier documents like the Catholic Social Teachings, the watershed of human rights occurs in the pontificate of John XXIII (1958–1963) when, in 1961, he issued *Mater et Magistra* (On Christianity and Social Progress), which affirmed that Catholic social thought was grounded in the dignity and rights of the human being.

In a series of documents, including *Pacem in Terris* (Peace on Earth), the church spoke of natural law imprinted in human hearts, the right to life, a worthy standard of living, the right to work, rights to moral and cultural values, freedom of worship, rights to associations and political and economic rights. In *Gaudium et Spes* (The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, 1965) the church acknowledged global interdependence and embraced new economic models. Pope Paul VI's attention to social concern continued after Vatican II, when two encyclicals (letters to the whole church) were issued. These were known as *Populorum Progressio* (The Development of Peoples, 1967) and *Octogesima Adveniens* (The Reconstruction of the Social Order, 1971). Pope John Paul II, in his second encyclical *Dives in Misericordia* (Rich in Mercy, 1980), highlighted the connection between mercy and human dignity. *Laborum Exercens* (On Human Work, 1981) emphasised the right to work, to receive a just wage and to organise collectively. In 1991, he affirmed human rights in the aftermath of the fall of Marxism in Eastern Europe in *Centesimus Annus*.

Two other forums in which Christians have been active since the 1950s are the InterAction Council and World's Parliament of Religions. Hans Kung's book *Global Responsibility* (1990) prompted conversations at the World's Parliament of Religions in 1993 which resulted in the *Declaration Toward a Global Ethic* being signed by over 6000 representatives of the World's Parliament.

Activity 6.9

Investigating, reasoning and judging

Conduct an internet search and examine the extracts from *The World Council of Churches: Declaration on Religious Liberty* and *Declaration on Religious Freedom: Dignitatis Humanae* (On the Right of the Person and of Communities to Social and Civil Freedom in Matters Religious, 1965):

1. Complete the table on Worksheet 6.9.
2. Once you have finished the table, complete these activities.
3. Construct a Venn diagram showing unique and shared characteristics of these two documents.
4. Does one document appear stronger than the other? Defend your answer in a mini-essay, using evidence to support your points.

Islam

Individualism is a characteristic of Western civilisation and was one of the fundamental ingredients in the development of human rights. In Islam, however, individualism is not emphasised and Islamic civilisation has not created an intellectual climate conducive to the protection of individual rights and freedoms. Islamic doctrines were the historical products of traditional societies where value is placed on social, family and community structures rather than on individuals. The aim of Islamic law was to ensure the well-being of the Islamic community, or *umma*. As a consequence *sharia* doctrines remain idealistic – they do not provide institutional mechanisms to deal with situations where

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governments of Islamic states contravene Islamic law and oppress and exploit their subjects.

The modern system of human rights, formulated in international law, came to the Middle East from the West and has received either enthusiastic endorsement or hostile rejection by Muslims. In the last two centuries, when Muslims sought legal means for stopping dictators, they turned to European constitutional law rather than *sharia* law.

Muslims who advocated constitutionalism were often Western educated or from secular nationalist movements. They met severe resistance from the conservative *Ulama* (learned men of religion) who fought constitutionalism in the name of preserving Islam and *sharia* law. Not all of the *Ulama* were against constitutionalism. Muhammad Abduh, the grand mufti of Egypt, was a strong supporter of Egyptian nationalism and constitutionalism and saw no conflict between constitutionalism and fidelity to Islam.

FIGURE 6.8
Under the rule of Ayatollah Khomeini, Iran was transformed from a constitutional monarchy to an Islamic Republic.

Activity 6.10

Investigating and reasoning

1 List some Middle Eastern countries that generally responded to Western ideas about human rights with 'enthusiastic endorsement'. Are Western ideas of rights and/or government still in practice in these countries?
2 List some Middle Eastern countries that generally reacted to Western ideas about human rights with 'hostile rejection'. What styles of government do these countries have today?

Activity 6.11

Investigating and reasoning

Read *The Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam* (available at www.religlaw.org/interdocs/docs/cairohrislam1990.htm).

1 What does it contain that you find surprising? Explain why.
2 What are the key ways in which *The Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam* is similar to and different from the UDHR document of Western origin found in this chapter? Express your findings in dot points on the T chart on Worksheet 6.11.

Hinduism

There is nothing in Hinduism that explicitly addresses human rights. Sanskrit has no word for 'right'. Despite the existence of a caste system, the poor and socially marginalised have generally been respected in Hinduism. Within the caste system is a relationship of mutual benefits, however, the system does not always work and is often discriminatory. The actual lives of women and **untouchables** is difficult. In recent years, groups of Hindu women, for example, have called for the application of human rights as described in the UDHR.

untouchables people outside the caste system, outcasts

FIGURE 6.9
An untouchable with his children

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In recent years, protecting human rights in India has involved antagonism between religious groups. After the assassination of Indira Gandhi (1917–1984) by her Sikh bodyguards, violence between Hindus and Sikhs erupted. More than 3000 Sikhs were killed and their businesses destroyed. In the early 1990s, violence flared between Hindu nationalists and Muslims, instigated after the demolition of a mosque in Ayodhya. In 1999, the Australian Christian missionary Graham Staines and his two sons were killed in Orissa and in 2002, Christian churches were attacked by members of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) and the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS).

Many Indians believed that the UDHR would overcome cultural differences and religious tensions. Some human rights activists have noted, however, that this has not happened for Hinduism because human dignity rests on social duties and social hierarchies.

Duties are not the same as rights. In a duty-based society, a person's place in the world is linked to their duties. *Dharma* refers to ethics and moral behaviour and so writings on *dharma* have informed the Indian constitution and understandings of human rights. For Hindus, *dharma* texts prescribe a person's duties and responsibilities in terms of gender, caste and stage of life. Rather than seeing one set of human rights as the norm for all, *dharma* texts specify a person's responsibilities and rights in terms of a social context.

The UDHR stresses individual rights. Hinduism, on the other hand, stresses *svadharma* or collective identity. Collective identity means that one is interacting with an extended family, caste and even non-humans.

While there are no human rights, in the modern Western sense, in traditional Hindu thought, some scholars consider that the concept of *dharma* serves as a functional parallel to the UDHR's idea of rights.

Activity 6.12

Investigating and reasoning

Examine the extracts from the Indian constitution on Worksheet 6.12.

1 Which extracts correspond with Rights in the UN Declaration?
2 How might an understanding of dharma be applied to the extracts chosen? Provide evidence to support your claims.

Buddhism

Traditionally, Buddhists have focused on perfecting the individual through cultivating right behaviour, meditation and personal insight, rather than on reforming society. Buddhists have not developed a comprehensive social philosophy and there is nothing in the scriptures or in the Theravada tradition that directly advocates radical social transformations. Like Hinduism, Buddhism focuses on duties and responsibilities over rights. The ultimate goal, according to Buddhism, is the elimination of the independent self. Despite this, scholars agree that Buddhist teachings are compatible with the goals of contemporary human rights.

FIGURE 6.10
Buddhism stresses duties and responsibilities over rights

Buddhist doctrine describes the world through the enlightened eyes of the Buddha. His teachings, the *dharma*, include liberation from the cycle of *samsara* and rebirth. If the traditional idea of *karma* is taken at face value, the question of rights does not occur as one's rebirth is determined by prior *karma*.

One of the clearest statements on human rights within Buddhism comes from the contemporary Thai monk Phra Prayudh Payutto. Payutto says 'society

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is based on selfish interest and ethical concepts such as 'human rights' are needed to keep everybody from cutting each other's throats in the process'.

Payutto believes that human rights systems have three flaws:

1 human rights arise from cut-throat conditions
2 they are not part of the natural order (*dharma*)
3 they pertain to the social realms.

In contrast, Buddhist ethical matters pertain to individual motivation. Payutto offers a 'positive ethic' which stresses compassion, harmony, cooperation and wisdom.

In 1962, the Fourteenth Dalai Lama declared that the UDHR was compatible with the principles taught by the Buddha. Defence of human rights has been a theme in his speeches and writings for more than forty years. The Dalai Lama has encouraged the Tibetan people, who have been oppressed by the Chinese government since 1950, to defend themselves using non-violent Buddhist principles. He says the Buddhist principle of compassion for others is related to human rights.

Some Asian governments argue that the UDHR cannot be applied to Asia because the rights are based on Western standards and are not applicable to other cultures. Buddhist scholars argue that rights are implicit within the core of *dharma*, from which it is possible to derive a Buddhist doctrine of human rights. There are those who argue that the Western-based notion of human rights is also inconsistent with the Buddhist doctrine of 'no-self'. Nevertheless, many Buddhist ideals lead in the direction of human dignity and Buddhists are encouraged to live with compassion, to be generous and to work for the cessation of suffering and to strive for the happiness of all creatures.

Buddhism entered the West over 150 years ago and the Buddhism of Western converts has been influenced by Western liberal democracy. Western Buddhism has embraced social activism more than Buddhism in Asia. Western Buddhists have written more on human rights in the last twenty-five years than Buddhists have done in the past twenty-five centuries. Western Buddhism focuses on compassion, non-harm, mutual dependency, no-self and the dignity of human beings that comes from their potential enlightenment. These principles match the political programs of Aung San Suu Kyi and the Dalai Lama without naming them as 'human rights'. Both leading Asian and Western Buddhists express their concern about social injustice using the language of human rights.

Activity 6.13

Investigating and reasoning

Prepare A5-sized fact cards about the activist work of Aung San Suu Kyi and the Dalai Lama.

1 Who has imprisoned or exiled them, respectively and for what reasons?
2 To what extent do you agree with the claim that the Buddhist principles of compassion, non-harm, mutual dependency, no-self and the dignity of human beings agree with the ideas underpinning the UDHR? Use quotes from the UDHR to support your answer.

Judaism

When the State of Israel was first declared in 1948, it was led by Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion and the Labor Zionist movement. They viewed Israel as part of the socialist world – the welfare of the group took precedence over the rights of individuals. One distinct feature of Israel at the time was *Kibbutzim*, where people lived and worked within community

FIGURE 6.11
Suicide bombings, war and military incursions have been a constant part of Israeli life since 1948

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groupings. The founding socialist structure began to change in the 1970s and 1980s and by the early 1990s, Israel had developed into a liberal capitalist society.

Israel's situation with the Palestinians has shaped its human rights policy. Suicide bombings, war and military incursions have been a constant part of Israeli life since 1948. Currently, human rights concerns in Israel could be categorised in three ways:

1 Human rights and civil liberties are extended to Israeli Jewish citizens. Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza, however, are under Israeli military control. Because the Palestinians are not Israeli citizens they do not have the rights of citizens. People in the West Bank and Gaza live in military zones. The military is prohibited from violating human rights.
2 Christians, **Druze** and Muslim Arabs who hold Israeli citizenship theoretically share the same legal and human rights as Jewish Israelis. However, many social services in Israel are delivered by Zionist or Jewish welfare agencies. Arab Israelis, in particular, are often unable to benefit from these services.
3 Zionists saw the creation of a Jewish homeland in secular rather than religious terms, yet the state was linked to Jewish religious tradition and culture. One-in-five Israelis are non-Jewish but the bulk of the population are either ethnic or secular Jews. This has led to debates as to whether the state is to be regarded as Israeli or Jewish and whether it is to be governed by Jewish religious or secular law.

Druze
a religious community found primarily in Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Israel and in the Palestinian territories, whose traditional religion is said to have begun as an offshoot of Islam

FIGURE 6.12
Israel commenced construction of the West Bank Barrier in 2002 in order to protect Israeli citizens from Palestinian attacks. Palestinians view the construction as a violation of their human rights.

Jewish attitudes towards human rights are influenced by a history of persecution and, in particular, the attempted annihilation of European Jews during World War II. The State of Israel is little more than sixty years old and the population has grown from one million at the time it was founded, to approximately six million, mainly through immigration. Immigration has brought together people from a wide variety of backgrounds and traditions, each with different understandings of human rights.

The 1998 Report from the UN on Israel says that, 'Israel has been quite successful in guaranteeing the freedom of religious practice and use of holy sites to the three monotheistic faiths, particularly for non-Jewish communities' but 'it is more difficult to claim that 'freedom of religion' is fully protected, particularly for the Jewish population'. Israel is only now in the process of writing a constitution which will be founded on human rights.

FIGURE 6.13
Diversity is a key feature of Israeli society today

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Activity 6.14

Investigating and reasoning

1 Use a *Bible* to find the five Jewish scripture references listed below and complete the table on Worksheet 6.14.
   a Leviticus 19:32–34
   b Leviticus 24:22
   c Leviticus 19:9–16
   d Psalm 15
   e Deut 24:10–13.

2 For each of the following issues addressed by Rabbis for Human Rights (see www.rhr.org.il), identify and explain whether and how the issue relates to:
   a the scripture references in the table you completed on Worksheet 6.14
   b the UDHR
   c economic and social justice: Rabbis for Human Rights organises local communities in their struggle for just economic policies, lobbies in the Knesset to ensure adequate budgetary allocations for the needy and helps increase public awareness of the plight of the poor while stressing society's responsibility toward them in light of the Jewish tradition
   d minority rights
   e indentured servants: Rabbis for Human Rights has worked to guarantee health care and education to foreign workers and their families, campaigned for legislation to prevent abuse by employers, pressed for adequate law enforcement of foreign workers' rights and sought redress for abuse suffered by workers at the hands of their employers
   f women's rights
   g interfaith dialogue
   h defence of Palestinian human rights
   i preventing home demolitions
   j agricultural access
   k separation barrier: Rabbis for Human Rights works to oppose the route of the separation barrier where it unnecessarily expropriates lands, cuts people off from their fields, divides villages or surrounds them.

China and human rights

In recent years, religion has become more important in China. As interest in religion has increased, so too has state control over religious organisations. The Chinese government believes that religions breed disloyalty, separatism and subversion. Under communism, China is officially an atheist country, but there are currently 19 million Muslims in China and conversions to Christianity have significantly increased. The Chinese government sees Christianity and Islam as threats as well as vehicles of foreign influence. The government is also keenly aware of the role the Church played in Eastern Europe during the disintegration of the Soviet empire.

FIGURE 6.14
Protestors for a free Tibet

The government exercises control over religion by making each religion register with the State Council's Religious Affairs Bureau. The Bureau monitors religious training, meetings, publications and the funding of religious activities. Religious activists still face long-term imprisonment and physical abuse by security forces in China. The government's argument that control of religion is strictly in accordance with the law is the same argument they apply to political dissent. The government engages in public re-education and campaigns promoting 'socialist spiritual

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civilisation' and patriotism, as an antidote to religion. This type of control over religious activities violates the right to freedom of association, assembly and expression, as well as freedom of religion.

Since 1996, Chinese leaders have consistently repeated three guiding principles for managing religions: adaptation to socialist society, supervision according to the law and correct and comprehensive implementation for the party's religious policy. Since the 1990s, the government has regularly cited violations of Chinese law as a pretext for dismantling churches, monasteries, mosques, temples and congregations.

Activity 6.15

Investigating, reasoning and judging

1 What has been the Chinese government's approach to religious freedom in Tibet and Xingiang (East Turkestan) and to Christianity in China?
2 Locate at least four different media reports related to one of the above. Analyse the reports using the lens of the UN human rights documents.
3 What conclusions can you draw?
4 Create a hypothesis related to religions and human rights in China.

Australia and human rights

Ideas enabling unoccupied and uncultivated lands to be taken over were common throughout Europe during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. While not religious in nature, religious expression was sometimes used to support these ideas. Christianity, on the whole, also did not speak out against them. Even though it was clear that Australia was occupied by Aboriginal people, Captain James Cook declared the country *terra nullius* (land belonging to no one) in 1770.

European settlement virtually destroyed the rights of Aboriginal people, who suffered not only loss of land but also died from introduced diseases

Homes Are Sought For These Children

A GROUP OF TINY HALF-CASTE AND QUADROON CHILDREN at the Darwin half-caste home. The Minister for the Interior (Mr Perkins) recently appealed to charitable organisations in Melbourne and Sydney to find homes for the children and rescue them from becoming outcasts.

I like the little girl in the centre of group, but if taken by anyone else any of the others I may do, as long as they are blonde

FIGURE 6.15
A group of half-caste and quadroon children at the Darwin half-caste home

and deliberate killings. From approximately 300 000 Indigenous people in 1770, the Indigenous population today has decreased to about 250 000. Additionally, in the early twentieth century, the government policy of removing children from Indigenous parents and placing them in either group homes or with white families has had a serious impact on Indigenous languages and culture. Aboriginal people did not gain citizenship in Australia until 1967.

Recent statistics indicate that:

- Infant mortality rate for Indigenous Australians is more than three times the national average.
- Suicide rates are six times higher for Indigenous Australians than for other Australians.
- Aboriginal people are imprisoned at 14 times the national average.
- Since 1980 over 140 Indigenous Australians have died in police custody.

In 1992, the High Court of Australia made a landmark ruling in the *Mabo* case when it recognised 'native title' to land in common law and recognised economic and religious attachment to the land. In 1996, a legal decision on the *Wik* native title case made it clear that native title could still exist on land that was covered by pastoral leases. This and other similar cases

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recognised traditional owners' continuing attachment and religious responsibility for their lands.

In 2008, the newly elected Labor Prime Minister Kevin Rudd made a historic national apology to the Stolen Generations.

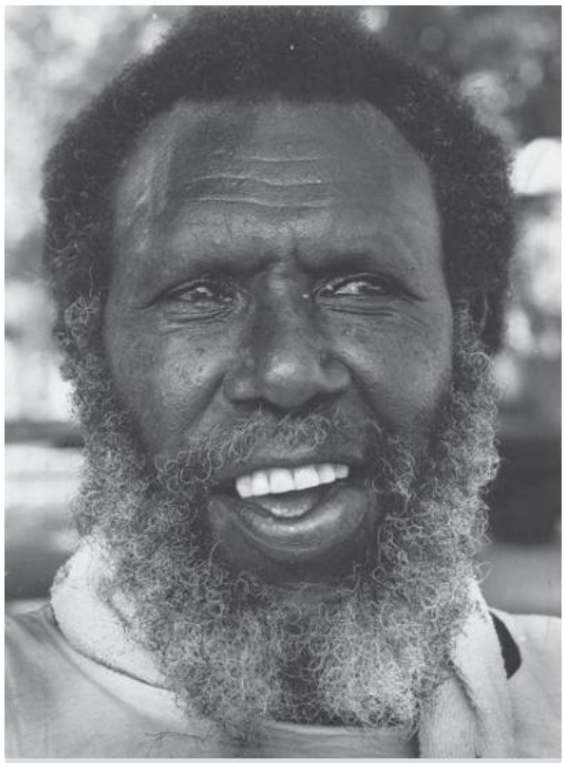

FIGURE 6.16
Eddie Mabo

> …That is why the parliament is today here assembled: to deal with this unfinished business of the nation, to remove a great stain from the nation's soul and, in a true spirit of reconciliation, to open a new chapter in the history of this great land, Australia … It is time to reconcile. It is time to recognise the injustices of the past. It is time to say sorry. It is time to move forward together.
>
> To the stolen generations, I say the following: as Prime Minister of Australia, I am sorry.
>
> On behalf of the government of Australia, I am sorry.
>
> On behalf of the parliament of Australia, I am sorry.
>
> I offer you this apology without qualification.
>
> www.dfat.gov.au/indigenous_background/rudd_speech.html

FIGURE 6.17
National Sorry Day and Kevin Rudd

Activity 6.16

Investigating and reasoning

1 How has religion been used as a well-meaning but misguided justification for the way in which Indigenous Australians were treated?
2 What bodies and processes exist to help protect human rights in Australia? Construct a diagram to show how they work.

Religious freedom

Religious freedom is linked to a wide range of human rights, including:

- communal religious practices: houses of worship, educational institutions, humanitarian organisations
- individual religious practices: prayer, worship, dress, diet, proclamation
- particular religious bodies, individuals and activities: freedom to proclaim one's religion, freedom of the press, freedom of association.

Religious freedom and religious persecution can affect all religious groups. Christians in Sudan, Bahá'ís in Iran, Ahmadiyyas in Pakistan and Buddhists in

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Tibet are perhaps the most intensely persecuted religious groups in the world. Historically, Christians have been the most widely persecuted group.

Some religious restrictions come from members of the same general religious group, who are not part of the subgroup. For example, some Christians in Russia, Greece and Armenia suffer discrimination from Orthodox Christians, while Shi'ite Muslims in Iraq, Pakistan and Afghanistan suffer persecution from some Sunni groups.

FIGURE 6.18
Human rights violations remain widespread and are increasing, making the need for a global response more urgent than ever

In 2005, an international survey on religious freedom found that Christian countries tend to rank highest in granting religious freedom. Other countries which have also scored highly include Israel, Japan and Taiwan.

The greatest restrictions on religious freedom are found in Islamic countries. Iran, Saudi Arabia, Sudan and Turkmenistan were ranked lowest in the survey. In 37 out of 75 countries surveyed, the score for religious freedom is identical to the score for civil liberties, indicating that religious freedom correlates closely with civil liberties in general.

Today, violations of religious freedom throughout the world are widespread and increasing. This is probably because attention to and action on, religious freedom has been weak. Commonly, political leaders tend to ignore religion when negotiating decisions that affect people's lives.

Conclusion

There is no doubt the United Nations *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* and the subsequent covenants and declarations have brought human rights to the fore internationally. Although they do not carry a great deal of weight legally, they are nevertheless important documents. They set a standard and act as constant reminders to people and governments of the ideals to be achieved.

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End of chapter activities

Activity 6.17

Framing

1 Create a vocabulary bank for the discourse of human rights.
2 Graffiti wall: Complete the following statements.
   a Human rights need to be enshrined in law because …
   b Human rights and religion can conflict when …
   c Human rights and religion can work together when …
4 Complete the UDHR quiz at www.knowyourrights2008.org/index.php?nav=declaration&rub=quiz.

Activity 6.18

Investigating

1 Conduct a search of news reports on human rights abuses around the world over the course of one day. Complete the table on Worksheet 6.18 to summarise your findings.
2 Complete the Frayer Concept Model on the topic 'inalienable human rights' on Worksheet 6.18.
3 Research and present a one-minute presentation about how a religion works to protect human rights.
4 Imagine you were the UN Secretary General in 2008 (the sixtieth anniversary of the UDHR). Write a 200-word letter to senior high school students, reflecting on the significance of the UN document and the importance of studying human rights with reference to religion.

Activity 6.19

Reasoning

1 How does the Australian idea of a 'fair go' align with human rights policies?
2 Fill in a consequences wheel on the topic 'If there were no UDHR, then …'. Be sure to consider some consequences for religion.
3 Read the quotes below:

> 'We are collective custodians of universal human rights standards, and any sense that we fall into camps of 'accuser' and 'accused' is absolutely corrosive of our joint purposes. The reality is that no group of countries has any grounds for complacency about its own human rights performance and no group of countries does itself justice by automatically slipping into the 'victim' mode.'
>
> Mary Robinson, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

> 'A universal renunciation of violence requires the commitment of the whole of society. These are not matters of government but matters of State; not only matters for the authorities, but for society in its entirety, including civilian, military, and religious bodies. The mobilisation which is urgently needed to effect the transition within two or three years from a culture of war to a culture of peace demands co-operation from everyone. In order to change, the world needs everyone.'
>
> Federico Mayor, Director-General of UNESCO

4 For each quote, list the implications for:
   a individuals b governments c religions.
5 To read a range of other quotes, visit: www.un.org/cyberschoolbus/humanrights/resources/quotable.asp

Activity 6.20

Investigating, reasoning and judging

Read the UN human rights fact sheet at www.un.org/cyberschoolbus/humanrights/resources/factsheet.asp.

1 Has religion contributed to any of these human rights abuses? If so, how?
2 Can religion help prevent any of these human rights abuses? If so, how?
3 Which of these human rights abuses could be most easily prevented? Propose a solution!
4 Find out about the following Nobel Peace Prize winners at nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace.
   a Martin Ahtisaari (2008)
   b IPCC and Al Gore (2007)
   c Muhammad Yunus and Grameen Bank (2006).
5 How is each recipient's work connected to the promotion of human rights?
6 How is each recipient's work connected to religion/s? (E.g. do they work from religious conviction? Do their ideas match the philosophy or ethics of one or more religions in particular? Do they work within a religion?)

CHAPTER REVIEW

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Activity 6.21

Judging

Evaluate the validity of the claim that the UDHR has been successful in its aim of promoting freedom of religion. Suggest reasons why or why not and use evidence to support your points.

Activity 6.22

Reflecting

1 How has this study informed my own position in relation to religion and human rights?
2 Are my ideas about human rights different from those of other people in my class?
3 What action could I take in response to my learning in this area of inquiry (e.g. letter writing at www.un.org/cyberschoolbus/humanrights/resources/letter.asp)?

Ethnographic investigations: school-based topic – religion and human rights

For an overview of the ethnographic investigation section of the course, refer to page x.

Investigation 6.1

The findings of this investigation may be presented in a multi-modal presentation, essay, report, or feature article.

Framing

Before starting this ethnographic investigation, you should already have established ideas about the relationships between religions and human rights. You should already have considerable knowledge about the religion/s under investigation.

1 Identify interview candidates suitable for this task. Your candidate needs to be a follower of a religion.

Investigating

1 Choose one person to interview about ways in which their religion supports or promotes human rights, the significance of human rights defence in the religious tradition and the reasons why the religion and/or the candidate deem human rights to be important.
2 Devise open-ended interview questions carefully to obtain useful information.
3 Conduct the interview, taking detailed notes.
4 In addition, before and after the interview, you may wish to gather further data (booklets, photographs, a range of human rights documents, more general information about the religion and the religion's activity in the sphere of human rights, generally or through a specific agency) to assist in your understanding of the relationship between the religion and human rights.
5 Organise and sort all your material.

Reasoning

1 Using your interview subject's responses and other research results, analyse the reasons why the religious tradition does or does not value the defence of human rights.
2 Is the religion's activity pertaining to human rights based more locally, nationally or internationally? Why?
3 What points of similarity and difference exist between the interviewee's understanding of the religious tradition's philosophies and activities pertaining to human rights and the actuality?
4 What similarities and differences exist between the interviewee's personal attitude towards human rights and the official standpoint of the religious tradition?

Judging

1 To what extent does the religion's philosophy of, and the interviewee's attitude towards, human rights match with the UDHR or other human rights documents?
2 How important is the defence of human rights in this religious tradition?
3 How important is the defence of human rights to your interviewee?
4 To what extent is your interviewee aware of the significance of human rights in their religious tradition and the actions taken by members of their religious tradition in defence of human rights?
5 How effective is the religion in its work in defence of human rights?

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Section two

Core

2

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CHAPTER SEVEN

AUSTRALIAN RELIGIOUS PERSPECTIVES

'Religion and spirituality will be a significant part of Australia's future and play a role in public, civic and political life.'

Gary Bauma

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

This chapter discusses:

Part I Aboriginal spiritualities and Torres Strait Islander religions

- Culture
- *The Dreaming*
- Totemic identity
- Ceremonies and rituals
- Anthropological investigations and classifications
- Government policy
- Land rights
- Christian missions

Part II Religion in Australian society

- The place of religion in Australian society
- Early settlement in Australia
- Education
- Growth and expansion
- Churches and social welfare
- Religion and state
- Australian spirituality

Part III Religious diversity in Australia

- White Australia policy
- Religions and religious denominations in Australia
- Religious diversity
- Inter-religious dialogue

KEY terms

culture
The Dreaming
totemic identity
Land Rights
religion
bush ministries
White Australia policy
diversity
inter-religious dialogue

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Background

Australian religious perspectives form part of the core components of the Study of Religion syllabus. This chapter explores the three major areas listed in the syllabus:

1 Aboriginal spiritualities and Torres Strait Islander religions
2 Religion in Australian society
3 Religious diversity in Australia.

culture the customary beliefs, social forms and material traits of a racial, religious, or social group

Activity 7.1

Framing

1 What is the name of the Aboriginal people in your local area?
2 What are Aboriginal spiritualities?
3 Name ten famous Indigenous Australians.
4 What government policies were specifically directed at Indigenous Australians?
5 What role does religion play in the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Australia?
6 What role has Christianity played in the past history of Indigenous people in Australia? What role does it play now?
7 Generate a class list of sites that are sacred and/or significant to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
8 Generate a class list of spiritual beings to which Aboriginal spiritualities refer.

Part I Aboriginal spiritualities and Torres Strait Islander religions

Introduction

Aboriginal people have lived in Australia for over 40 000 years. At the time of European contact, there were over 300 000 Indigenous Australians. Aboriginal people are separated into over 600 language groups, comprising more than 250 Indigenous languages, which, while belonging to the same linguistic family, are quite distinct.

Aboriginal cultures vary, as each Aboriginal group is virtually an independent socio-cultural group belonging to a certain area. It is not possible to speak of a single Aboriginal **culture**. Nor is it possible to speak about Aboriginal religions or spiritualities as a single idea. There are, however, some basic similarities related to ritual expression, even though there may be differences in practice, meaning and interpretation.

It is inappropriate to label Aboriginal groups as 'tribes' because there were no tribal leaders. It is also inappropriate to describe them as nomads, as this term suggests a lack of connection to the land. Aboriginal people moved from place to place on a cyclical timetable to look after their country physically and spiritually and to access seasonally available food. Relationships with other Aboriginal groups were governed by a complex web of structures. At the base was the family but, for hunting purposes, the family was part of a larger group of up to fifty people. Relationships are also

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FIGURE 7.1
Aboriginal rock art

FIGURE 7.2
Hand paintings at Kakadu

organised according to totemic association, descent and relationship to the land and particular sites within it. Marriage was also governed by a series of rules and for some groups a complex plan developed so that family inter-marriage was avoided.

Culture

Aboriginal culture is characterised by a fusion of the spiritual and the material. The daily tasks of life are imbued with religious meaning. Rituals sustain and reaffirm the community's relationship with the land. For Aboriginal people, the land is a text that they learn to read, and their paintings, rock carvings and sculptures express and maintain their spiritual beliefs in the same way that scriptures do for other religions.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have various understandings of country, some of which might be based on traditional or generational knowledge – other understandings may be the result of colonisation. The natural environment is significant to Indigenous people not only because it provides food, medicine and shelter but also because tools, weapons and ceremonial objects are made from the natural environment. Certain features of the landscape are invested with spiritual meaning.

Activity 7.2

Framing, investigating, reasoning and judging

1 Investigate the diversity of Aboriginal seasons at the Australian Bureau of Meteorology site: www.bom.gov.au/iwk/climate_culture/Indig_seasons.shtml.
2 Then read about the seasons of the Bininj/Mungguy people of the Kakadu region in more detail at www.environment.gov.au/parks/kakadu/nature-science/seasons.html.
3 In a T chart, show how the Bininj/Mungguy seasons are similar to, and different from, the seasons in your local area.
4 Create a circular chart, like the one from Kakadu, showing some weather patterns and environmental events that occur in your local area. Indicate on the chart how some of these might provide significant and useful information to those living a traditional Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander lifestyle there.
5 To what extent is the European seasonal calendar adequate to describe and predict weather in your local area? Provide reasons for your answer.
6 Suggest ways in which knowledge of the weather and country might be significant in Aboriginal spiritualities or Torres Strait Islander religions.

FACT

'Country' is a term used by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to describe the place of family origins and links to particular parts of the Australian landscape.

Knowledge of country is localised and one reason that Aboriginal people may feel uncomfortable in a strange environment is that they cannot read and respond to the environment as well as they would in their home country.

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The Dreaming a term used to describe a time of ancestral creation and the origins of all things for Indigenous Australians

diversity differences in racial or ethnic classifications, age, gender, religion, philosophy, place of origin, cultural values as well as other identifying features

The Dreaming

One significant feature of all Aboriginal religions is ***The Dreaming***, a non-Aboriginal term coined by anthropologists and now used by some Indigenous people. *The Dreaming* is sometimes expressed in local language as *altjiranga*, *wongar, ungud* and *tjukurpa.* The difficulty with the term *The Dreaming* is that the single term does not acknowledge the **diversity** of Aboriginal groups.

The term 'The Dreamtime' was first used in the early twentieth century to describe how the ancestor spirits shaped the world and established the 'law', or way of life, to be followed by the Arrernte-speaking people. The Karadjiri people of the Kimberleys use *bugari* to refer to the period when the ancestor spirits formed the Earth's features and instituted the 'law'.

The Dreaming has a number of meanings, including:

- the narrative myths of creation and ancestor beings
- the embodiment of spiritual power of the ancestor beings in the land, places or flora and fauna
- a way of life or 'law' that includes moral and social teachings, as well as ritual practices
- the personal life of Aboriginal people that connects them to their land.

The Dreaming sets out the structure of society, the rules for social behaviour and the ceremonies performed to maintain the life of the land. *The Dreaming* also relates to the Aboriginal concept of time, which is governed by phases of the Moon, the Sun and the seasons. Ancestor beings of *The Dreaming* are beings who are born and die yet remain eternally present. Their spirits are passed on to their descendents, such as Snake, Kangaroo, Crocodile, Bird and Fish, which have become totems for various groups.

While *The Dreaming* may refer to times in the past, it is also ever-present and connects people, past and present. *The Dreaming* is a real and concrete part of Aboriginal life and has nothing to do with Western concepts of dreams, imagination or illusion. Some commentators argue that it is not valid to confine the term *The Dreaming* to 'religion' in the Western sense, as *The Dreaming* informs every aspect of Indigenous culture, society and spirituality.

FACT

Altjiranga: *The Dreaming* in the language of the Arrernte people from central Australia.
Wongar: The Dreaming in the language of the people of northeast Australia and Arnhem land.
Ungud: The Dreaming in the language of the Ngarinyin people, from the north of Western Australia.
Tjukurpa: The Dreaming in the language of the Pitjantjatjara people, from the northwest of South Australia.
Bugari: The Dreaming in the language of the people from Broome, north of Western Australia.

FIGURE 7.3
Traditional rock paintings

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Activity 7.3

Investigating

Locate two or three stories of *The Dreaming* from different Aboriginal groups and places. What does the story tell you about the people and their relationship with the land, ancestor beings and with each other? Use evidence from the stories to support your claims.

Activity 7.4

Reasoning and judging

Is *The Dreaming* a more useful English language term to describe this reality than 'the dream time'? Write a well-structured paragraph (employing a topic sentence, elaboration and evidence sentences and a concluding sentence) to express your answer to this question and the reasons for your standpoint.

Totemic identity

Some Aboriginal people's relationship with *The Dreaming* is expressed through their **totemic identity** – an alter ego that orients the person. People are born into a totem, which may be an animal, plant or part of the natural environment. A person belongs to that totemic group for life.

People who share the same totem have a special relationship with each other. Knowing and preserving one's totem ensures that a person's social identity is conserved and the person exercises responsibility related to their totem. A totem not only grounds a person spiritually, but also locates them physically in their country and imposes ritual responsibilities related to their totem area. Totemic identity includes knowing the country's songs, knowing how it was created during *The Dreaming* and knowing the symbols of body painting related to the totem. There are also certain taboos related to a totem, for instance, a people are rarely allowed to eat their totem, because in doing so they consume part of themselves.

There are many **lores** and rules related to totems that differ from one language group to another.

FIGURE 7.4 Traditional body painting

- In some language groups men and women eat meals separately.
- In some areas men do all the cooking, while in other areas women must do it.
- Some foods have spiritual significance. These animals and plants need to be protected and are often not eaten or only eaten during ceremonies.
- Pregnant women, boys before initiation and girls before puberty are denied some food for sacred reasons.
- Certain foods are prepared by women, others by men. Generally, yams, roots, nuts, fruit and shellfish are prepared by women, while men prepare flesh foods such as kangaroo and emu. This rule is not the same in all language groups.
- In some language groups, during mourning, or *sorry business*, or during some ceremonies, only certain people can feed other particular people. For example, in some areas a person who is mourning may not touch food until ceremonies for the deceased are finished.

QSA Resource Indigenous Perspectives website

totemic identity a feature of Indigenous Australian spiritualities, which orients the person to a particular totem (e.g. snake, crocodile)

Ceremonies and rituals

Australian Indigenous ceremonies and rituals reflect the great diversity of spiritual and cultural practices of Aboriginal peoples. Ceremonies and rituals are held

lores traditional knowledge or beliefs

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FIGURE 7.5
Aboriginal smoking ceremony

FIGURE 7.6
Aboriginal woman painting traditional art

for many reasons but all play a significant role in the spiritual beliefs of Aboriginal people.

People's relationship and understanding of their ancestral past is taught to them through ritual and ceremony. Ceremonies ensure that important parts of the lore are maintained. Ceremonies re-enact ancestral events and different groups of people take different roles in the ritual, depending on their social position or ancestral heritage. Aboriginal ceremonies have many functions: they tell ancestral stories; mark life transitions; promote fertility, growth or health and repair the social order.

Beliefs, stories and lores of *The Dreaming* are protected by particular families within the group. It is their responsibility to remember and pass on the rituals and ceremonies of this group. Individuals within ceremonies possess different knowledge too: men may have separate knowledge from women but together the whole ritual is performed.

In some places, men and women are caretakers of sacred sites, special areas of land for rituals and ceremonies and they care for the land so that the spirits continue to look after them. Some sites are restricted to specific genders. These areas are generally marked out by significant landforms, symbols, carved trees or artifacts. Sometimes a ceremony may be labeled 'women's business' or 'men's business' where secret knowledge is passed on through special dances or sacred objects. Participation in some ceremonies is limited by age, and some ceremonies are for family only. Other ceremonies may be open to other language groups.

One Queensland Aboriginal ceremony that involved different language groups, who brought food and materials for trade, is the Bunya Feast held near the Bunya Mountains. Traditionally, this feast included language groups from across southern Queensland and northern New South Wales. Bunya nuts were eaten and people shared dance and lore ceremonies.

Music, dance, painting and culture are essential to ritual. 'Art' within Australian Indigenous culture is integrated into the social process – body painting and sacred objects have ritual significance. Before ceremonies begin, much time is devoted to preparing the art (for example, making body paint and painting the body). Some groups collect ochres, plants and fibres to make into paints. Tools might be painted with sacred designs and objects may be carved to represent spiritual figures.

In Aboriginal culture, art was constantly produced because it belonged in the culture. For example, when groups moved, bark paintings were left behind or, if used in special ceremonies, were either destroyed or hidden for later use. In some areas, burial poles are made containing symbols of the deceased and their family. In other areas, sand sculptures were often made for healing or burial rites.

The meanings contained within the artworks are complex: symbols used in the works may represent landscape features such as mountains or rivers but

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these symbols might also hold a deeper meaning for someone inside the community. Art is a ritual encounter with *The Dreaming*. Each language group has particular symbols associated with their group and, while some symbols may appear to be the same across groups, they will have different meanings for each group.

Special dress is worn for some dances and rituals and the body painting, feathers or other types of dress assist Aboriginal people to connect with the spiritual world. Sacred objects are used in a similar manner. In some areas of Australia, women wear bird feathers, wrist and ankle bands woven from string and skirts from emu feathers and men might wear animal furs or skins.

Many different types of instruments are used in ceremonies and there are protocols involved in the use of instruments. The most well-known instrument, the didgeridoo, which originated in north Queensland, is popular across the country – but for some Aboriginal groups, women and any outsiders are forbidden to play it. Other instruments include rattles, rhythm sticks and in some areas, women use a ceremonial drum made of animal skin. Traditionally, drums are used in areas where the didgeridoo is not.

Rituals and ceremonies are central to Aboriginal people's existence and it is believed that when ceremonies are not performed in certain areas the animals and birds leave that location and the country withers.

In some places, sacred sites have been constructed for use in ceremonies. In eastern Australia, for instance, bora rings, which are often associated with men's coming of age ceremonies and rites of passage were constructed and maintained as permanent ceremonial grounds. Sometimes there was a smaller bora ring connected to a larger ring. Some of these survive intact; others are only partially preserved; while others live on only in memory. There is believed to be a bora ring in Musgrave Park in Brisbane that led up to a smaller ring on the site of the nearby Anglican church.

FIGURE 7.7
Playing the didgeridoo

FIGURE 7.8
Bora rings in Morton National Park

Activity 7.5

Investigating

1 What types of ceremonies are important for Indigenous people?
2 What different kinds of places and objects are sacred or used in connection with the sacred?

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Anthropological investigations and classifications

A 1974 investigation by R. M. Berndt, a non-Indigenous Australian, suggested that there were four main groups of Aboriginal religions. The first group included people from Arnhem Land to the Kimberleys in northern Australia; the second from desert areas in central Australia; the third from southeast Australia in New South Wales and Victoria; and the fourth from Cape York. Another anthropologist, A. P. Elkin argued that there were three waves of religious influence: the northwest wave with circumcision as the central rite; the northeast wave from Cape York to the Murray Valley with an emphasis on 'sky-gods'; and the wave from Arnhem Land with a focus on fertility.

Peterson, an anthropologist, identifies two religious groups: the inland desert peoples and the woodland/coastal peoples. Each group had, according to Peterson, a different religious focus: desert peoples were concerned with fertility and woodland/coastal people were concerned with death and the safe passage of spirits back to the land.

Other scholars have noted that coastal groups tend not to employ male initiation rites such as circumcision while they are present in the Arrernte, Pitjantjatjara and Walbiri communities. Unfortunately many of the early anthropologists and ethnographers had little interest in religion and merely noted actions and rituals of Aboriginal people as evidence of their 'primal religion'. The use of the descriptor 'primal' implies that Aboriginal religions are inferior to major world religions. This type of comparison does not acknowledge the important role religion plays in the lives of Indigenous people nor does it recognise the complexities of examining a religion as an outsider.

Activity 7.6

Investigating and reasoning

This section has described the findings of three particular anthropologists and 'other scholars'. Compare and contrast the information yielded by these four sources. Devise a chart, map or diagram to show the points of similarity and difference between them. In your chart, map or diagram, highlight ideas that reference the sacred.

Government policy

The creation of Aboriginal Reserves between the 1860s and 1890s led to much dislocation of Aboriginal people from their country. Indigenous people see it as a loss of agency because colonisers 'rounded them up' and placed them in compounds under the authority of protection boards. This is a period that interrupts Aboriginal ceremony and maintenance of country.

Government policies related to Aboriginal people can be categorised into three general areas:

1 control and protectionism
2 assimilation and integration
3 self-determination and self-management.

FIGURE 7.9
An Aboriginal mission in Northern Australia

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Policies of control and protectionism existed between 1788 and the early 1930s and gave governments the power to control all aspects of Indigenous peoples' lives, including employment, education and social interaction. The Chief Protector could move people from town to town and indiscriminately place people on missions or reserves. Before an Aboriginal person could be employed, they had to be issued with a permit from the Chief Protector and employers did not have to pay wages if they fed the Aboriginal person and their dependants. If a person was paid a wage, the money was kept in the care of the Chief Protector and Aboriginal people had to request money to purchase anything, including personal items.

Also covered under the Protectionist Act was the state government's power to remove Aboriginal children from their parents. Children with light coloured skin were removed from 'uncivilised' parents and placed with either white families or on Christian missions to be educated and 'made white'.

From 1934 to 1972, assimilation and integration policies were introduced, with the stated aim of enabling Aboriginal people to attain similar standards as white people. These policies were really aimed at eradicating full-blood Aboriginal people and were a form of cultural genocide. While these assimilation policies appeared to relax the rules and provide freedom of movement, they did not provide the basis for self-sufficiency within the wider community. They were also problematic for people who wished to maintain their own culture and for those who had spent decades separated from mainstream society under the Chief Protector's control.

The fight for citizenship rights for Aboriginal people came to a head during this period. When the Australian constitution was adopted in 1901 Aboriginal people had no political power. Section 51 stated:

> 'The Parliament shall subject to this Constitution, have power to make laws for the peace, order and good government of the Commonwealth with respect to … (xxvi) The people of any race, other than the aboriginal race in any State, for whom it is deemed necessary to make special laws.'

Section 127 stated:

> 'In reckoning the number of people of the commonwealth, or of a State or other part of the Commonwealth, aboriginal natives shall not be counted.'

In 1967, a referendum was held asking Australians to vote either 'yes' or 'no' to change the constitution to include Aboriginal people in the census and to give the Commonwealth the power to make laws with regard to them. The result of the 1967 Referendum remains the largest affirmative vote in all forty-four constitutional referenda held in Australia, with 90 per cent of voters approving the changes to the constitution.

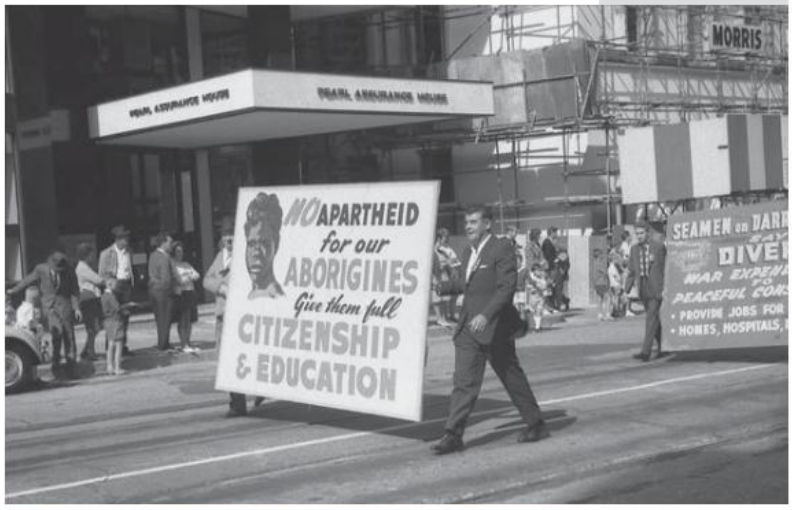

FIGURE 7.10
Trade unionists marching for Aboriginal citizenship, in the 1966 Brisbane May Day procession

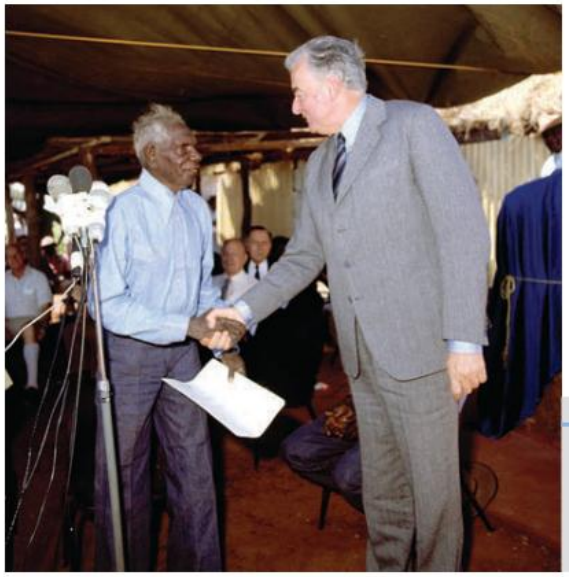

FIGURE 7.11
In 1975, Prime Minister Whitlam with Vincent Lingiari, symbolising the return of land to the Gurindji people

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In 1972, the Whitlam government introduced wide ranging social reforms for Aboriginal people, which opened up access to traditional lands. The government also provided money for large scale programs to promote self-determination and improve education for Indigenous people. The government also introduced a reconciliation policy that marked a shift away from the paternalism of the past.

Activity 7.7

Investigating, reasoning and judging

1 Locate at least two of the following movies (most are available in your local DVD store). Include one recent release and one more than 20 years old.
   a *Jedda* (1955)
   b *The Fringe Dwellers* (1986)
   c *Rabbit-Proof Fence* (2002)
   d *The Tracker* (2002)
   e *Ten Canoes* (2006)
2 View a short segment (no more than 10 minutes) of the films you have been able to locate.
3 What view of Aboriginal people is presented in the films?
4 What view of Aboriginal spiritualities is presented?
5 Has the view of spirituality changed over time? What evidence can you identify to support your response?

Land Rights

Land Rights the rights of Indigenous Australians to access and ownership of land possessed before the arrival of Europeans

The **Land Rights** struggle for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples began in 1788, when the colonisers declared Australia *terra nullius* (land belonging to no-one). This declaration stated that the land was unoccupied. Aboriginal Land Rights came into the national spotlight in 1966, when the Gurindji stockmen, working on the Wave Hill cattle station in the Northern Territory, walked off the job, demanding better working conditions and control of their traditional lands.

In 1972 the Aboriginal Land Rights Commission was established by the government to recognise Land Rights for Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory. One of the assumptions underlying the recognition of Land Rights was the spiritual link Aboriginal people had with their land. This spiritual link gave Aboriginal people a sense of identity and remains the heart of their spiritual beliefs. The Northern Territory *Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1976* stated people making a claim had to be:

> … a local descent group of Aboriginals who have common spiritual affiliations to a site on the land, being affiliations that place the group under a primary spiritual responsibility for that site and for the land and are entitled by Aboriginal tradition to forage as of right over that land.
>
> Section 50:1(a)

Christian churches campaigned for Aboriginal Land Rights and worked to bring Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians together. In 1978, the newly formed Uniting Church of Australia (UCA) became involved in the struggle for the rights of Indigenous people on the former Presbyterian missions at Aurukun and Mornington Island. The Queensland government had allocated a 1900 kilometre mining lease over the area. With the support of the Uniting Church, the Aurukun people successfully challenged the legislation in the Queensland Supreme Court but the decision was later overturned by the Privy Council in England after an appeal from the Queensland government.

The UCA believed so strongly in the importance of land to Aboriginal people that they set up a fighting fund for the communities of Aurukun and Mornington Island that raised over $100 000. In 1982, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders in the UCA formed the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress, which not only took responsibility for ministry with Indigenous people but worked to develop Indigenous leadership.

In 1988, to celebrate the bicentenary of Australia, the Uniting Church sponsored the March for Freedom, Justice and Hope that brought together Aboriginal people from all over Australia to celebrate their survival. The UCA also made a detailed submission to the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Islander Children from their Parents and then

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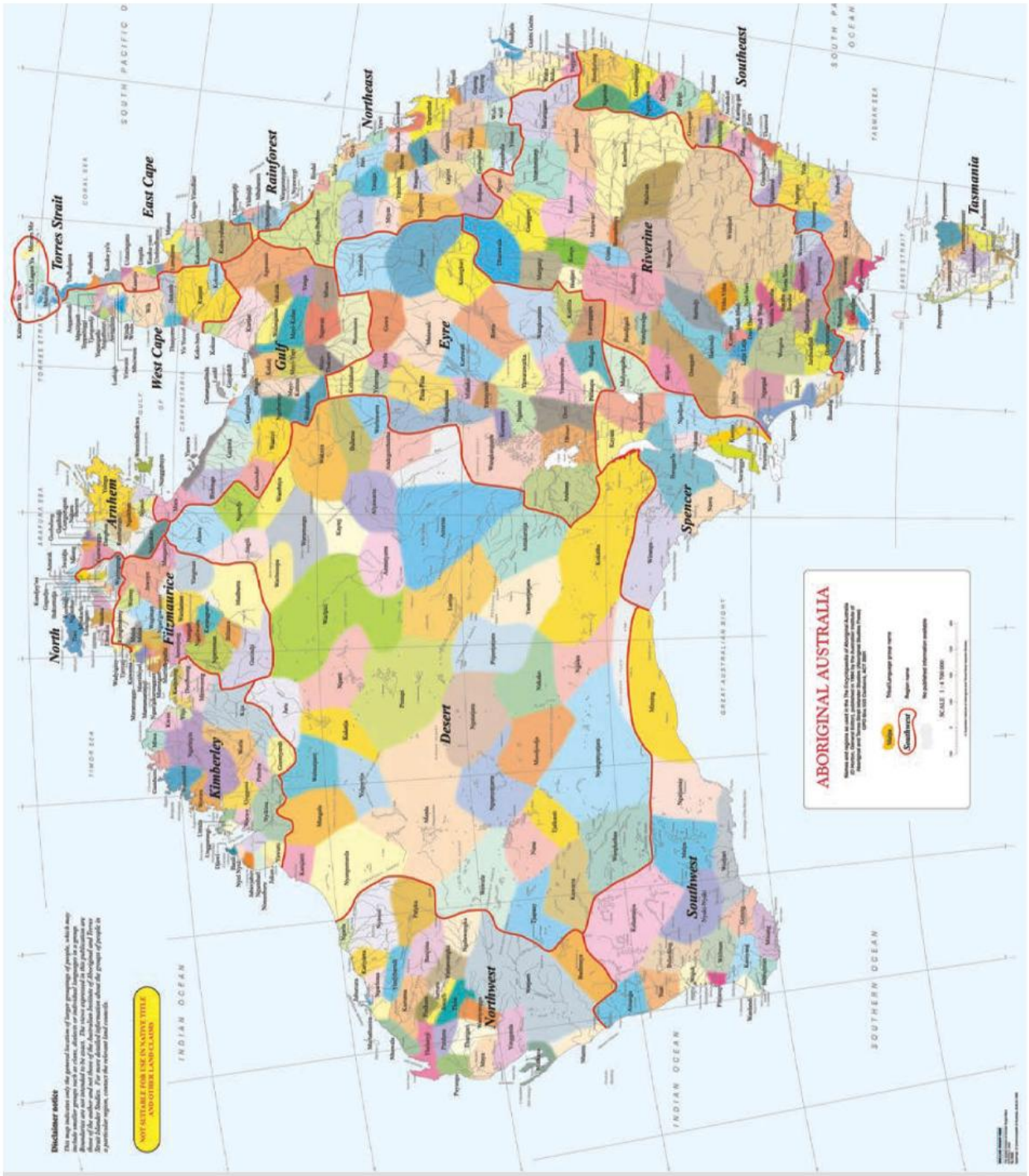

FIGURE 7.12

Aboriginal Australia

The map is just one representation of many other map sources that are available for Aboriginal Australia. Using published resources available between 1988-1994, this map attempts to represent all the language or tribal or nation groups of the Indigenous people of Australia. It indicates only the general location of larger groupings of people which may include smaller groups such as clans, dialects or individual languages in a group. Boundaries are not intended to be exact. This map is NOT SUITABLE FOR USE IN NATIVE TITLE AND OTHER LAND CLAIMS. David R Horton, creator, (c) Aboriginal Studies Press, AIATSIS and Auslig/Sinclair, Knight, Merz, 1996.

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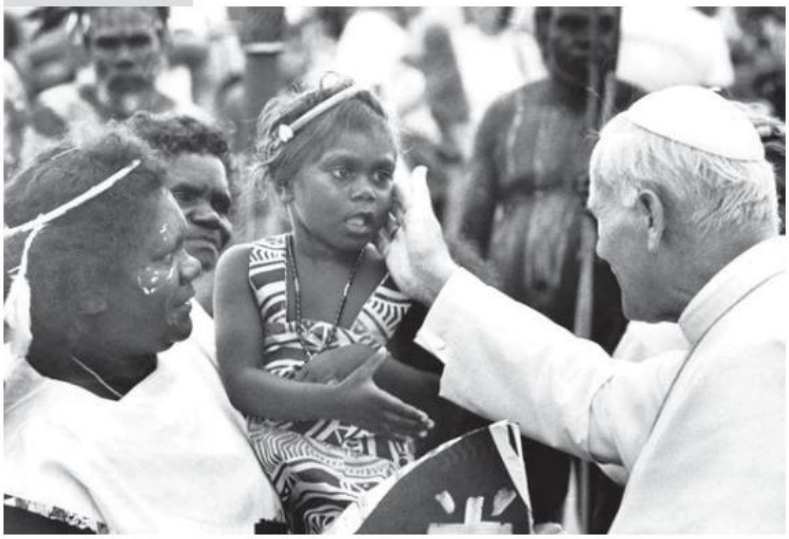
campaigned for the government to deal appropriately with the issue of the stolen generations through a national apology.

Another well-known statement of support for Indigenous peoples' rights came from Pope John Paul II when he said at Uluru in 1986:

> 'Let it not be said that the fair and equitable recognition of Aboriginal rights to land is discrimination. To call for the acknowledgement of the land rights of people who have never surrendered those rights is not discrimination. Certainly, what has been done cannot be undone. But what can now be done to remedy the deed of yesterday must not be put off till tomorrow.
>
> The establishment of a new society for Aboriginal people cannot go forward without just and mutually recognised agreement with regard to these human problems, even though their causes lie in the past.'
>
> *The Pope in Australia*, p. 170

FIGURE 7.13
Pope John Paul II in Alice Springs



Activity 7.8

Investigating

Complete the Land Rights timeline on Worksheet 7.8 supplementing the information above with more recent developments explained in the 'Australia and human rights' section of Chapter 6.

Activity 7.9

Reasoning

Create an illustrated leaflet for senior high school students explaining why it is important to study Land Rights when investigating Aboriginal spiritualities and Torres Strait Islander religions.

Christian missions

The Christian churches' involvement in Aboriginal missions has been both criticised and praised. Some argue that the missions obstructed culture, kept Indigenous groups at a distance from their country and created generations of people who did not belong within either Indigenous or white society. Others argue that without the missions the future of Aboriginal people would have been made worse, as the government and settlers appropriated their land and they were raped and murdered. It needs to be kept in mind that today's knowledge and understanding ought not be applied to what happened more than one hundred and fifty years ago.

Although Roman Catholic involvement in Aboriginal history is not large there are a number of examples, including a few we will mention here. Bishop Polding, the first Catholic Bishop in Australia, spoke out against the mistreatment of Aboriginal people at a parliamentary committee on Aborigines in 1845. He criticised the way in which Aboriginal people had no rights, had been dispossessed from their land and had been raped and murdered.

In 1846, two Spanish Benedictine monks came to Western Australia and established a monastery at New Norcia, which operated as a school and farm for Aboriginal children. In Queensland, four Italian Passionist order priests began a mission at Stradbroke Island in 1843 where they attempted to learn the language and convert people. Despite much work, the mission failed. Another mission was established on Bribie Island in the 1870s.

Lutheran missions were established in South Australia in the early 1860s and in 1866, a mission was started at Killapaninna with the Dieri people.

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Hermannsburg mission was established in central Australia in 1877 and existed until 1982. The Lutheran missionaries attempted to mediate conflict between the pastoralists, the police and the Aboriginal people and opposed violence against Indigenous people.

In Queensland, the mission station Elim, later known as Hope Vale, outside Cooktown, was established in 1885 by the German missionary Johann Flierl. In 1887 he was replaced by George Schwartz who remained at Hope Vale for over fifty years.

During World War II, Schwartz was put into an internment camp because he was German and in May 1942, 254 Aboriginal people were evacuated without notice and removed to Woorabinda, west of Rockhampton. The mission area was occupied by the Australian and United States Army and Airforce. Hundreds of Hope Vale people died while at Woorabinda from an outbreak of influenza, as they were not used to the colder conditions. The survivors were not allowed to return to Hope Vale until 1949.

Missionaries had a different goal from government and settlers. While they were motivated primarily by the concern to 'save souls', they were also driven by compassion for Aboriginal people and how they were treated. As a result of Christian missionary activity, some Indigenous peoples' religious practice has strong Christian overtones while still drawing on Indigenous religious and cultural beliefs and practice.

FIGURE 7.14
The church at Hermannsburg mission. The mission was established in central Australia in 1877 and existed until 1982

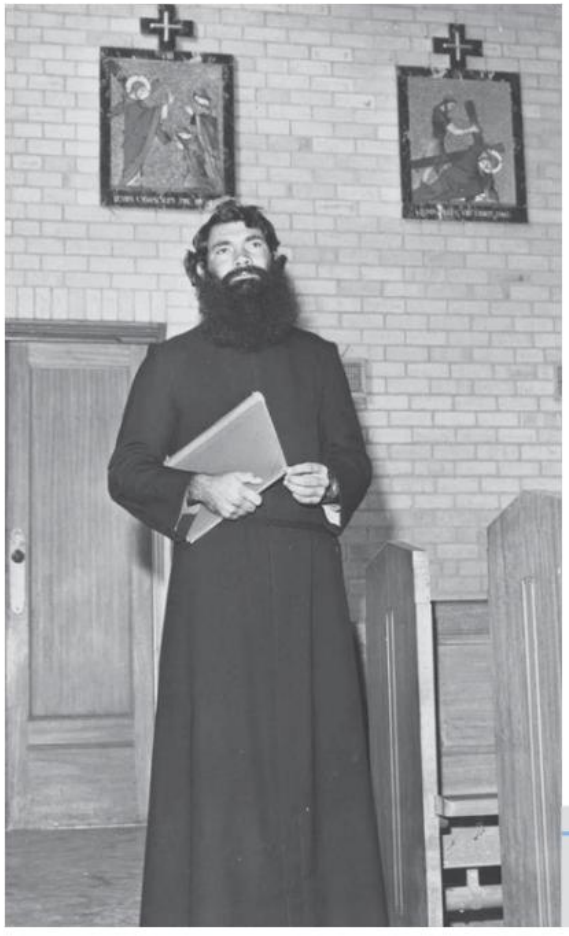

FIGURE 7.15
Father Patrick Dodson, Australia's first Aboriginal priest

Activity 7.10

Investigating and reasoning

1 Generate a list of missions that existed in your state.
2 Place them on a map of your state.
3 Choose one mission to investigate and find out as much as you can about:
   a significant events in its history
   b everyday occurrences and the routines of those who lived there.
4 Imagine that you are a missionary or one of the Aboriginal people living at the mission and compose three diary entries about events in your life and your reflections on them.

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CASE STUDY Oodgeroo of the Nunuccal

Oodgeroo of the Noonuccal (1920–1993), was born Kathleen Jean Mary Ruska, on Minjerribah (Stradbroke Island) and belongs to the Noonuccal Aboriginal group, who are custodians for part of the land of Stradbroke Island. She shared with her father *The Dreaming* totem of the carpet snake (Kabul). She was known as a writer and political activist by her married name, Kath Walker and resumed her traditional name, Oodgeroo, in 1988. She returned her MBE in protest at the condition of her people in the year of Australia's Bicentenary celebrations.

She left school at 13 and worked as a domestic servant until 1939, when she volunteered for service in the Australian Women's Army Service. Between 1961 and 1970, Oodgeroo achieved national prominence, not only as the Queensland State Secretary of the Council for the Advancement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders (CAATSI), but also through her highly popular poetry and writing. In 1964, she released *We Are Going*, a collection of verse and in the process, she became the first Aboriginal woman to have her work published. *We Are Going* sold out in three days.

She was also involved with many Aboriginal rights organisations such as the National Tribal Council, the Aboriginal Arts Board, the Aboriginal Housing Committee and the Queensland Aboriginal Advancement League. Oodgeroo spent her last years on Stradbroke Island where she established a cultural and environmental education centre known as Moongalba (resting-place).

'Son of Mine', a poem written during the 1970s, graphically tells the history of Aboriginal people in Australia from an Indigenous perspective.

FIGURE 7.16
Oodgeroo of the Noonuccal

Son of Mine

My son, your troubled eyes search mine,
Puzzled and hurt by colour line.
Your black skin as soft as velvet shine;
What can I tell you, son of mine?

I could tell you of heartbreak, hatred blind,
I could tell you of crimes that shame mankind,
Of brutal wrong and deeds malign,
Of rape and murder, son of mine;

But I'll tell you instead of brave and fine
When lives of black and white entwine,
And men in brotherhood combine—
This would I tell you, son of mine.

Activity 7.11

Investigating and reasoning

Read Oodgeroo's poem 'Son of Mine' and answer these questions.

1 In your own words, explain the meaning of 'puzzled and hurt by colour line'.
2 Conduct a PMI analysis of the poem and the ideas it communicates.
3 Why do you think the poet would choose to tell her son of positive, rather than destructive, race relations in Australia?
4 In the four decades since the poem was written, to what extent has Oodgeroo's vision of 'when lives of black and white entwine/ and men in brotherhood combine' been affirmed? Give reasons for your answer.

Conclusion

Land is central to Aboriginal people. It has taken nearly two hundred years for colonial Australians to begin to understand the spiritual connection Aboriginal people have with land and country. *The Dreaming* provides Aboriginal people with a sense of self and identity. It offers them a spiritual connection between past and present and sustains them in their daily life.

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Part II
Religion in Australian society

Activity 7.12

Framing

1 What is the role of religion in Australian society?
2 What religions exist in Australia?
3 What religions have been prominent in the history of Australia?
4 Does Australia have established religions?
5 Is religion linked to the state in Australia in any way?
6 In what way has religion influenced Australian society?
7 What role does religion fulfil in social welfare?
8 How is religious education carried out in Australia?
9 What interactions between religions exist?
10 Is there a particularly 'Australian' interpretation of religion?

The place of religion in Australian society

Many scholars have contrasted the place of religion in Australian society with that of religion in the United States. Some North American colonies were settled by religious pilgrims in 1620, who brought with them many religious practices. Many left England because they felt these beliefs and observances were not taken seriously.

White settlement in Australia began with military officers and convicts who, except for some Irish convicts, had little religious motivation. While this may be a symbolic difference, religion in Australia has been described as 'on the edge', rather than central to the formation of national mindset as it was in America.

In some respects, attendance at religious services in the Australian colonies was regarded as a form of discipline, due to the fact that the first chaplain also acted as a magistrate. Many have indicated that the convict beginnings of Australia shaped a nation of people who were adverse to authority, including religious authority. Some of this anti-authoritarianism is reflected in the ANZAC legend. Others dismiss convict attitude as a factor and point instead to industrialisation as influencing the position of religion in Australia.

Gary Bauma, one of Australia's leading sociologists of religion, argues that in the early years of settlement, Australia's 'middle class' was military, as overseers of convicts, and that the military view of chaplaincy persisted through World War I, into the work of chaplains in some church related schools in later years.

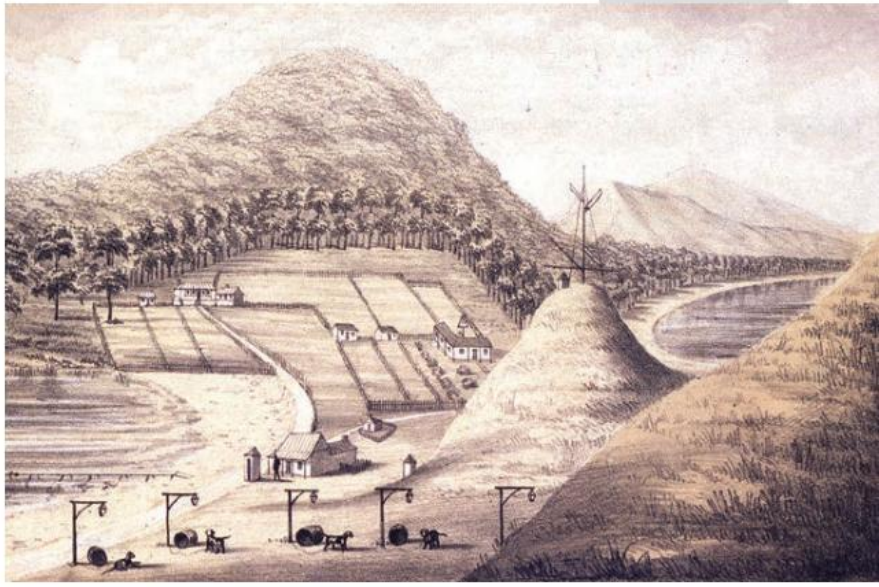

FIGURE 7.17
The barrier on Eaglehawk Neck to the penal settlement of Port Arthur, Van Diemen's Land

One significant influence on religion in Australia has been the importation of religious traditions from the nations of Australia's immigrant population. Beginning with English Anglicans and Irish Catholics, the early history of religion in Australia is mainly of Anglo-Celtic origins. Later, in the post-World War II era, Christian immigrants came from European

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backgrounds. From the 1960s onwards, religious traditions from Asia, the Middle East and Baltic countries increased.

Bauma has identified a number of features or characteristics to describe religion in Australia. He lists them as:

- a serious but light touch in dealing with religion
- a wariness of enthusiasm in religion
- a wariness of imported, mass culture products including spiritual and religious ones
- a distancing from authoritarian leaders and people promoting sacred causes
- a serious commitment to living in the here and now (but not **hedonism**)
- a serious openness to the experience of others
- a serious mateship grounded in shared experience
- a serious tolerance of difference linked to 'a fair go'
- a serious readiness for humour and to laugh at oneself
- a serious quiet reverence
- a serious wariness and intolerance of 'gate-keepers and 'God's police'
- a preference to live and let live.

Bauma, *Religion and Spirituality in the 21st Century*, 2006, pages 45–47

hedonism
a philosophy that regards pleasure to be of ultimate significance and the most important pursuit in life

FIGURE 7.18
Captain Cook's landing at Botany Bay in 1770

Activity 7.13

Investigating, reasoning and judging

1 Do any of the features or characteristics in the list above apply only to religion? If so, which ones and why? Explain how the remaining features or characteristics might apply to wider Australian culture.
2 Find examples of situations providing evidence to support Bauma's assessment of religion in Australia.
3 What is suggested by the repeated use of the word 'serious' in Bauma's list?
4 How complete and accurate is Bauma's list? Give reasons for your answer.

Early settlement in Australia

The First Fleet consisted mainly of Christians from the British Isles, including Anglicans, Catholics, Presbyterians, Methodists, Congregationalists and Baptists. However, not all of the denominations were given equal status. The colonial government gave special rights and some financial support to the Church of England (Anglicans) since it was the established church of the British government. At the same time, it discouraged activities of the other denominations including Catholics. Consequently, Catholics and other Protestant groups faced great difficulties in establishing their church in Australia during the first 40 years of settlement.

The colonial government required a 'due observance of religion' and so all convicts, whether believers or not, were forced to attend services. Many of the convicts were Irish Catholics who, when forced to attend Anglican services, responded angrily.

Reverend Richard Johnson, an Anglican, was the chaplain assigned to the First Fleet and he conducted the first Christian service in Australia on 3 February 1788. He was the only clergyman in the colony for six years, ministering to the entire convict population that, in 1877, was over 700 people. In addition to his

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religious duties, he also managed a farm and served as a magistrate. The fact that chaplains served as magistrates and could sentence convicts to up to 1000 lashes, created an atmosphere where convicts were highly suspicious of the clergy.

Most of the convicts respected Johnson but the colonial government did not share their admiration and provided him with little support. In fact, when the government refused to provide him with a building for church services he used his own funds to build the church, the first in Australia, which opened in 1793. The church was burnt down in 1798 and in 1800 Johnson returned to England.

Johnson was replaced by his assistant, Samuel Marsden, who was also Anglican and who arrived in 1794. Marsden is credited with founding St John's Anglican Church in Parramatta in 1803, but he was not a popular figure with either the government or the convicts. He was anti-Catholic and referred to the Irish convicts as 'a savage race'. Marsden maintained that Catholic convicts did not need their own clergy and that they should worship as Anglicans. Not only did he disapprove of Catholics but he was also critical of other Christian denominations such as Congregationalists and tried to stop them from worshipping.

Catholic convicts

During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, hundreds of Irish convicts, making up a quarter of the population, were transported to Australia. The Irish convicts' crimes ranged from petty theft to rebellion. Irish convicts included priests, intellectuals and ordinary Irish men, women and children. Catholics, unlike most other convicts, were keen to maintain their religious identity and took a serious interest in religion. Because of the restrictions placed on Catholic worship by Johnson and Marsden, and the fact that there was no Catholic clergy for the first few years, some services, lead by **lay people**, were conducted in secret.

lay people non-ordained members of a religion

In 1800, an Irish priest arrived in Australia, not as official clergy but as a convict accused of aiding rebellion in Ireland. Governor King decided that Irish convicts would be better behaved if they were allowed access to a priest and to celebrate Mass. The first recorded Catholic Mass was celebrated in Sydney on 15 May 1803 by the convict priest Father James Dixon.

On 4 March 1804, angry at the harsh conditions under which they lived, more than 300 Irish convicts armed with spears and rifles rallied at Castle Hill crying 'death or liberty'. They intended to march on Parramatta but were intercepted by government troops who demanded they surrender. The convicts refused, however, and the troops fired upon them. Nine convicts were killed and many others were wounded. Some of the rebels were hanged, others flogged and many were sentenced to hard labour in the Newcastle area.

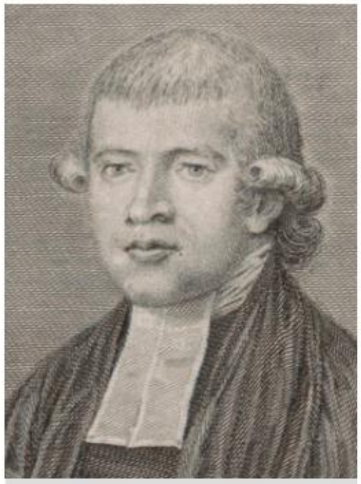

FIGURE 7.19
Richard Johnson

FIGURE 7.20
Samuel Marsden

FIGURE 7.21
The Castle Hill rebellion, 1804

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After the 1804 uprising, Marsden claimed that Irish Catholics were using their religious gatherings to plot rebellion, so Catholic worship services were banned. Father Dixon returned to Ireland in 1808 and Catholics were again without a priest until the arrival of the non-convict priest Jeremiah O'Flynn in 1817. Unfortunately, O'Flynn did not have the approval of the British or Colonial governments to officially operate as a chaplain. As a result, in 1818 he was arrested for conducting illegal worship services and deported. He did, however, leave behind the Blessed Sacrament (the consecrated bread from Mass) at a Sydney home, which became the centre for Catholic devotion until priests arrived two years later.

Up until the 1820s, the Catholic Church in Australia had few rights and no proper buildings, clergy or education system. Some Protestants in the colony were outraged at the deportation of Father O'Flynn and began to criticise the colonial government for its unfair treatment of Catholics. In 1820, two Catholic priests, Fathers John Therry and Phillip Conolly, the first priests to arrive with government approval, disembarked in Sydney. Father Therry was allowed to minister to Catholics, but was forbidden to **proselytise** or conduct marriages between Protestants and Catholics. Therry took little notice of the directives. In 1825 he was dismissed, but was reinstated in 1837.

proselytise the practice of converting or attempting to convert people to another religion

In 1829, the English Parliament passed the *Catholic Emancipation Act,* which gave Catholics the same political rights as Protestants and the right to hold public office. This Act eventually improved the situation of Irish Catholics in Australia. In 1830, the New South Wales government gave permission for Catholics to have a Bishop in Australia. Bishop Bede Polding was the first Catholic Bishop of the colony, serving from 1835–1865. Polding was English, not Irish and was culturally different from the Catholic population he was sent to serve.

Sabbatarian laws laws that strictly enforce the observance of the Sabbath

Activity 7.14

Investigating

1 Conduct an internet search to locate convict records from the First Fleet.
2 Analyse the religious affiliation of those listed.
3 Present your analysis as a graph.

Protestants and temperance

Membership of Protestant groups, such as the Methodists, Presbyterians, Congregationalists and Baptists expanded during the early nineteenth century. John Dunmore Lang, ordained by the Church of Scotland, was the first Presbyterian minister in the colony. He challenged the colonial government about its preferential treatment of the Church of England. Lang argued that, under English law, the Church of Scotland had equal status with the Anglican Church. He demanded that the government fund the building of a Presbyterian church just as it was funding the establishment of Anglican churches. When Governor Brisbane refused, Lang took his case to England and was granted £300 for the church, Scots Church, which opened in 1826.

William Broughton, an Anglican priest, arrived in Sydney in 1829 and was consecrated as the first Anglican bishop in 1836. He served in the Legislative Council of New South Wales and opposed Lang's idea that all Australians should be allowed to vote. Broughton established Anglican schools, a theological college as well as instigating the building of St Andrew's Cathedral in Sydney.

Many convicts associated the Church with either the English aristocracy or the prison system. As a result, voluntary church attendance was low. In an attempt to boost Sunday church attendance, Lang and Broughton urged the government to outlaw leisure pursuits such as cricket, as a way of restoring moral order.

As the population grew, people's behaviour appeared to deteriorate and public drunkenness, considered a major moral problem, prompted the establishment of Temperance societies. The Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU), mainly influenced by Protestant Christianity, urged people to refrain from drinking alcohol, campaigned for prostitution and gambling to be banned and for **Sabbatarian laws** to be established. Anglicans and Catholics maintained that alcohol in moderation was not a concern. The WCTU also campaigned for women's right to vote.

By the late nineteenth century, the term 'wowser' entered the Australian vocabulary. Now understood

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FIGURE 7.22
Poster for prohibition

as someone who does not want to join in any fun, the term 'wowser' is said to derive from the temperance slogan **W**e **O**nly **W**ant **S**ocial **E**vils **R**emedied.

By 1928, the Christian base within Australian society was so strong that in the New South Wales census of that year no one identified themselves as atheist.

Activity 7.15

Investigating and reasoning

1 Construct a pictorial timeline showing the development of religion in Australian society from 1788 to the mid-1800s.
2 Annotate the timeline with relevant facts.
3 Choose one prominent religious leader from Australia's early history (you might focus on one mentioned somewhere in this chapter or find one of your own) and create a poster based on the leader's life, work and influence.
4 Create a chronological display of posters made by class members.

Education

As the settlement was originally intended only for convicts, no provision was made for education in the original plan for the colony. In 1792, as the number of children in the colony grew, two schools were established – one for the children of military officers and one for children of convicts.

By the end of the eighteenth century, settlers' children also attended school. One of the first Catholic schools in the colony opened sometime between 1803 and 1806. Father Therry later opened a Catholic school in Parramatta in 1820 and by 1833, there were 10 Catholic schools in the colony, catering for both Catholic and Protestant students.

Activity 7.16

Investigating

What are the oldest schools that are still open in your area? Were they established by religion or state?

In 1836, the government passed the Church Act, which provided funding, in the form of subsidies, for buildings and salary for clergy, for all the main Christian denominations. At the same time, education became a concern. The colonists believed that the government should support the education of children and that religion should be part of the curriculum. Disputes arose, not only over who would teach religion but also over which Christian denominational beliefs would be taught and whose catechism would be used.

The dispute expanded to involve four groups: Anglicans, Catholics, other Protestants and the government. It seemed that, every time one group would offer a solution, the others would disagree. Eventually, the government set up a dual education system: national schools (similar to state schools) and denominational schools (schools run by different churches). Both systems were government funded to some extent.

Up until 1848, small grants were made to denominational schools to cover land, buildings and

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FIGURE 7.23
An early Australian school in Victoria

salaries but the internal management of the school was left to the Church. From the early 1850s to the 1860s, grants covered books and teaching equipment. After the 1860s, school management passed to central boards and funding was restricted to salaries and books. Protestant schools were virtually destroyed by these changes and Catholic schools were being squeezed out of the system.

In 1869, the Catholic bishops made it clear that they would not agree to a single system of education that was secular and that the government should not have a monopoly over the provision of education. In 1872, state aid to church schools was abolished and Catholics either had to send their children to government schools or fund their own schools. The bishops turned to religious congregations of nuns and monks, or sisters and brothers, mainly from Ireland, to run Catholic schools. An era of expansion and a dramatic increase in the number of religious orders in Australia followed. In the late 1890s, for example, there were approximately 2000 sisters and brothers in Australia, by 1910, there were more than 6000 and in 1950, they had grown to 13 000.

Activity 7.17

Investigating and reasoning

1 Create a histogram graph showing the numbers of Catholic sisters and brothers in Australia from the late 1890s to 2006. Find 2006 figures at www.catholicaustralia.com.au/page.php?pg=austchurch-survey.
2 Describe the histogram in words.
3 How has the histogram pattern, relative to the population of Australia, made itself felt in the Catholic education sector?

Gold rush

During the gold rushes of the 1850s, shanty towns appeared across the nation. In most mining towns, diggers chose to stop work on Sunday for church services, often conducted by lay preachers because of the shortage of clergy in the country. The first church built on the goldfields, completed in only three days, was at Turon River north of Bathurst in 1851. The gold rushes attracted people from all over the world, including Chinese diggers who were considered different and often treated badly.

FIGURE 7.24
The rush to the Ballarat goldfields in1854

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Growth and expansion

As the colony grew, it eventually divided into states and different denominations established churches in different areas. The Presbyterian Church was strong in Victoria. Tasmania had a high proportion of Anglicans and some poorer Catholic free settlers. The first settlers in Western Australia were free settlers and the churches were mainly served by lay preachers from the Anglican and Methodist denominations. South Australia, established in 1836, was the only state not to have convicts and had a larger Lutheran population that most other states.

Queensland was established in 1859, although it had been a penal colony since 1822. Queensland's population consisted of all the protestant denominations, including Lutherans, who spoke German until the early twentieth century. James Quinn, the first Catholic bishop of Brisbane, arrived in 1861. He requested the aid of an Irish-Catholic group of nuns, the Sisters of Mercy, who arrived on 10 May 1861. The leader of the small band of sisters, Ellen Whitty (Mother Vincent), established the first secondary girls' school in Queensland, All Hallows' School.

FIGURE 7.25
All Hallows' School

CASE STUDY Caroline Chisholm

Another famous Australian of this period is Caroline Chisholm, who is considered one of Australia's most significant pioneers. Born in Northampton, England in 1808, and raised in the tradition of Evangelical philanthropy, her upbringing ensured she was interested in helping those less fortunate than herself. She married Captain Archibald Chisholm when she was 22 and converted to his religion, Catholicism. In 1838, the couple moved to Australia and settled in Sydney.

Chisholm's charity work began immediately after her arrival in Australia when she found many women living on the streets and immigrants without jobs. Chisholm met immigrant ships and organised shelter and employment for new arrivals. She lobbied to start a home for unemployed women and to find adequate work for them and opened the Female Immigrants' Home, which housed 96 women. In 1842, due to the success of Chisholm's work in placing immigrants into the workforce, the home closed. She began an extensive campaign to improve the conditions for migrants travelling to Australia and, with the help

FIGURE 7.26
Caroline Chisholm

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CASE STUDY Caroline Chisholm continued

of her husband, began working on her own migration scheme.

Caroline Chisholm wrote and spoke extensively on the plight of immigrants throughout New South Wales and she collated statements from immigrants as a guide for future English migrants. The Chisholm house became an information centre in Australia and for many years, received thousands of letters from immigrants seeking advice and assistance. In 1846, Chisholm returned to England, but sailed back to Australia in 1854, where she again took up her charitable work. In October 1854, she toured the Victorian goldfields and organised a series of shelters to be set up along the route to the diggings. She also lobbied for lands to be unlocked for small farmers because of her passionate belief in the benefits of the small farmer class.

Caroline Chisholm had a strong sense of vocation and a desire to do what she considered was the will of God. She felt that she had been chosen and gifted by God to care for those less fortunate. Upon discovering the circumstances of young women in Australia, Chisholm prayed and fasted to identify God's will for her. She wrote that she was:

> … impressed with the idea that God had, in a peculiar manner, fitted me for this work…. During the season of Lent of that year I suffered much; but on the Easter Sunday I was enabled at the altar of our Lord to make an offering of my talents to the God who gave them. I promised to know neither country or creed, but to try and serve all justly and impartially. I asked only to be enabled to keep these poor girls from being tempted, by their need, to mortal sin; and resolved that to accomplish this I would in every way sacrifice my feelings – surrender all comfort nor, in fact, consider my own wishes or feelings, but wholly devote myself to the work I had in hand. I felt my offering was accepted and that God's blessing was on my work.

Caroline Chisholm was a pioneer in advocating strong social justice principles and did much to improve the situation of many women.

Activity 7.18

Reasoning

Perhaps the most well-known image of Caroline Chisholm is the one that appeared on the Australian five dollar note from 1969 until 1992. She was the first woman, other than a monarch, to be depicted on Australian currency. Of all the notable Australians removed from Australian notes when polymer currency was introduced, Caroline Chisholm was the one that was missed enough that complaints were made.

1 Identify aspects of the note's design that relate Chisholm's work, life and times.
2 Why could there be no reference to religion in this representation of her?

bush ministries ministries formed to provide pastoral care in sparsely settled or remote areas in the early twentieth century

Bush ministries

In 1897, the Anglican Church established 'bush brotherhoods', an organisation of Anglican priests formed to provide pastoral care in sparsely settled areas. These became known as **bush ministries**. There were 10 bush brotherhoods scattered throughout Queensland, South Australia, New South Wales and Western Australia. Members of the brotherhood lived in strict poverty, worked in pairs and held services in farm sheds, hotels and in the open. They performed baptisms, marriages and funerals. The brotherhood began in Queensland in 1902 in Herberton and between 1926 and 1939 built seven churches in north Queensland around the sugar-growing areas of Cairns, Innisfail and Mackay.

Another bush ministry was begun by the Presbyterian minister John Flynn. Flynn had a keen interest in outback Australia and throughout his training he assisted other Presbyterian ministers with missionary work in various parts of rural and remote Australia. Of particular concern to Flynn was the lack of medical care available to rural residents. He was commissioned by the Presbyterian Church to compile a report on life in the Northern Territory in which he recommended he be appointed the head of a new organisation, the Australian Inland Mission (AIM).

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The Church was receptive to his recommendations and Flynn began work as the head of the organisation in 1912.

In this role, Flynn helped to establish several hospitals and nursing homes and recruited a team of ministers who travelled among the outback parishes on horseback, visiting congregations and households. When he began his service there were only two doctors servicing vast areas of Western Australia and the Northern Territory. Many people died because of lack of medical treatment and the problems posed by distance and poor communication services in acquiring medical help. Flynn identified the potential of air flight and radio telecommunications. Combining these with the ideas of Clifford Peel, a Victorian medical student, he published the idea for an aerial medical service in the Presbyterian publication *Inlander*. Flynn raised money for the venture and in May 1928 the Aerial Medical Service, now known as the Royal Flying Doctor Service, was established.

FIGURE 7.27
John Flynn

FIGURE 7.28
The bush brotherhood

The medical services and hospitals established by Flynn offered accessible medical care for those in rural communities. However, despite his strong Presbyterian background, Flynn refused to open his hospitals and hostels to the Aboriginal community. Flynn upheld the romantic ideal of the outback frontier and the importance of the white bushman, who he referred to as 'A1 human stock'. He often expressed racist sentiments towards the Aboriginal people, refusing to have anything to do with them and espousing the view that they should be allowed to die out as rapidly as possible. Later, during the 1920s and 1930s, Flynn began to express some sympathy regarding the poor treatment of Aboriginal people. He condemned Church and government policies on Aboriginal health and welfare, but did not act to improve these policies. His only suggestion for improving the lives of Aboriginal people was to assimilate them into white society, and to educate and evangelise them.

Churches and social welfare

The gold rush of the mid-nineteenth century provided a significant economic boom to Australia and many people believed it was literally a 'golden age'. However, with the onset of depression in the early 1890s, the banks crashed, the building boom halted and workers in the shearing and maritime industries conducted lengthy strikes to improve conditions. Workers and their families were reduced to poverty; alcoholism and suicide increased and there was no government funding to assist the unemployed, sick or aged.

Relief of any kind was left to the churches. Many charitable organisations based within the churches came to the fore to assist people. These included the Dorcas Society (Presbyterian), the Salvation Army, St Vincent de Paul (Catholic) and the Central Missions (Methodists). These societies assisted families by distributing food, visiting the sick and elderly and providing clothing and shelter. The workers, who were mainly women, blended their charity work with a form of evangelism that encouraged people to attend

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St Vincent de Paul Society

The St Vincent de Paul society was established in France in 1833 by a Parisian university student, Frederik Ozanam, who was moved to action by the poverty he saw in the slums of Paris every day. Homelessness, disease and starvation were common. Ozanam and a small group began working in the poor suburbs of Paris helping to alleviate some of this suffering. They adopted the name The Society of St Vincent de Paul after the Patron Saint of Christian Charity. The Society was established in Australia in 1854. The Society's principal aim is to bring about social justice by feeding, clothing and housing those in need. The St Vincent de Paul Society is a Catholic lay organisation that embodies Catholic teaching about the dignity and equality of all people in God's eyes.

The Salvation Army

The Salvation Army is an evangelical organisation within Christianity, which provides its central motivation. It has been operating in Australia since 1880. The organisation was originally established in London in 1865 by William Booth. Booth's aim was to make Christianity and the Church more accessible to the whole community – especially the poor and working class. While his original aim was to help the needy in terms of spirituality, his work with the poor and destitute expanded to helping them materially. Booth helped to establish social welfare programs, shelters and hostels. Later, Booth's aims for social change expanded to include employment services, legal aid for the poor and a missing persons' bureau.

church. The charity organisations assisted all people, regardless of their denomination.

Some Christians, witnessing the effects of the depression, were concerned that charity work was not sufficiently responsive to the economic crisis and began to lobby the government to provide funding for social welfare programs. Particularly active in the movement were the Methodists who openly sided with the striking labour unions, criticised harsh working conditions and defended people's right to strike. Cardinal Moran, too, supported the workers and offered to mediate between employers and employees. Catholics argued for social reform and fair wages, arguing that poverty was a result of economic structures. Protestants were concerned for moral reform of society as they were largely of the opinion that poverty was a punishment from God. Not all Christians supported the involvement of churches in what they considered issues of state.

Activity 7.19

Investigating and reasoning

1 List five welfare agencies operating in your state that have their roots in religion. Then complete the table on Worksheet 7.19.
2 Complete the consequences wheel on Worksheet 7.19 to show possible outcomes of the government banning religious welfare agencies on the pretext that welfare is an issue of state only. If religious welfare agencies were banned …

Religion and state

Many elements of public life in Australia have been shaped by Christianity. Most public holidays are Christian feast days (e.g. Easter and Christmas) and other national ceremonies such as ANZAC Day and the opening of parliament include Christian ideals and language. Christian rituals and principles have also been absorbed into popular culture and debate has, on the whole, been influenced by Christianity. Despite this, Australia does not have an established church and Christianity is not the official religion of Australia. Church and state have had some memorable battles throughout Australian history. One notable debate was between the Catholic Archbishop of Melbourne, Daniel Mannix and Prime Minister Billy Hughes regarding Hughes' policy on conscription.

Mannix, an Irishman, was one of the most prominent voices of the anti-conscription campaign of World War I and opposed Australia offering any military assistance to Britain. Mannix defended his position on conscription saying he thought Australia's efforts were already enough and that Australia needed to put its own interests before those of the

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FIGURE 7.29
An ANZAC Day service in Sydney

British Empire. Mannix went on to denounce the war altogether, labelling it a 'sordid trade war' and was quoted at the time as saying 'Conscription is a hateful thing and it is almost certain to bring evil in its train … Australia has done her fair share – I am inclined to say more than her fair share – in this war'. The issue of conscription divided Australian society. Because of its strong ties to England, the Anglican Church in Australia strongly supported conscription. On the other hand, many Irish Catholics agreed with Mannix.

In Australia, there is a separation between Church and state but for some, the separation is not strict enough. Separationists point out that religious beliefs are a matter of conscience and therefore should not be sanctioned by government because the state's jurisdiction does not extend to what people think. Separationists want to see the end of state privileges for churches such as taxation exemptions and funding for education and also oppose religiously inspired debates related to reproductive technology and euthanasia.

Australian spirituality

Over time, religious rituals and liturgies have developed a uniquely Australian flavour. As people became more comfortable within the Australian landscape and as they grew to understand Australian Indigenous spiritualities we have seen the use of Australian imagery in prayer and liturgical setting and some prayer services including elements of Aboriginal culture or spirituality, such as an Aboriginal cleansing ceremony.

In Australia, the term 'religion' tends to refer to socially organised ways of expressing belief. More recently, the term 'spirituality' has been used to signify holding a private religious belief without involvement in communal religious practice. Religions throughout history have made a variety of forms of spirituality available and many have offered introductions to contemplation, meditation and spirituality in general. Today, the popular meaning of the term 'spirituality', divorces it from the religious traditions from which it derived. Such interpretation is often related to individual activity rather than a group activity.

All religions and religious groups express a particular type of spirituality, so it is important to think of religion and spirituality as two connected and related ideas. Sometimes in conversation some Australians say, 'I'm not religious, but I am spiritual' meaning that while they do they do not belong to a particular religion, they do hold some beliefs. This

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distinction between religion and spirituality does not adequately recognise how intimately spirituality is linked with religious tradition.

Modern spiritualities may be derived from existing religions and may be shaped by the environment, place or history. Australian spirituality has responded to the Australian environment – including beaches, bush, desert, rural and urban living. It has also responded to Australian commemorative history, including the ANZAC legend, pioneer legend, the bush legend and Australian lifestyle. Australian spirituality taps into all of these very 'Australian experiences' passed on from generation to generation either through family, formal history or film and television.

We can really only understand Australian spirituality when we engage with where we have come from and what has shaped our current situation. Australia's context for religion and for spirituality has been its history, but the present reality also needs to be considered. Australia's religious and spiritual identity will continue to develop and respond to Australia's increasing religious diversity.

FIGURE 7.30
The nature of Australian spiritualities is as diverse as its landscapes

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Part III
Religious diversity in Australia

Activity 7.20

Framing

1 What religions are present in significant numbers in Australia?
2 What religions are evident in your neighbourhood or city?
3 What groups exist within different religions?
4 How does Australia collect data on its religious composition?
5 What methods are available to assist in investigating religious diversity?
6 How do religions cooperate with each other in Australia?

Figure 7.31 A typical white family from the 1950s

Introduction

Government policy has had a significant impact on religious diversity in Australia. As we have seen, the population of the colony was largely Anglican or Catholic in the early stages but reached greater diversity of Christian denominations in the nineteenth century. Although other religious groups existed in Australia, because of the **White Australia policy**, Australia remained a predominantly Christian nation until the 1950s.

White Australia policy

The White Australia policy refers to the guidelines and processes associated with immigration to Australia for the period between Federation (1901) and the end of World War II (1945). The policy originated in the 1850s as a result of violence against Chinese gold diggers by Australian miners in Victoria and New South Wales, and against East Asian workers in northern Queensland. Increasing problems led the governments of each colony to establish restrictions with regard to Chinese immigration. Volatile circumstances in Queensland also played a part in the introduction of the White Australia Policy, with factory workers protesting the immigration of Pacific Islander people, fearing that foreign immigrants would cause a shortage of employment for Australian workers.

The *Immigration Restriction Act 1901* was passed by the federal government, with the Prime Minister of the time, William Hughes, stating 'Our chief plank is, of course, a White Australia. There's no compromise about that. The industrious coloured brother has to go – and remain away!' The purpose of this act was to 'place certain restrictions on immigration and to provide for the removal from the Commonwealth of prohibited immigrants'. People had to pass an English dictation test in order to remain in or enter Australia. The purpose of the language test was to exclude non-whites from Australia. The White Australia policy specifically targeted European migrants and people of Asian or Pacific Islander descent. It was positively

White Australia policy a term used to describe a collection of historical policies that intentionally restricted non-white immigration to Australia from 1901 to 1973

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FIGURE 7.32
A campaign was waged to support the White Australia policy, which included posters

received throughout the country with Hughes calling it 'the greatest thing we have achieved'.

Similar attitudes towards immigration were reiterated at the end of World War II. During the war, a large number of refugees came to Australia and most left when the war ended. However, some had married Australians and wanted to remain in the country, but the Immigration Minister Arthur Caldwell declared that they should be deported. This decision was met with a large degree of protest and the White Australia policy began to disintegrate.

Another major step towards a fairer policy on immigration occurred when Immigration Minister Harold Holt allowed 800 non-European refugees to stay and allowed Japanese war brides to enter the country. The process to officially abolish the *White Australia Policy* ultimately took twenty-five years, with gradual steps towards a less-discriminatory form of immigration. In 1966, the federal government announced the end of the *White Australia Policy.* In 1973, the Whitlam Labor government took further steps to remove race as a determinant within Australia's policy on immigration.

Activity 7.21

Investigating

1 Locate and research instances of riots against immigrant workers in Queensland in the nineteenth century.
2 Identify the religious questions raised by these riots.

Religions and religious denominations in Australia

Each religious group in Australia has a story to tell about its arrival in Australia and how it has developed in this country. The following section provides some insight into the religious diversity of Australia.

The Anglican Church in Australia

Once called the Church of England, the Anglican Church adopted its present name in Australia in 1981, officially separating from the Church of England in England. The change did not alter any doctrines but rather expressed a desire to acknowledge the Australian Church within the worldwide Anglican Communion.

Anglicanism was introduced to Australia with the arrival of the First Fleet and the Church of England, as it was then known, enjoyed exclusive government subsidies under Crown patronage until 1836.

The fundamental conviction of Anglicans is contained in the statement: 'Jesus Christ is Lord'. This statement is core to the Christian scriptures and was clearly stated in the Anglican Catechism that was incorporated into the *Book of Common Prayer* in 1662. The *Book of Common Prayer* is the principle statement of Anglican faith and practice. In 1978, the General Synod of Australia adopted an *Australian Prayer Book* that modernised the language and incorporated alternative practices to accommodate

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FIGURE 7.33
St John's Cathedral in Brisbane

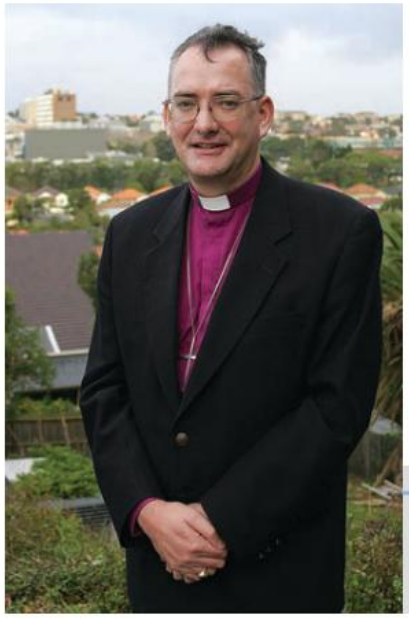

FIGURE 7.34
The Anglican Primate of Australia, Archbishop Phillip Aspinall

some of the variety of theological traditions that emerged in Anglicanism in Australia.

The Anglican Church in Australia consists of 23 dioceses, each of which is divided into parishes. Anglicans view Christianity as a fellowship of believers – common public worship is a basic expression of this. Within the Anglican tradition, there are three forms of public worship: Holy Communion, the service most regularly performed (usually weekly); Morning Prayer and Evening Prayer.

Membership of the Anglican Church occurs on two levels:

1 Membership of the church, which, as part of the Anglican Communion, is open to all baptised people who want to share in public worship.
2 Membership of a parish, which enables a person to participate in the formal government of the local church and requires communicant status achieved by receiving communion three times a year, including Easter.

In 1982, the Sydney **synod** appointed Dr Patricia Brennan to lead a committee to investigate the role of women in ministry in the Anglican Church. As a result, the Movement for the Ordination of Women (MOW) was formed in 1983. Twenty-five years later, there are now 450 women ordained in the Anglican Church in Australia, although debate continues over ordination of women as bishops in some Australian dioceses.

Two styles of Anglicism exist in Australia: High Anglicanism, which has an Anglo-Catholic interpretation particularly related to liturgy; and Evangelical Anglicanism, which places more of an emphasis on biblical revelation and personal conversion.

Activity 7.22
Reasoning

insert logo?

Analyse how this logo creates meaning pertaining to the Anglican Church in Australia.

Activity 7.23
Investigating

1 Who is the leader of the Anglican Church in Australia?
2 How many Anglican dioceses exist in Australia and which one do you live in?

synod
an official assembly of the church at the international, national, regional or diocesan level

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The Lutheran Church in Australia

FIGURE 7.35
A Lutheran church

A community of German Lutherans settled in South Australia in the 1830s, under the leadership of Pastor August Kavel. Pastor Kavel also arranged for two missionaries, Pastors Schürmann and Teichelmann from the Dresden Mission society, to start work with Aboriginal people in Adelaide. They arrived in 1838, established a good rapport with the Aboriginal people, learned their language and by 1840, held worship services with Indigenous people. Twelve Lutherans also arrived in Queensland in 1838 to work with Aboriginal people in the Moreton Bay region.

FIGURE 7.36
The Hermannsburg mission

South Australian Lutherans settled in rural communities in the Barossa Valley and the Adelaide Hills and were later joined by another group of Lutherans under the leadership of Pastor Fritzsche. The two pastors ministered to the separate congregations. The two groups split at the 1846 synod due to differences in their practice and the theology of the pastors.

The relative isolation of the Australian Lutheran communities, the vast size of Australia and differences in language often separated Lutherans from mainstream society, giving the impression that Lutherans lived in isolation.

Many of the Lutheran pastors in Australia were trained in missionary seminaries at Leipzig, Hermannsburg or Berlin. Most of the missionary societies attempted to establish missions for Aboriginal people in outback Australia. Hermannsburg mission in central Australia is named after the mission seminary in Germany. Lutheran schools were established during the nineteenth century and were seen as a way to educate and nurture young Lutherans within the traditions of the church.

World War I (1914–1918) proved a difficult time for Lutherans in Australia. While most Australian-born Lutherans considered themselves Australian, their German ancestry was treated with suspicion. In Victoria, the German language was forbidden in Lutheran schools and 49 schools in South Australia were closed by an Act of Parliament on 30 June 1917. In Queensland, eight pastors were imprisoned. As a result, the Lutheran church stopped using German in church and English became its language. After the war, in 1921, two separate groups were established, the United Evangelical Lutheran Church and the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Australia. World War II saw many of the prejudices against Lutherans resurface, delaying efforts to unite both Lutheran groups.

In 1966, the two groups finally merged into the Australian Lutheran Church. At the same time, the Catholic Church, through the Second Vatican Council (1962–1965), opened the door to dialogue with other Christian denominations and in 1975, the Lutheran Church of Australia began its first bilateral dialogue with the Catholic Church. Other dialogues followed

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with the Anglicans, the Uniting Church and the Reformed Churches.

Until the 1950s, the Lutheran Church in Australia was predominantly German. With the influx of migrants after World War II, Lutherans from Latvia, Finland, Sweden and Estonia became part of the Australian Lutheran church. More recently Asian congregations have been formed and there are Indonesian and Cambodian congregations. Three independent Lutheran churches exist in Queensland.

In 1911, the number of Lutherans in Australia was 72 395. This fell to 60 803 in 1933 (some Lutherans may not have identified themselves as Lutheran due to fears left over from prejudice during World War I) and towards the end of World War II only 0.88 per cent of the population identified themselves as Lutheran. By the early 1990s, Lutherans made up 1.49 per cent of the population, yet according to the National Church Life Survey only 18 per cent of these attend church on any Sunday, while 40 per cent indicated that they did not attend church at all.

Activity 7.24

Reasoning

Lutheran Church of Australia

Analyse how this logo creates meaning.

Activity 7.25

Investigating

The Lutheran Church of Australia website (www.lca.org.au) may assist you to complete this activity.

1 How many Lutheran churches are there in your state?
2 How many Lutheran schools are there in your state?
3 Complete the tables on Worksheet 7.25 to show information about the Lutheran church and school nearest to you.

The Uniting Church in Australia

FIGURE 7.37 The Sunnybank Uniting Church in Brisbane

The Uniting Church in Australia was formed on 22 June 1977, after a formal process of more than twenty years. The Uniting Church consists of an amalgamation of three denominations, Congregational, Methodist and Presbyterian, which have their origins in the European Reformation of the sixteenth century.

Congregationalists

Congregationalists emerged from the English Reformation and have close links to the Reformed Churches. Early Congregationalists were a sub-group of the English Puritans called Separatists who argued that church reform was impossible while the state dominated the church, therefore they separated themselves from the Church of England. Congregationalists see the life of the church in the gathered congregation, not the church hierarchy or monarch.

Methodists

Methodism dates from the industrial revolution and began as a movement within the Church of England. John and Charles Wesley, students at the University of Oxford, formed a Christian society called the Holy Club. John Wesley's life changed after a meeting with Moravian missionaries in 1738 and he subsequently began preaching around England.

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The term 'Methodist' is related to the methodical way of approaching the Christian faith that Wesley promoted and it was originally a term of derision. Methodism developed into a denomination after the death of John Wesley in 1791. John Wesley never intended to form a new denomination; in fact, he encouraged members to receive communion at their local Anglican Church. Over time, the movement embraced changes such as the ordination of leaders for missionary work and a separate observance of the Lord's Supper. With this, separation from the Church of England began. Methodists encourage lay leadership and have a strong interest in social activism. They are also known as a 'singing faith' as much of their theology is taught through songs from the pen of Charles Wesley. The Wesleyan Methodist Church, established after World War II, is an independent denomination and has no relationship with the Methodist Church of Australia and is not part of the Uniting Church in Australia.

Presbyterians

Presbyterians emerged from the Protestant Reformation and their founder, John Knox, worked with the Protestant reformer John Calvin. John Knox reformed the Church of Scotland in line with the teachings of Calvin. The Westminster Confession of Faith (1647) is considered a foundational document of Presbyterianism and emphasises justification by grace through faith and the sovereignty of God.

Towards Uniting

Congregationalists, Methodists and Presbyterians discussed amalgamation as early as the mid-1920s but internal division within the denominations halted the process. During the 1960s, discussions shifted from amalgamation to conversations based on ecumenical theology focused on union. The joint Commission on Church Unity (JCCU) was established in 1957, but it was not until 1971 with the formation of the *Basis of Union* that the churches could see a way forward.

sodalities
an old name for lay church movements or organisations in the Roman Catholic Church

When the three denominations united, Congregationalists made up 5 per cent, Methodists 59 per cent and Presbyterians 36 per cent of membership. Not all Presbyterians entered the union. The Uniting Church recognised that members of the three denominations who were ordained ministers, elders, leaders, deaconesses and lay preachers would continue to operate in the new union. Many practical parts of church life had to be addressed for the union to be successful and these included forms of worship, expressions of social justice and church governance structure.

The Uniting Church in Australia prides itself on its gender-inclusive approach to church affairs, where women are not only ordained but also contribute actively to all ministries of the church.

Activity 7.26

Investigating

1 Find out what foundational denomination the Uniting Church in your local area was prior to union.
2 If possible, ask an older member of the congregation their memories of the journey to union and whether they think it was well handled for 'ordinary' members of the church community.

The Catholic Church in Australia

Catholics, predominantly from Ireland, arrived in Australia during the convict period. Another large influx of Irish Catholics arrived during the 1840s after the potato crop failure in Ireland. In 1836, there were 21 898 Catholics in Australia and by 1851, the Catholic population had risen to 56 899, an increase of 141 per cent. In the British colony, they struggled hard to preserve their faith, which was sustained by regular Mass attendance and popular devotions such as the Forty Hours Adoration, the Nine First Fridays, membership of **sodalities** and praying the rosary.

State aid to Catholic schools was abolished in 1872. The Catholic Church established and maintained a separate education system that was not only a means of religious formation for children but also maintained strong links between family and parish. Opposing the free, compulsory and secular education system imposed in many of the colonies and insisting that religion was inseparable from life; Catholic schools survived and even expanded because religious orders

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FIGURE 7.38
The Cathedral of St Stephen in Brisbane, built in 1850

FIGURE 7.39
Father Lalo comforts refugees in Dili

administered and taught in primary and secondary schools across the country. The lack of federal funding for Catholic schools remained a problem until 1964, when some government funding was provided.

After World War II, the demographic character of the Catholic Church in Australia changed from one that was predominantly Irish to a church that included members from Europe and beyond. Within this period, over 2.5 million new arrivals changed the face of the church in Australia. In the 1970s, Vietnamese and Latin Americans added another dimension to Australian Catholicism.

The Australian Catholic Church has always maintained a missionary presence overseas in places such as Papua New Guinea, the Pacific, South-East Asia and, most recently, East Timor. The work is supported by local parishes and associated Mission Aid Societies.

The Roman Catholic Church has traditionally involved itself in the public arena and has taken strong public stands on issues such as conscription, immigration policies, communism and moral issues. Since the Second Vatican Council in the 1960s, the church has also spoken out publicly on issues of justice and peace and Aboriginal Land Rights.

From their humble beginnings in 1788, the Catholic population in Australia is now over 5 001 600 people – the largest Christian denomination in the country.

Activity 7.27

Investigating and reasoning: response to stimulus

'The Little Irish Mother'

Father Patrick Hartigan (1878–1952) under the alias John O'Brien penned the collection of poems called *Around the Boree Log* and *The Parish of St Mels* while he was a parish priest in a New South Wales country town. His poetry describes, in a sentimental way, Catholic life in Australia. One of his most famous poems, 'The Little Irish Mother', reflects something of the character of Irish Catholicism in Australia. Read the poem 'The Little Irish Mother' on Worksheet 7.27 and answer the following questions.

1 Which word in the poem's second line brings a religious connotation to the poem's opening?
2 What is the 'settling up to be' described by the final stanza, where does it take place and who is 'the judge'?
3 How are the Irish and, in particular, Irish women represented in 'The Little Irish Mother'?
4 What is the role of religion in the lives of Irish Australians, according to this poem?
5 Provide evidence from the poem to defend the claim that this is a 'sentimental' portrayal of Catholic life in Australia.

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Pentecostalism

Some of the fastest growing churches in Australia are Pentecostal Churches. While this is not a uniquely Australian phenomenon, it is in stark contrast to the waning attendance figures of mainstream Christian Churches. However, overall Pentecostal followers constitute a small percentage of Christians in Australia.

The term 'Pentecostal' comes from the Book of Acts (Chapter 2) in the Christian scriptures. The text recounts the story of the disciples being 'filled with the Holy Spirit' and being able to 'speak in tongues'. Pentecostals stress that this experience it not limited to the early Church but is available to all people and is evidenced by **glossolalia** and the regular occurrence of healing miracles and statements of prophecy. Pentecostalism is a particular style of Christianity that is often grounded in **anti-sacerdotal** rhetoric.

glossolalia speaking in tongues

anti-sacerdotal hostile to priests or the priesthood

Forerunners of modern Pentecostalism in Australia are the Assemblies of God and some Churches of Christ. Like the reformist and revivalist movements of previous eras, Pentecostalism claims to have recovered the church of early Christianity. They believe in a literal reading of scripture and see baptism of the Holy Spirit as being 'born again'. They deny the validity of infant baptism.

Pentecostal worship is unlike that of most mainstream Christian services. A Pentecostal service may last for two to three hours and generally begins with about thirty minutes of singing. Pentecostal music is based on popular music and accompanied by large bands and skilled musicians who lead the congregation. Words of the songs are projected onto large screens and worshippers are encouraged to physically express themselves by moving, clapping or dancing.

At some time during the service, someone may engage in glossolalia while others listen. When the person is finished speaking someone else usually offers an interpretation of what has been said. A feature of the service is the preaching, which usually lasts up to an hour. The preacher often displays a highly engaging and charismatic style. Examples of Pentecostal churches include Christian Outreach Centres and Hillsong.

A particular feature of Hillsong is the number of other groups that it advertises for participants, including: United Youth, Hillsong Kids, The Sisterhood, Frontline 25–35s, Volunteers, Worship and Creative Arts and Connect Groups. Although Hillsong has only a few centres in Australia it belongs to the new category of 'mega-churches' because it holds services in a large venue aiming to attract a mass audience.

More recently, Pentecostals have begun to support conservative political movements such as the Australian Christian Coalition and lobby to support conservative moral positions. In some areas of Australia, they have established parent-controlled and church-controlled schools.

FIGURE 7.40
A service at Hillsong

Activity 7.28

Investigating and reasoning

After examining the websites of Hillsong Church and Christian City Church (as representative of a range of Pentecostal churches) suggest two or three reasons to account for the speed at which such church congregations are growing in Australia.

1 http://hillsong.com
2 www.myc3church.net.

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Eastern Orthodox Churches in Australia

The Eastern Orthodox Church is divided into several independent groups including Greek Orthodox, Russian Orthodox, Romanian Orthodox and Serbian Orthodox, with each representing the 'State church' of a different nation. The Eastern Orthodox Churches came to Australia for the purpose of spiritual and pastoral care of their members, not for missionary activity.

As far as can be gleaned from First Fleet records, there were no Eastern Orthodox people in the early colony, the first Greek Orthodox migrants arrived in Australia in about 1810. The first Orthodox service held in Australia occurred when a ship's chaplain celebrated liturgy during Easter in 1820. By 1896 there was a Greek Orthodox priest in Sydney and the first Orthodox Church in Australia was established in 1898 in Surry Hills, Sydney. This was followed by an Orthodox Church in Melbourne in 1900.

Greek Orthodox Church

In 1924, the Patriarch of Constantinople (the spiritual leader of the Orthodox Church) established the Greek Orthodox diocese in Australia and the first bishop was appointed. By 1927, there were more than 10 000 Greeks living in Australia, with established communities in Perth, Brisbane, Port Pirie, Sydney, Melbourne and Darwin. However, the only communities with churches were those in Sydney, Melbourne and Port Pirie.

After World War II, the Greek population grew significantly and the diocese was upgraded to an archdiocese in 1959. Today, the archdiocese has been further divided into several districts, each with an assistant bishop in charge. More than 100 parish communities exist as well as church schools and a theological college.

The Greek Orthodox Church of St George opened in Brisbane in May 1958 and is located in West End, Brisbane. The Greek Orthodox community in Brisbane provides a number of community based programs as well as a nursing home for the elderly and childcare facilities.

Russian Orthodox Church

The first large influx of Russian Orthodox members arrived in Australia after fleeing Russia in 1911–1914. Most of the immigrants were seeking asylum from political and religious oppression. By 1911, Russians were the fourth largest ethnic group in Brisbane. The second wave of Russian migrants were 'White Russians' (supporters of the Tsar and anti-Communists) fleeing the Communist Revolution of 1917. They arrived in Australia around 1920, after

FIGURE 7.41
The Greek Orthodox Church of St George in Brisbane

FIGURE 7.42
St Nicholas' Russian Orthodox Cathedral in Brisbane

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travelling through Russia, Siberia and northern China, landing either in Townsville or in Brisbane. The first Russian parish was established in Brisbane in 1923.

The Russian Orthodox Cathedral of St Nicholas was erected during 1935–1936 in Woolloongabba in Brisbane and was the first purpose built Russian Orthodox Church in Australia. Orthodox churches are highly decorative and the **iconostasis** for St Nicholas' Cathedral was decorated by Russian immigrants and the moveable icons and chandelier are of Russian and Chinese origins.

iconostasis
a wall of icons and religious paintings, separating the nave from the sanctuary in a church

The Eastern Orthodox church communities have played a significant role in the settlement of migrants in Australia because people have been able to continue contact with their ethnic community as well as maintain their spiritual and religious practices.

Activity 7.29

Investigating, reasoning and judging

Using Table 7.1 on page 178, answer the following questions.

1 Which religion had the largest number of adherents and in what year?
2 Which religion had the smallest number of adherents and in what year?
3 Which religion experienced the largest percentage growth in numbers between 1996 and 2001?
4 Which religion experienced the largest percentage decline in numbers between 1996 and 2001?
5 Which religion experienced the least percentage change between 1996 and 2001?
6 Rank the religions and 'no religion' according to the percentage of the population who identified as each in 2001.
7 Design and produce a bar graph showing the number of adherents to each listed religion in 1996 and 2001.
8 What conclusions can you draw from the data presented?

Judaism in Australia

The Jewish community in Australia dates back to 1788 – between 8 and 14 of the 751 convicts on the First Fleet were Jews. The First Fleet list included the Jews Esther Abrahams, Henry Abrams, Daniel Daniells, Johan Harris, Frances Hart, David Jacobs, Amelia Levy and Joseph Levy. In addition, Sarah Burdo, Aaron David, Sarah Davis, John Jacobs, Thomas Josephs and Joseph Tuso may also have been Jewish. Of the Jews who landed at Sydney Cove, Joseph Levy, who was transported for seven years for stealing a copper kettle worth eight shillings, was brought before the second sitting of court in Australia and was the first Jew to be buried in Australia in April 1788. Other Jews arrived after 1788 but the first formal Jewish administrative structure, a Jewish Burial Society, was not established until 1817.

In Sydney during the 1820s, Jewish businessmen met for prayer. According to official records, the merchant Phillip J. Cohen, made his home available for religious services in 1828 and by 1832, the Sydney Hebrew Congregation was established. The first permanent synagogue opened in 1844 and the Great Synagogue was established in Elizabeth Street, Sydney, by 1877.

Australian Jews were mainly drawn from the English 'urban poor'. By the 1840s, there were small Jewish communities of Anglo-Jews in New South Wales, Van Diemen's Land, South Australia and Western Australia. When transportation ended in 1852, there were approximately 1200 Jews in Australia, mostly from London's East End. They totalled about 0.5 per cent of the population. Even though the number of Jews increased during the gold rushes of the 1850s, overall numbers remained at around 0.5 per cent.

When Queensland became a state, there were approximately fifteen Jewish families in Brisbane. They formed a congregation in 1865 and used a series of rented rooms for worship until the construction of Queensland's first synagogue in 1886. Later, a number of Jewish families from Sydney came to Brisbane and joined the Queensland community. Synagogues became the focal point of Jewish life in Australia, as in other parts of the world.

During the nineteenth century, small Jewish communities emerged in Maitland, Tamworth, Goulburn and Toowoomba but they went into decline as the gold rush waned. Many Jewish men returned

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to the larger cities, 'married out' and assimilated into Australian society. In country Victoria, Bendigo and Ballarat maintained substantial congregations until about the end of the nineteenth century. The physical size of Australia – the distance between cities and towns – presented significant challenges to Australian Jews. Keeping kosher food laws, for example, proved impossible for travelling Jewish bushmen, and being able to gather a ***minyan*** in some areas was almost impossible. Jewish females were also in short supply in bush areas and many Jewish men 'married out', destroying the Jewish line and with little hope that children of mixed marriages would be brought up Jewish. While there were small Jewish communities in some country areas, in the 1960s, only 3.5 per cent of Australian Jews lived outside capital cities.

Assimilation has always been an issue for Jews, partly because of their need to maintain religious observance and partly because of fears of anti-Semitism. Some German-speaking Jews who arrived in Australia during the 1850s had difficulty merging with the English-born majority. The situation changed at the end of the nineteenth century, when Russian and Polish Jews, who fled their homeland because of persecution, arrived in Australia.

The arrival of Yiddish speaking Jews, whose dress was different and whose 'foreignness' was visible, raised fears of the rise in anti-Semitism in the Anglo-Jewish community. These fears were not unfounded: anti-Semitic statements, such as Jews being manipulative profiteers, began to appear and the *Bulletin* magazine even claimed that the Boer War had been started by Jews for their own financial gain.

Consequently, Anglo-Jews developed a policy of non-distinctiveness, often playing down religious practice that might appear to non-Jews as 'odd'. The result was a steady decline in Jewish religious observances and an increase in mixed marriages. By the 1920s, the Jewish community in Australia was facing a crisis. Up to 30 per cent of male Jews in Australia had married non-Jews. In Tasmania and South Australia, the percentage was up to 50 per cent and it was predicted that within two generations Jews would have assimilated completely into Australian society.

Jewish leaders, concerned with the declining numbers within the Australian Jewish community, adopted a revitalisation policy, which focused on Jewish youth. They provided sporting associations, educational facilities and youth groups to heighten the cultural sense of 'Jewishness' in young people. While the initiative was moderately successful, it was the arrival of 2000 Jews from Eastern Europe in the 1920s and the emigration of 7000 Jews fleeing Nazi Germany in the 1930s, which substantially increased the size of the Jewish community in Australia. This unexpected wave of non-English speaking Jews changed the face of Jewry in Australia.

FIGURE 7.43
The Great Synagogue in Sydney

minyan
quorum of ten adult Jewish men over the age of thirteen

The European Jews saw themselves first and foremost as Jews, unlike Anglo-Australian Jews who considered themselves Australian and then Jewish. The majority of the new arrivals were deeply religious, learned in Judaism and, in some cases, pro-Zionist. They were also determined to ensure the survival of the Jewish community and they readily became involved in group activities that confirmed and enhanced their cultural, social and religious identity.

In 1940, 2000 Jews were deported by the British government to Australia as 'enemy aliens' on the ship the *Dunera*. Many of the internees stayed in Australia and they made significant contributions to Jewish life. These Jews laid the foundations for Reform Judaism, established Jewish day schools and represented changing attitudes to Zionism.

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FIGURE 7.44
The *Dunera* boys reunion in 1997

FIGURE 7.45
Margaret Street Synagogue

Activity 7.30

Investigating and reasoning: response to stimulus

The *Dunera* boys

Read the account by Walter Travers on Worksheet 7.30, or online at www.holocaust.com.au/mm/i_horst.htm, and answer the following questions:

1 Why were the *Dunera* boys interned by the British government and sent to Australia?
2 Find a word or phrase in each extract that suggests that this situation caused each man to feel hurt.
3 List four positive outcomes of the Dunera experience mentioned by the two men.
4 What do you think Horst Jacobs means by 'We have been able to repay our debt with interest'? Refer to religion in your answer.

In the mid-twentieth century, the Australian government introduced a quota system to limit Jewish refugee migration, which would keep Jews as a small percentage of the population. Jews in Melbourne and Sydney, where there was a high concentration, were accused of not assimilating, working for long hours for low pay and undermining Australian living standards. They were also accused of destroying Christianity and lacking morality.

Anti-Jewish sentiment grew during the post-World War II migration period. Australia's immigration policy until 1939 had aimed at being 98 per cent Anglo-Celtic but it changed dramatically after the war. In 1945, Arthur Calwell, the Minister for Immigration, published a document entitled *How Many Australians Tomorrow?* advocating that Australia needed to double its population of 7.5 million. The document was not well received and Jewish refugee immigration was limited according to the White Australia policy. Jewish people were restricted to a total of 25 per cent of all passengers on ships and in 1948, this quota was extended to planes. In 1949, the quota for Jewish immigrants was set at 3000 per annum and the 'Iron Curtain Embargo' of 1949 excluded Jews who came from countries under Soviet rule. Calwell's policy was continued under Liberal Immigration Minister Harold Holt from 1950–1955 until members of the Jewish community questioned the government on discrimination grounds.

In 1954, 17 000 Jews arrived from Europe and Shanghai. In 1961, 10 000 arrived with a significant number fleeing the uprising in Hungary in 1956 and a small number of Egyptian Jews immigrating as a result of Suez Crisis of 1956. Between

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1938 and 1961 Australian Jewry increased from 23 000 to 60 000.

Today, large Jewish communities are centred in Sydney and Melbourne, with smaller Jewish communities in Brisbane and the Gold Coast. The range of Jewish practice in Australia is diverse, comprising Orthodox, Progressive and Conservative synagogues. In Brisbane, the Orthodox synagogue is located in Margaret Street – two other synagogues exist in Camp Hill and Greenslopes. There are also two synagogues on the Gold Coast.

The history of Jews in Australia is characterised by the relative stability of Jewish life that has existed from 1788.

Activity 7.31

Reasoning and judging

Using Table 7.1 on page 178, answer the following questions about Judaism in Australia.

1. How many more people identified as Jewish in 2001 than in 1996?
2. What proportion of respondents identified as Jewish in both years?
3. What proportion of religious non-Christians identified as Jewish in 2001?
4. How accurate do you think the ABS data is in its reflection of the number of Jews in Australia and why?

Islam in Australia

Muslim fishermen from Indonesia, known as Macassans, visited the Australian coastline as early as the 1650s, in search of trepan (sea cucumber), which they sold to the lucrative Chinese market. There appears to be some evidence of trade between the sailors and Aboriginal people in Australia, as Macassan artefacts have been found in Aboriginal communities in northwest Australia. The last known Macassan fleet was turned away in 1907, after laws banning Macassan ships entering Australian waters were enacted in 1906. Between 1885 and 1940 a small numbers of Indonesians from Java worked on sugar plantations in Queensland, while others worked in the pearl industry in Western Australia. Most returned to Indonesia when their contracts expired because of the government's White Australia policy.

The most notable group of Muslim immigrants to Australia were the Afghan camel drivers who arrived in Melbourne during the 1860s. They first came to accompany Burke and Wills in their exploration of Australia's inland and later to transport goods across the deserts with their camels. The Afghans contributed to the building of the railway line between Port Augusta and Alice Springs where a series of 'Ghan' towns were established along the way. They also assisted in constructing the Overland Telegraph line between Adelaide and Darwin in the 1870s.

The Afghan men were not allowed to bring women with them, so many married Indigenous women from remote communities and some married European women. Children from these unions were often given Afghan names, wore traditional Afghan dress, memorised the *Qur'an* and observed Muslim customs. The first mosques in Australia, in Adelaide (1888), Broken Hill (1891) and Perth (1905), were built by Afghan Muslims. With the arrival of cars and heavy transport vehicles, camels became obsolete and were let loose in the deserts.

There was some Muslim migration to Australia after World War II, mainly from Yugoslavia and Albania. A larger group arrived from Turkey in 1967 after the Australia–Turkey Agreement. The Muslim

FIGURE 7.46 Afghan camel drivers in early Australia

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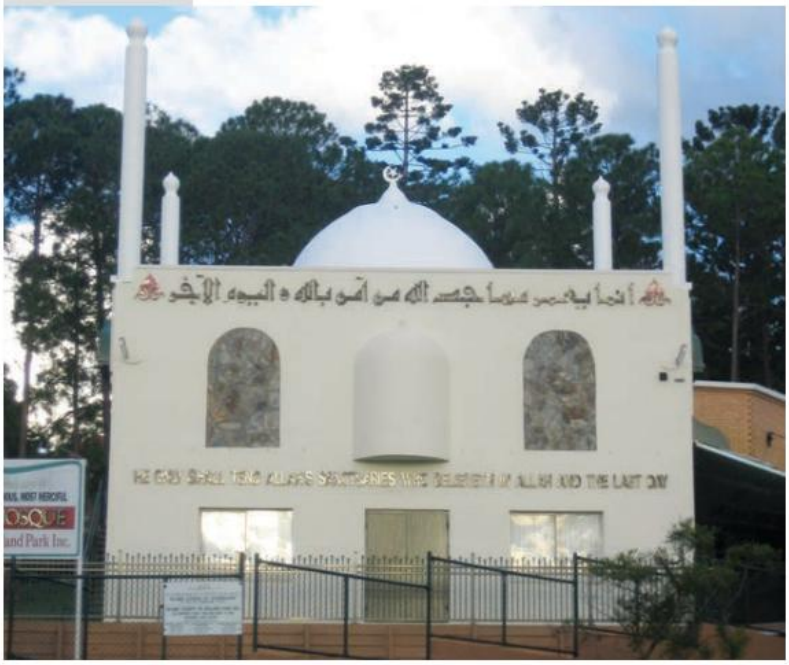
population increased from 2704 in 1947 to 22 311 in 1971. In the 2006 census, there were 23 126 Turkish-born Muslims in Australia. During the 1980s, many Muslims migrated to Australia under the Special Humanitarian Scheme, with most coming from war-torn countries such as Lebanon and from Afghanistan, Iran, Palestine, Albania, Iraq and Bosnia in the late 1990s.

Today, there are close to two hundred mosques in Australia. These mosques are largely non-sectarian – they do not belong to one particular group within Islam. Muslim schools also exist in most capital cities. There are at least seven Mosques in Brisbane and four Muslim schools.

At the 2006 census, there were more than 340 000 Muslims in Australia, with 128 904 born in Australia. Australian Muslims come from more than sixty different countries and, while the majority come from Turkey and Lebanon, there are also 8656 from Indonesia, 10 039 from Iraq, 15 965 from Afghanistan, 13 821 from Pakistan and 13 361 from Bangladesh.

Australia's Muslim population is primarily concentrated in Sydney and Melbourne, with about 3 per cent of both states' populations being Muslim. The Muslim population in Queensland accounts for approximately 1 per cent of the total population. In contrast to one hundred years ago, when they were mainly located in outback and rural communities, today's Muslims tend to live in large cities

FIGURE 7.47
Holland Park Mosque in Brisbane



Activity 7.32

Reasoning and judging

Using Table 7.1 on page 178, answer the following questions about Islam in Australia.

1 How many more people identified as Muslim in 2001 than in 1996?
2 What proportion of respondents identified as Muslim in each year? What proportion of religious non-Christians identified as Muslim in 2001?
3 How accurate do you think the ABS data is in its reflection of the number of Muslims in Australia? Why?

Activity 7.33

Investigating

1 What was the Australia–Turkey Agreement?
2 Why was it formed?
3 What did it achieve?

Buddhism in Australia

Some historians believe that in the early fifteenth century, Chinese ships were sent to explore the oceans south of China and landed on Aru Island, north of Arnhem land.

One of the most influential groups of Chinese to come to Australia were the Chinese men who came during the gold rushes of the 1850s. The first group arrived on the goldfields in 1848 where they introduced Buddhism to Australia. In 1857, Victoria had 27 000 Buddhists and by 1891, Buddhists represented 1.2 per cent of the Australian population. They brought statues of the Buddha with them and built Joss houses, a significant example of which remains in Bendigo, Victoria. When the gold ran out, many of the original miners returned home. With the introduction of the White Australia policy, there were only 3269 Buddhists in Australia by 1911.

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In the 1870s, another group of Buddhists came from Sri Lanka to Australia hoping to work in the sugar plantations of northern Queensland. In 1882, 500 Sinhalese left Sri Lanka hoping to work in the cane fields of Queensland and 275 disembarked in Mackay. Two days later, when 225 Sinhalese attempted to disembark in the Burnett River they were greeted with protests from the Anti-Coolie League. Fearing that they were going to be killed, the Sinhalese responded by throwing knives. This anti-racial outburst became known as the Battle of Burnett. Other groups of Sinhalese settled on Thursday Island in the Torres Strait, where they worked in the pearling industry. By the end of the 1890s, Thursday Island had approximately 500 Sinhalese who planted two bodhi trees, that are reportedly still alive. Later, thousands of Japanese worked in the pearl industry in Darwin and Broome. They celebrated Japanese Buddhist festivals and remained until 1941.

In the early twentieth century, a small group called The Little Circle of the Dharma, formed by Max Tayler, Max Dunn and David Maurice practised Theravada Buddhism. In 1938, another Buddhist study group, who used English translations of texts, held regular monthly talks and information sessions.

In the early 1950s, the New South Wales Buddhist society was formed by Westerners with an interest in Theravada Buddhism. It was not until the late 1960s and early 1970s that Mahayana Buddhism entered Australia. During the late 1970s, Soka Gakki, a lay movement from Japan, was established in Sydney. For approximately one hundred years, Buddhism in Australia has been maintained by lay people, but in the late 1970s moves were made to establish a Buddhist retreat centre in the Blue Mountains. Within a matter of a few years, a number of Buddhist monasteries were established and one of the largest in the southern hemisphere is Chung Tian Temple at Priestdale in Brisbane.

With an increase of immigration from South-East Asia in the 1970s, Buddhism also grew. When the Vietnam War ended in 1975, Buddhist numbers increased rapidly with an influx of refugees and a group of Vietnamese monks arrived in Australia in 1980. In 1981, with the arrival of the senior monk the Most Venerable Thich Phuoc Hue, the Vietnamese Buddhist Federation was established, which now has branches in most states of Australia.

FIGURE 7.48
Chung Tian Temple at Priestdale in Brisbane

More recently, Buddhism has also increased through Western conversions. Buddhism, in the main, is not an evangelical religion and so Westerners who have come to Buddhism have mainly done so as a result of reading books or attending meditation courses.

For immigrants, Buddhism is not only a religious belief but one that offers significant cultural and social support. Engaged Buddhism has more recently played a larger role in Australian society through the establishment of care facilities and social support mechanisms for people.

In Queensland, Buddhism is primarily known via Chinese New Year celebrations, a feature of Chinatown in Fortitude Valley, Brisbane. More recently, it is experienced through the Buddha's birthday celebrations held, during the long weekend in May at Southbank, by the Chung Tian Temple.

One of the oldest Chinese Temples in Brisbane is the Temple of the Holy Triad or the Brisbane Joss House, as it is known. This temple was constructed during 1885–1886 for the Cantonese Chinese community of Brisbane, and is sandwiched between the Breakfast Creek Hotel and Albion Park Racecourse. The Chinese community had large market gardens in the area around Breakfast Creek and some had small businesses in Fortitude Valley. The Chinese market gardeners supplied the whole of Brisbane with vegetables during the late 1880s.

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FIGURE 7.49
Temple of the Holy Triad, also known as the Brisbane Joss House

The temple – opened on 21 January 1886 – was constructed so that the Chinese people in Brisbane could have a community base. For the next sixty years, it continued to provide a focus for Chinese people. In the latter half of the nineteenth century, the Chinese community erected a number of temples in the Queensland gold fields and near major ports. The only ones that remain are the temple at Breakfast Creek, the Chun Lo Goon temple in Rockhampton, which is now relocated in the Chinese Gardens in the city and the Hou Wang temple in Atherton.

The Brisbane temple is significant not only because of its elaborate ceramic ornamentation, which depicts Chinese characters, but also because of the triple roof, which was imported from China by one of Brisbane's prominent Chinese trading firms. The temple fell into disrepair in the early part of the twentieth century but was restored and re-opened in 1966.

It was not until 1981 that the Buddhist population increased sufficiently to be separately identified in the national Census and records indicate that by this time there were 35 000 Buddhists in Australia. As one of Australia's fastest growing religions, Buddhist immigration since the late 1970s has been significant. By 2006, there were 357 800 Buddhists in Australia.

idolatry
worship of any cult image, idea, or object, as opposed to the worship of a monotheistic God

Activity 7.34

Reasoning and judging

Using Table 7.1 on page 178, answer the following questions about Buddhism in Australia.

1 How many more people identified as Buddhist in 2001 than in 1996?
2 What proportion of respondents identified as Buddhist in each year?
3 What proportion of religious non-Christians identified as Buddhist in 2001?
4 How accurate do you think the ABS data is in its reflection of the number of Buddhists in Australia and why?

Hinduism in Australia

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, many European trading ships left the Bay of Bengal with Indian crews and some Indians also worked as labourers on the convict transport ships. In 1837, forty Indian labourers from the Dhangar people in Chotanagpur were contracted to a British planter to work in New South Wales. Ten years later, more Indian men arrived to work and it is reported that one ship also contained women and children.

Australians were generally suspicious of Indians – they considered them a moral threat, and thought of their religious practices as **idolatry**. The *Indian Emigration Act 1839* promoted a scheme, with an assured passage home, for young married couples with up to two children to work in Australia. Many worked as itinerant merchants but records indicate that 200 Anglo-Indians worked in the printing industry. Subsequently, in 1857 the Victorian census records 277 Indians, or 'Hindoo race', as living in the state (race was a term used at the time to classify people of colour).

The camel drivers from the Punjab, while classed as Indian nationals, were also racially identified as 'Hindoos' and while some may have been Hindu, others were Sikhs and Muslims. Some Hindus became hawkers and during the 1880s, when Victoria relaxed the licensing provisions for peddlers, the Indian hawker became a common sight – walking from door

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to door selling his wares. There are also newspaper records that indicate that when a Hindu died he was cremated using a eucalyptus log pyre. In Queensland, some Hindus worked as labourers on cotton and sugarcane farms in the north.

One of the first racist outbursts against Hindus and Muslims occurred in the *Illustrated Weekly News* of 1 May 1893. The article referred to Hindus and Mahometans (Muslims) as dangerous, nasty, hoarding money and begging for tea and tobacco. The reporter thought that Hindus were more liberal than Mahometans because they drank, ate more and wore better clothes.

After Federation, when the White Australia policies were introduced, it became increasingly difficult for Indians to gain work. Even though it was argued that they were British subjects, it did not change the prevailing attitude of society, which considered coloured immigrants to be lesser beings. Many hawker licences were not renewed and it became almost impossible for Indians to acquire land.

In 1922, an Indian diplomat, Srinivasa Sastri, highlighted the plight of Indian Australians at an Imperial Conference and his political agitation was backed by the Council of Churches. Eventually, Indians were granted electoral rights in 1925, and in 1926, they became eligible to receive the pension. Despite the improved conditions of Indians post-1925, the Indian population continued to decline and by 1947, the year of Indian Independence, there were only 2189 Indians in Australia. In the 1950s, two Indian academics arrived to take up visiting appointments and the 1954 Census records only 2647 Indians as Australian residents.

Probably because of this history, the Hindu community has been slow to celebrate publically its cultural and religious identity in Australia. One event that changed attitudes was the visit, during the early 1960s, of Hindu gurus and swamis, who offered classes in yoga and meditation. Another significant shift has been the conscious move by Hindu immigrants to make worship more communally centred. Today there are approximately thirty-five Hindu temples in Australia, including three in Brisbane. The Australian Hindu population more than doubled between 1996 and 2006 and now numbers more than 148 000 people.

FIGURE 7.50
A Hindu temple in Carrum Downs, Victoria

Activity 7.35

Reasoning and judging

1 What 'religious' reason might the newspaper columnist have had in mind when he said 'Hindus are more liberal than Mahometans because they drank, ate more and wore better clothes'.

2 Examine the graph below and answer the following questions:
   a Describe the difference in religious affiliation between Australian residents born in India and Indian residents.
   b List, in order, the three religions with the most adherents in India
   c List, in order, the three religions with the most adherents among Indian-born Australian residents.
   d What is the approximate difference between the percentage of India's population that is Hindu and the percentage of Indian-born Australian residents that is Hindu?

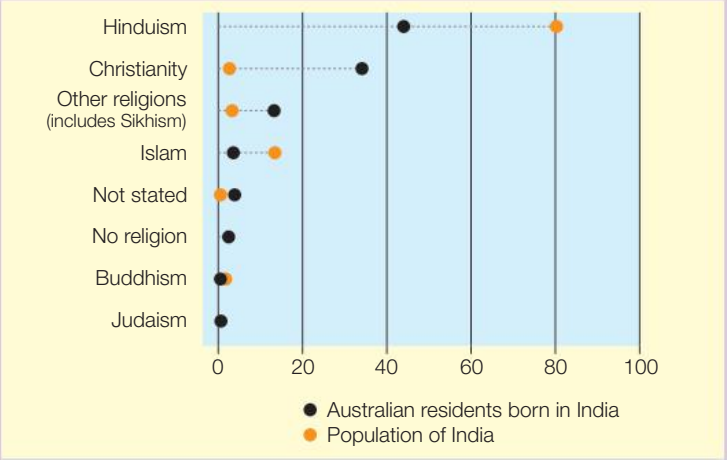

FIGURE 7.52
Religions of Australian residents born in India compared with Indian residents

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Christianity in Australia

The history and development of Christianity in Australia has been covered in this chapter in the discussion of the colonial period and of its constituent denominations: the Anglican Church, Catholic Church, Uniting Church and Pentecostals.

sectarianism a narrow-minded adherence to a particular sect or denomination

In the early history of Australia, **sectarianism** was an unfortunate feature of Australian life. It surfaced most obviously in the debates about funding for education. In the last fifty years, however, there has been a significant change in relationships among Christian churches, which are now characterised by an ecumenical approach and relationships are much more cordial and cooperative. Ecumenism has led to cooperation at local, state and national levels. Official dialogue has led to agreement on some theological matters, practical sharing of resources and joint publications.

While the percentage of Christians in Australia has declined from 96.1 per cent in 1901 to 63.9 per cent in 2006, the actual number of Christians in Australia has increased to 12 685 829 in 2006. Christianity remains by far the largest of the world religions in Australia and continues to contribute to society through education, health care, social welfare, spiritual support and by its participation in debate in the public arena.

Religious diversity

Religious affiliation in Australia

The following table, from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), shows religious affiliation in Australia between 1996 and 2001.

TABLE 7.1
Religious affiliation 1996–2001

Religious affiliiation	1996		2001		Change
	'000	per cent	'000	per cent	per cent
Christianity:					
Anglican	3903.3	22.0	3881.2	20.7	-0.6
Baptist	295.2	1.7	309.2	1.6	4.8
Catholic	4799.0	27.0	5001.6	26.6	4.2
Churches of Christ	75.0	0.4	61.3	0.3	-18.2
Jehovah's Witness	83.4	0.5	81.1	0.4	-2.8
Lutheran	250.0	1.4	250.4	1.3	0.2
Orthodox	497.0	2.8	529.4	2.8	6.5
Pentecostal	174.7	1.0	194.6	1.0	11.4
Presbyterian and Reformed	675.5	3.8	637.5	3.4	-5.6
Salvation Army	74.1	0.4	71.4	0.4	-3.7
Uniting Church	1334.9	7.5	1248.7	6.7	-6.5
Other Christian	420.6	2.4	497.9	2.7	18.4
Buddhism	199.8	1.1	357.8	1.9	79.1
Hinduism	67.3	0.4	95.5	0.5	41.9
Islam	200.9	1.1	281.6	1.5	40.2
Judaism	79.8	0.4	84.0	0.4	5.2
Other religions	68.6	0.4	92.4	0.5	34.6
No religion	2948.9	16.6	2906.0	15.5	-1.5
Not stated/inadequately described	1604.7	9.0	2187.7	11.7	36.3
Total	17 752.8	100.0	18 769.2	100.0	5.7

Australian Bureau of Statistics

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Measuring diversity

We now have access to over twenty-five years of census data related to religion in Australia, which measures religious identification. While these statistics do not provide us with a great deal of information, as picking a religious identity does not indicate a person's practice, participation, membership or beliefs, it nevertheless provides us with some information about religious background. The Australian census reports enable people to trace the religious composition of Australia from 1901 to the present day.

The following table, from the ABS, shows major religious affiliations in Australia since 1901.

TABLE 7.2
Major religious affiliations since 1901

Census year	Christianity				Other religions	No religion	Not stated/ inadequately described	Total
	Anglican	Catholic	Other	Total				
	per cent	per cent	per cent	per cent	per cent	per cent	per cent	'000
1901	39.7	22.7	33.7	96.1	1.4	0.4	(a)2.0	3 773.8
1911	38.4	22.4	35.1	95.9	0.8	0.4	(a)2.9	4 456.0
1921	43.7	21.7	31.6	96.9	0.7	0.5	(a)1.9	5 435.7
1933	38.7	19.6	28.1	86.4	0.4	0.2	12.9	6 629.8
1947	39.0	20.9	28.1	88.0	0.5	0.3	11.1	7 579.4
1954	37.9	22.9	28.5	89.4	0.6	0.3	9.7	8 986.5
1961	34.9	24.9	28.4	88.3	0.7	0.4	10.7	10 508.2
1966	33.5	26.2	28.5	88.2	0.7	0.8	10.3	11 599.5
1971	31.0	27.0	28.2	86.2	0.8	6.7	6.2	12 755.6
1976	27.7	25.7	25.2	78.6	1.0	8.3	11.4	13 548.4
1981	26.1	26.0	24.3	76.4	1.4	10.8	11.4	14 576.3
1986	23.9	26.0	23.0	73.0	2.0	12.7	12.4	15 602.2
1991	23.8	27.3	22.9	74.0	2.6	12.9	10.5	16 850.3
1996	22.0	27.0	21.9	70.9	3.5	16.6	9.0	17 752.8
2001	20.7	26.6	20.7	68.0	4.9	15.5	11.7	18 769.2
2006	18.7	25.8	19.3	63.9	5.6	18.7	11.9	19 855.3

Australian Bureau of Statistics

Activity 7.36

Reasoning and judging

Using Table 7.2, answer the following questions.

1 Describe and account for the state of religious diversity in Australia in 1901.
2 Describe the changes in religious affiliation within Catholic, Anglican and other Christian denominations between 1933 and 1954. How do you account for these changes?
3 In 1901, a total of 96.1 per cent of the census population identified as Christian. In 2006, this figure was 63.9 per cent. Explain how this data relates to changes in the number of people affiliating with other religions and those who report 'no religion'.

Using Table 7.1 on page 178, answer the following questions.

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Activity 7.36 continued

1 Describe the changes that have occurred in religious affiliation for Buddhism, Islam and Hinduism in the five-year period. What reasons can you give to account for these changes?
2 Describe the changes in affiliation within Christian churches from 1996–2001.
3 What conclusions can you draw about religious diversity in Australia today from the historical data provided? Use evidence to support your claims.
4 Predict what the religious affiliation data will look like at the next census. Provide reasons your answer?

TABLE 7.3
Data from the 2006 census showing religious affiliation by gender

Denomination	Males	Females	Persons
Buddhism	196 220	222 537	418 757
Christianity	6 018 672	6 667 162	12 685 834
Hinduism	79 855	68 272	148 127
Islam	177 756	162 634	340 390
Judaism	42 902	45 924	88 826
Other Religions	52 131	56 889	109 020
No Religion	1 976 043	1 730 509	3 706 552
New Age, so described	682	1 339	2 021
Not defined	73 943	34 708	108 651
Religious belief	9 335	11 198	20 533
Theism	1 546	1 073	2 619
Not stated	1170 163	1 053 795	2 223 958
Total	9 799 248	10 056 040	19 855 288

Australian Bureau of Statistics

Activity 7.37

Reasoning and judging

Use Table 7.3 to complete the following tasks.

1 Name the religion or other response which shows the *greatest difference in numbers* between male and female adherents or respondents.
2 Name the religion or other response which shows the *greatest proportional difference* between male and female adherents or respondents.
3 Name the religion or other response which shows the *smallest proportional difference* between male and female adherents or respondents.
4 Construct a pie chart to show the proportions of male and female total respondents.
5 Construct a pie chart to show the proportions of male and female adherents of a religion of your choice.
6 Are these differences significant, in your opinion? Give reasons for your answer.
7 Suggest reasons for the differences between male and female religious affiliation.

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Reasons for diversity

The diversity of Australia's religious groups has been shaped by migration. Each group of migrants contributed something to Australia's religious diversity: Prussian and German immigrants brought Lutheranism; Greek immigrants brought Greek Orthodoxy; Lebanese immigrants brought Islam and Maronite Christianity. Smaller shifts in religious diversity also take place because of conversions.

From the census data we can also learn that the percentage of people indicating 'no religion' has increased: some in this category may also be people who 'believe' but do not 'belong' to a specific religious group. While we can identify changes in religious identity in the census data, we can also see physical evidence of many of these changes in our cities, which now have an increasing number of temples, shrines, mosques and other places of worship.

Activity 7.38

Investigating, reasoning and judging

1 Using the *Yellow Pages* for your area, create a list of one of the following to indicate the degree of diversity that exists where you live.
   a temples, shrines, mosques and synagogues
   b restaurants specialising in food from other countries.
2 Using a street directory for your area, create a list of street names originating from non-Anglo-Celtic backgrounds.
3 What conclusions can you draw about your area based on this investigation? How do you think your area compares to other places in your state in this regard?

Other religions

More recent religious movements such as New Religious Movements (NRMs) and the New Age Movement are usually not clearly identified in census data, because groups with less than one percent of the population are not included as separate entities. Instead they are collected under the term 'other'.

FIGURE 7.51
Religious diversity

New Religious Movements

Generally, New Religious Movements (NRMs) are defined as religious groups that have emerged since World War II and became popular from the 1960s. They can be categorised as those:

- inspired by Eastern traditions (e.g. Brahma Kumaris)
- arising from Christian contexts (e.g. Jesus Army, Boston Church of Christ)
- originating in particular country (e.g. Soka Gakkai)
- derived from esoteric teaching (e.g. Beshara)
- referred to 'self religion' (e.g. Life Training)
- focusing on extra-terrestrial entities and UFOs (e.g. Heaven's Gate)
- linking to the New Age movement (e.g. Church Universal and Triumphant).

New Age Movement

NRMs and the New Age Movement, while different, emerged during the 1960s but the New Age Movement did not become popular until the 1980s. New Age communities are also organised differently from NRMs, in that they do not have a central authority or share a common set of teachings. The New Age Movement has a certain affinity with post-modernity and is dominated by American spiritual values and ideas and is often 'self' focused.

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New Age Movements are influenced by consumerism and often lead to a focus on 'spiritual shopping' and spiritual self-development. Their success however, lies in their ability to rapidly assimilate into mainstream culture.

Inter-religious dialogue

Since the 1950s, religious diversity in Australia has increased. For the past twenty years, some people have made a conscious effort to engage with others in order to understand the different ways religions view the world and to work together for justice to ensure peace and harmony. Some groups have developed guidelines, which not only explain useful attitudes to bring to dialogue, but also suggest something of the purpose of coming together.

inter-religious dialogue cooperative and positive interaction between people of different religious traditions

Generally there are four modes in which **inter-religious dialogue** takes place.

1 Local dimension – that may be in the form of grass roots community meetings.
2 Practical or common cause dimensions – where a group might come together for particular purpose to address a particular issue.
3 Spiritual dimension – people may attend rituals within each others' traditions and participate in shared prayer.
4 Cognitive dimension – people come together to develop understanding and knowledge of faith traditions.

Study of Religion is situated in the fourth mode. It is designed to develop the cognitive dimension, which, through the process of the development of religious literacy, sets a firm foundation for engagement in inter-religious dialogue.

Conclusion

Religion in Australia has been shaped by many different perspectives. This chapter has provided a brief introduction to a number of religious traditions and indicated some of the changes that have taken place in Australian society since World War II. By taking religious diversity seriously and engaging actively with it in Australia, it may be possible to develop models for peaceful and harmonious religious interaction, free from complications surrounding religion in many other countries. Such models could make a contribution to religious harmony worldwide.

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End of chapter activities

Activity 7.39

Framing

1 Build a vocabulary bank of terms used in discussion of Aboriginal spiritualities and Torres Strait Islander religions.
2 Graffiti wall: complete the following statements
   a The religious background of Australia is …
   b Australians think religion is …
   c The results of religious diversity in Australia have been …
3 Create a mind map to express and organise your knowledge of Australian religious perspectives.

Activity 7.40

Investigating

1 In what ways are traditional Indigenous spiritual beliefs and practices taught to young Indigenous Australians today? Where does this take place?
2 Create a comic strip of no more than eight cells, telling the Australian story of one religion (or religious sub-group) of your choice.
3 List five bodies that exist in Australia to promote inter-religious dialogue.
4 Complete a 5Ws + H chart on a past or contemporary Australian activist whose work pertains or pertained to religion in some way.

Activity 7.41

Investigating and reasoning

Using the ABS media fact sheet 'Census shows non-Christian religions continue to grow at a faster rate', available on the ABS website at www.abs.gov.au, shade the map of Australia on Worksheet 7.41 to show degrees of religious diversity in the various states. Explain why you think this is so.

Activity 7.42

Reasoning

1 Conduct a SWOT analysis of religious diversity in Australia.
2 Predict a range of possible futures for Religion in Australia.
3 Include reference to Aboriginal spiritualities and Torres Strait Islander religions.
4 Express your ideas in the form of a diagram.

Activity 7.43

Investigating, reasoning and judging

1 Devise questions with which to interview five friends or family members about their awareness, understanding and opinions regarding religion/s in Australia. After conducting the interviews, draw general conclusions related to your friends' and family's responses. To what extent do you think that their awareness, understanding and opinions reflect those of the wider Australian population? What makes you think this?
2 Write a feature article about the religious history of your area. Your ideas need to be linked by an overriding theme, which should be evident in the article title, choices of images and the selection and organisation of your material.

Activity 7.44

Reasoning and judging

1 In a T-chart, create lists of points that support and refute the following claim: 'Religion in Australia is slowly dying'.
2 Decide which side you agree with and write a speech that sets forth your point of view persuasively.

Activity 7.45

Reflection

1 What have I learned about religion in Australia?
2 How can I use what I have learned in this area of inquiry?
3 What did I find surprising or challenging in this area of inquiry?
4 What skills have I improved as a result of my learning process?

CHAPTER REVIEW

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HINDUISM: THE FACTS

Number of adherents
- Approximately 900 million (worldwide)
- 148 100 (Australia)

Sacred text
- *Vedas, Upanishads*

Place of worship
- *Mandir* or temple

Symbol
- *Aum*

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CHAPTER EIGHT

HINDUISM

'Sacrifice, charity, penance and action should never be abandoned. They must be performed, for sacrifice, charity, penance and action cleanse even the wise.'

Bhagavad Gita 18:5

CHAPTER OBJECTIVES

This chapter discusses:

- The history of Hinduism
- Sacred texts of Hinduism
- Hindu beliefs
- Religious practice
- Prayer and worship
- Hindu festivals and celebrations
- The yogas
- Pilgrimage
- The four classes of Hinduism
- Stages of life in Hinduism
- Modern Hinduism

KEY terms

Aryans
Vedas
Upanishads
Brahman
Atman
maya
karma
moksha
Bhagavad Gita
Brahma
Vishnu
Shiva
Lakshmi
Ganesha
puja
bhakti
mandir
Vikram calendar
Shalivahana calendar
yoga
ashramas
Maha Shrivratri
Janmashtami
Holi
Raksha Bandan
Navaratri
Divali

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Introduction

To speak of Hinduism as if it is one unified entity would misrepresent it. Hinduism is not only a complex combination of the traditional practices of Indian people but it also has a history spanning thousands of years. Hinduism is often described by how it differs from other religions. For example, Hinduism has no founder and no official canon of scripture. Textbooks generally agree that Hinduism's main feature is its diversity.

Worldwide, Hindus number around 900 million. Large communities of Hindus are located in India, Fiji, the UK, the US and Canada. Hindus did not attempt to define the fundamentals of Hinduism until they were challenged by Buddhism in approximately 600 CE, and confronted by Islam and Christianity. For traditional Hindus there is no separation between religious and secular activity and no significant distinction between religion and culture.

Activity 8.1

Framing

1. What do you know about Hinduism?
2. What words and images are associated with Hinduism?
3. Where did Hinduism originate? Where can it be found in the world?
4. On a map of the world, indicate where there are significant Hindu populations.
5. Are there Hindus in Australia? Are there Hindus in your local neighbourhood?
6. How is Hinduism presented in the media?

Timeline

BCE	
Before 2000	Existence of Harappa culture in Indus River valley
2000	*Aryan* migration into India from northwest
1500	Beginning of the ***Vedas***
800–500	Beginning of the ***Upanishads***; Axis Age
c. 200–200CE	Creation of ***Bhagavad Gita***
CE	
c. 788–820	Life of philosopher Shankara
c. 1200	Muslim entry into India
1200–1600	Spread of ***Bhakti*** movements
1498	Vasco da Gama arrives in India
1526	Mughal Empire commences
1757	British protectorate in Bengal
1829	*Sati* (widow burning) banned by the British
1850	First English translation of the *Rig Veda*
1885	Foundation of Indian National Congress Party
1948	Portuguese entry into India
c. 1750–1947	British domination of India
1893	Vivekananda, Hindu representative at World Parliament of Religions
1869–1948	Mohandas Gandhi
1947	Indian political independence
1948	Gandhi assassinated United Nations *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*
1950	Constitution of the Republic of India
1998	Hindu Nationalist BJP Party gains government in India

Vedas
a large body of texts originating in ancient India that form the oldest layer of Sanskrit literature and the oldest sacred texts of Hinduism

Upanishads
Hindu scriptures that constitute the core teachings

Bhagavad Gita
'The Lord's Song', one of the most popular texts in Hinduism, which describes a conversation between Arjuna and his charioteer, who is later revealed as Krishna

Bhakti
a special form of worship and deep, personal devotion to God that expresses love to one's god.

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The history of Hinduism

The origins of Hinduism date to approximately 2000 BCE, when a civilisation developed in northwest India in the area of the Indus River, now Pakistan. This isolated area of the Indian continent was the home to an advanced civilisation, the Harappa culture, whose two major cities, Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro, were laid out geometrically and contained brick houses with running water for toilets and baths. The water and sanitary system has been described as equal to that of the Romans. The Harappa culture was significant and much larger than the other three great cultures of the time, China, Egypt and Mesopotamia.

Our knowledge of the religious beliefs and practices of these people comes from the figurines and engraved seals found by archeologists in the 1920s. While no one has yet deciphered the writing on the seals, much has been learned from the images engraved on them, which reveal a rich mythological life focused on fertility through the worship of a mother goddess. There is also evidence of a god with a close resemblance to the Hindu god *Shiva*, who some call proto-Shiva: the figure has a fierce looking face, wears a large horned headdress and sits in the yogi position.

In approximately 1700 BCE, the Harappan civilisation ended abruptly when the people abandoned their cities. Scholars have no indication of the cause – some speculate about a prolonged drought, others think it might have been an invasion. Some of the Harappan people may have moved south into India and possibly merged with the Dravidian, the southern population. Until the Harappan script is deciphered, only tentative links can be made between the religious lives of the Indus valley people and contemporary Hinduism.

Aryans

Sometime around 2000 BCE and 1500 BCE Indo-Europeans, called **Aryans**, or noble ones, migrated into the Indian subcontinent. They too possessed a superior technology and spoke an early version of Sanskrit. Other branches of the same race migrated into Iran and westward into Europe. The dominant

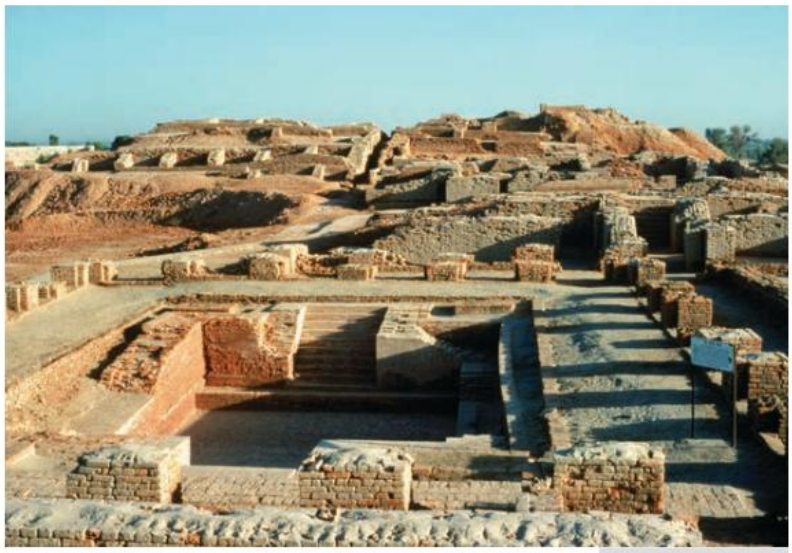

FIGURE 8.1
The great bath at Mohenjo-Daro

Aryans colonised the non-Aryans, developing a class system consisting of three upper classes: the *brahmins* or priestly class, the *kshatriyas* or ruling class and the *vaishyas* or mercantile class.

The Aryans worshiped mainly male gods, who were thought to control nature. Dyaüs Pitr, shining father, was the father of the gods; Indra, the god of storm and war, was considered to give strength to followers; Agni was the god of fire, who carried sacrifices to the world of the gods and Yama ruled the afterlife.

Worship was generally undertaken outside at altars and specialist priests performed services at three low altars, offering sacrifices of milk, ghee, grains and sometimes animals. The priests chanted mantras, handed on from father to son, which they believed would protect them. Eventually these sacred chants were written down and formed the core of the Aryans' sacred texts, the *Vedas*.

Shiva
the Hindu god of destruction and transformation

Aryans
early Indo-Europeans who migrated to the Indian subcontinent

Activity 8.2

Investigating and reasoning

1 On the map of India provided on Worksheet 8.2, mark the Indus River, Harappa and Mohenjo-daro. In no more than four sentences, indicate why these places are significant for Hinduism.

>>>

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Activity 8.2 continued

2 Graphically represent the origins of Hinduism showing aspects of Indus Valley civilisation and culture and Aryan culture.
3 Using only a six-frame story board, illustrate the history of Hinduism.
4 Annotate the timeline by providing facts related to dates and events to increase basic understanding of key events.

Activity 8.3

Reasoning

Use the T-chart on Worksheet 8.3 to show the benefits and challenges that Hinduism's long history might pose for adherents.

Sacred texts of Hinduism

Vedas

The name *Vedas*, which means 'knowledge' or 'sacred lore', is related to the English words 'vision' and 'wisdom'. The *Vedas* are the oldest Hindu sacred texts and are a collection of oral traditions.

While the earliest version of the *Vedas* have been dated at 1500 BCE, pious Hindus consider them to be much older. The *Vedas* consist of four works: the *Rig Veda*, the oldest; the *Sama Veda* (hymns); the *Yajur Veda* (sacrificial formulas) and the *Atharva Veda* (magical spells and incantations). The *Rig Veda* is largely an anthology of poems addressed to various gods. The anthology constantly mentions a powerful and mysterious power, called *Brahman*, which gives a sacrifice its efficacy. While some modern scholars see these hymns as essentially polytheistic, traditional Hindu scholars see the hymns as manifestations of the different aspects of *Brahman*.

The *Vedic* period lasted until approximately 600 BCE and while their hymns are still used today, the gods of the *Vedic* period are no longer part of the religious life of the Indian people. A later addition to the *Vedas*, the *Upanishads*, contains philosophical and religious ideas from the meditative traditions.

Brahman
Brahman is the unchanging, infinite, immanent and transcendent reality that is the Divine Ground of all matter, energy, time, space, being and everything beyond in this Universe

Atman
a divine spirit that all people share

maya
the Hindu belief that the everyday world is an illusion and that the distinction between the self and the Universe is a false dichotomy

karma
the effects of one's actions in life, good or bad; the natural actions

moksha
means 'freedom' and, according to the *Upanishads*, is the ultimate goal of human life

Upanishads

The *Upanishads* are a collection of more than one hundred written works, which record insights into reality. It is generally understood that the term '*Upanishad*' means 'sitting near' or 'a session' and that the *Upanishads* emerged from the spiritual experience of the student sitting near their master, learning techniques for achieving religious experience. The *Upanishads*, unlike the *Vedas*, are for anyone who has the necessary experience to be a spiritual master. They are written in dialogue form, including prose and poetry, and recount the beliefs of the Aryan peoples as they spread further east and south into Indian territory. By the end of the seventh century BCE, a group of hermits or *munis* who lived in the forest and practiced asceticism and meditation emerged. Over time, these hermits came to play an important role as priests and developed elaborate techniques, including mystical ecstasy.

Important ideas that developed in the *Upanishads* and are core concepts in Hindu spirituality include ***Brahman***, ***Atman***, ***maya***, ***karma*** and ***moksha***. In the *Upanishads*, the term *Brahman* is extended to include a supreme, infinite, impersonal reality that is pure being, pure consciousness and pure bliss. *Brahman* is Absolute Reality. The *Upanishads* insist that *Brahman* is something that can be known, not just believed in, but that it cannot be fully put into words. *Brahman* is not a god, but exists above them, and the gods derive their power from *Brahman*. The *Upanishads* say that experiencing the timelessness of *Brahman* can bring an end to everyday suffering and fear of death.

The *Upanishads* ask: 'What is the real self?' In Sanskrit, the word for inner self is *Atman*, which is a larger concept than the notion of the individual self or soul. While each Hindu has an individual soul (*jiva* or *jivatman*) the *Upanishads* teach that all people share the same *Atman* (divine spirit), which, when experienced fully, is identical with *Brahman*.

The *Upanishads* refer to the everyday world as *maya* (illusion), which should be interpreted as meaning both 'magic' and 'matter'. The model of the world presented in the *Upanishads* is like a great consciousness rather

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than a machine with moving parts. Death, therefore, is not a tragedy because, when one life form is lost, it is reborn into another. This is the beginning of the development of the concept of reincarnation.

The idea of rebirth recognises that people can be reborn either as humans or as animals depending how people behave. What determines a person's rebirth is *karma* (to do), which includes the moral consequences of actions performed. *Karma* also explains why some people are born with great advantages in life while others have relatively little.

Moksha means freedom and according to the *Upanishads*, is the ultimate goal of human life. *Moksha* also includes liberation from the limitations of the self. One means of attaining *moksha* is through ascetic practice, which enables one to know the sacred reality.

Other sacred texts of Hinduism are the great Hindu epics, the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana*. These are known well by all Hindus, and belong to *smriti* scriptures, because they are teachings that are remembered rather than revealed to the listener. The epics provide examples of the values and ideals that are important to Hinduism and today, many of the epics are presented on television and in the cinema.

Activity 8.4

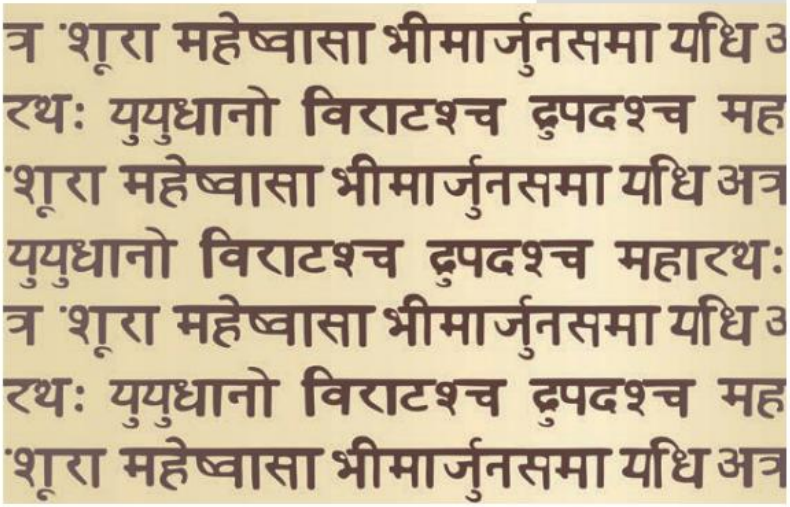
Investigating and reasoning

1 Represent the cycle of rebirth in a diagram or picture.
2 Use a Freyer Concept Model on Worksheet 8.4 to describe each of the following: *Brahman, Atman, maya, karma* and *moksha*.

Bhagavad Gita

The *Mahabharanta*, the longest of the Indian epics, ranks as the world's largest work of poetry with approximately 100 000 verses. Contained within it is the *Bhagavad Gita* (The Lord's Song) one of the most popular texts in Hinduism. The *Bhagavad Gita* describes a conversation between Arjuna and his charioteer, who is later revealed as Krishna. The conversation concerns moral and social duty, law, obligation and virtue (*dharma*).

FIGURE 8.2
This Sanskrit text is based on the *Bhagavad Gita*



Activity 8.5

Reasoning

Read the following Hindu texts and answer the questions below:

The sacrifice of God: *Devayajna*

Brahma, the self-existent, was performing fervid concentration. 'In fervid concentration,' he reflected, 'there is no infinity. Come, let me sacrifice myself in living things and all living things in myself.' Then, having sacrificed himself in all living things and all living things in himself, he acquired greatness, self-radiance and sovereignty.

Śrīmad Bhāgavatam XIII, 7, 1, 1

1 What characteristics of Brahma and creation does this extract indicate? Provide evidence to show how the text invites this reading.

Karma Yoga

12. Desiring success, they sacrifice to the Gods with ritual actions, for from such actions success comes quickly in the world of men.

23. Liberation achieved, attachments gone, with a mind fixed on knowledge, man's whole action becomes a sacrifice, his deeds melt entirely away.

24. *Brahman* is all: the act of offering, the offerer and the fire!

He who concentrates on *Brahman* in all his actions shall surely reach *Brahman*.

extracts from *Bhagavad Gita* IV, 12:23–24 R. Panikkar, trans., *The Vedic Experience Mantramunjari*, 1997

2 What behaviour does this text encourage in adherents?
3 How does this text reinforce the idea of the existence of parallels between *Brahman* and humanity?

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Activity 8.6

Investigating, reasoning, judging

Locate a copy of the *Bhagavad Gita*. Read the conversation between Arjuna and Krishna.

1 Represent the story in a comic strip.

2 Explain why Krishna tells Arjuna he must fight.

The Laws of *Manu*

The Laws of *Manu* (*Manu Smrti*), written between 200 BCE and 200 CE, can be viewed as an extensive code of conduct for Hindu society. The duties of the king, for instance, are highlighted in Chapter VII:

> 1 I will declare the duties of kings, (and) show how a king should conduct himself, how he was created and how (he can obtain) highest success.
>
> 5 Because the king has been formed of particles of those lords of the gods, he therefore surpasses all created being in lustre:
>
> 13 Let no (man), therefore, transgress that law which the king decrees with respect to his favourites, nor (his orders) which inflict pain on those in disfavour.
>
> G. Buhler, trans., *The Laws of Manu*, 1964

Hindu beliefs

Classical Hinduism is polytheistic, but Hindus do not see polytheism as incompatible with monotheism. They believe that god is one being that can be worshipped in many different forms. There are three major gods associated with creation, preservation and destruction: **Brahma** (not to be confused with *Brahman*), **Vishnu** and Shiva.

Brahma the Hindu god of creation

Vishnu the Hindu god of preservation

Brahma, the creative force of the Universe, is often the object of collective worship. This god is represented in art as an old, thoughtful king with four arms and four faces that look in all four directions. The images of Hindu gods are very highly decorated and colour is used to highlight their nature. Often the gods are accompanied by animals or birds that assist them to move around the cosmos: Brahma is accompanied by a white goose.

Vishnu, thought of as light and warmth, functions within the triad of gods as the preserver of order

FIGURE 8.3
Trimurti (three-faced figure) that represents Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva

FIGURE 8.4
Brahma, the creative force of the Universe

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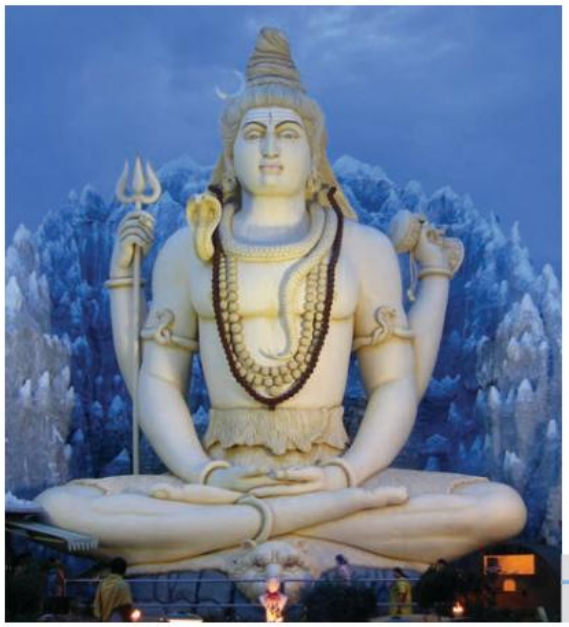
and harmony. He is often depicted lying on a many headed cobra, which symbolises cosmic energy and time. Because he is associated with loving kindness, he appears in various physical forms to help people in need. The ten common **avatars** through which Vishnu offered help include: Matsya, a man/fish; Kurma, a man/tortoise; Varaha, a man/boar; Narasimha, a man/lion; Vamana, a dwarf; Parasurama, (Rama with an axe, the first human avatar); Rama; Krishna; Buddha and Kalki. Two avatars that are very popular are Rama and Krishna. Rama appears in the epic *Ramayana*, one of the most widely told stories of Hinduism. In brief, the story describes when Rama's wife Sita is abducted by Ravana, the demon king of Sri Lanka. With the help of Hanuman, the leader of the monkeys, Rama kills Ravana and brings Sita home. Krishna first appears in the epic *Mahabharata* as a mature and solemn god but, in later works, he is younger and plays the flute. He is frequently depicted painted blue, the colour of the sky, indicating his otherworldly nature.

Shiva is the aspect of *Brahman* that destroys and re-creates the Universe. He appears in different forms, most frequently in bronze statues as Shiva Nataraja, known as ruler of the dance. In this representation, Shiva stands on the dwarf demon Apasamara Purusha,

FIGURE 8.5
Vishnu



avatar
the descent of a deity to the earth in an incarnate form or some manifest shape; the incarnation of a god

FIGURE 8.6
Shiva

which represents human pride, and as he dances he has four arms, his long hair flies in the air and he is surrounded by a ring of fire, symbolic of his destructive powers. In one hand he holds an hourglass drum, which symbolises the pulse of time, in his second hand he holds fire, which symbolises his destructive powers, in his third hand there is often a deer, symbolising an unsteady mind that darts around, and the gesture of the fourth hand is a ***mudra***, which often points to the crushed demon underfoot.

mudra
a symbolic or ritual gesture in Hinduism

The mother goddess has many forms and is sometimes depicted on her own as Durga or as one of the shaktis, who are the consorts, or wives, of the male gods Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. While the shakti have little power, they nevertheless play an important part in the devotional life of Hindus.

As Durga, the mother goddess appears as a brave heroine riding a tiger. This shows that she can control wild beasts and she carries assorted weapons in her many arms to kill the demon buffalo, which symbolises ignorance and selfishness.

As Kali she represents the malevolent form of the mother goddess and is presented in her most terrifying form – dark or black, with a red face, her tongue hanging out, with a garland of skulls around her neck and a severed head in her hand to frighten her enemies.

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FIGURE 8.7
Durga on a tiger

FIGURE 8.8
Kali

FIGURE 8.9
Lakshmi

FIGURE 8.10
Sarasvati

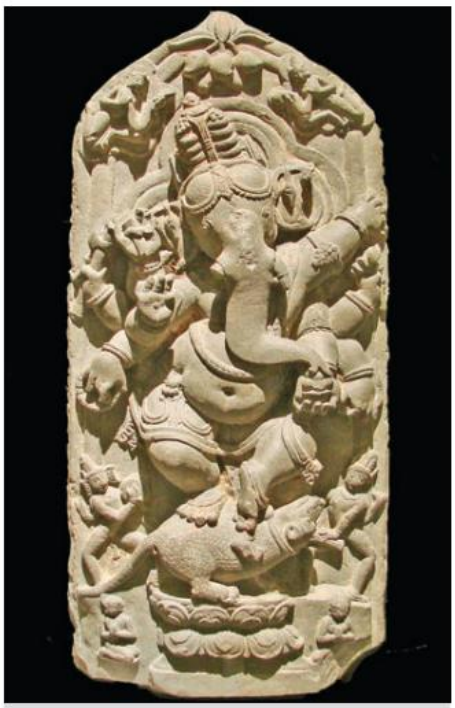

FIGURE 8.11
Ganesha

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Another goddess, **Lakshmi**, the consort of Vishnu, represents beauty, prosperity and goodness. She is often depicted standing on a lotus with her hands holding gifts or using hand-positions indicating protection.

Sarasvati, the wife of Brahma, patroness of music and the arts, is often depicted playing an Indian lute and holding mala or prayer beads and the scriptures in other hands. She is said to have invented the Sanskrit language and her vehicle, the swan, is appropriately graceful.

Another very popular god, **Ganesha**, the Lord of Obstacles, is a benevolent deity depicted as a human, with the head of an elephant. He has one broken tusk and his representations often show a rat sitting at his foot.

His large ears and head indicate the great wisdom he has acquired listening to the *Vedic* texts. The elephant's trunk is a symbol of intellect, which can discriminate between truth and falsehoods. His large stomach suggests that he can digest all experience and not suffer from success. The folded leg and the grounded leg represent two aspects of his personality in balance: one grounded in the world, the other in meditation. The food at his feet denotes wealth and prosperity, which he has at his command but which does not rule his life, and the rat represents greed. The rat, Ganesha's vehicle, symbolises that overcoming desire provides enough strength to transport even an elephant.

Activity 8.7

Investigating, reasoning and judging

Examine the images of Ganesha and Durga on page 192. Identify symbols in the images which represent:

1 power to fight evil
2 strength
3 power to remove obstacles
4 beauty
5 power to reassure people.

Activity 8.8

Investigating and reasoning

Read the following quote, taken from the BBC religion and ethics site: www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/hinduism/deities, and answer the questions below.

'Hindus worship various gods depending on the characteristics they wish to emulate and according to their needs.'

1 For each Hindu god described above, suggest why people might wish to express their devotion to him or her particularly.
2 Complete the table on Worksheet 8.8.

Lakshmi
the Hindu goddess of beauty, prosperity and goodness

Ganesha
a popular Hindu god revered as the Lord of Obstacles

Religious practice

Prayer and worship

Hinduism does not commonly express itself in congregational prayer. Individual, domestic, devotional worship is more common.

Puja

Shrines are built anywhere from the steps of the Ganges River to the corner of a room in a home, to cars and even on roundabouts in the middle of roads. A person's chosen deity is treated like an honoured

FIGURE 8.12
Temple of Kumbhewara

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puja
religious ritual that Hindus perform on a variety of occasions to pray or show respect to gods

guest in their home and as royalty in shrines and temples. The word *puja* means paying respect or homage to God through various actions that express the wish to serve the deity and receive blessings in return. *Puja* rituals are the same whether at home or at a temple, except that the latter may be more elaborate and dramatic.

In every home, an area is set aside for a shrine, which traditionally includes statues, pictures or images of gods and goddesses. *Puja* is performed at the shrine each morning and evening. Items used during puja include:

- incense
- red kum-kum powder, sandalwood paste and yellow turmeric powder
- fruit offerings or sweetmeats
- ghee lamp
- *arti* lamp
- bell
- copper container of water from the Ganges
- flowers.

Puja actions

1 Those taking part in *puja* bathe and dress in clean clothes representing outer and inner cleansing.
2 A bell and prayers invite the deity to be present.
3 The deity is offered a special seat while a water offering is made.
4 The deities are bathed and given clothes that fit the image.
5 Red kum-kum powder, turmeric, sandalwood paste and rice are put on the deity as a symbol of relaxation.
6 Flowers are laid before the deities or placed over them.
7 Incense sticks are lit symbolising the destruction of selfish desires.
8 The ghee lamp is waved before the deity.
9 Fruits and foods are offered.
10 The *arti* ceremony is then performed. Devotees accept the light and blessing of god by passing their hands over the flame then over their head indicating their desire to receive enlightenment.

The purpose of *puja* is not to ask for favours but to offer the deity homage and entertainment.

FIGURE 8.13
A Hindu performing *puja* at home

Activity 8.9

Investigating, reasoning and judging

1 Examine the image of *puja* shown in Figure 8.15. Identify the symbols used and explain their significance.
2 In what way/s do the actions at the home shrine express love and devotion? Provide examples to support your claims.

Activity 8.10

Investigating and reasoning

Visit the Rudra Centre website at www.rudraksha-ratna.com/pujaaltar.htm or a similar website, and together with material in this chapter, create your own design for a *puja* altar for home worship. Design the *puja* altar for one of the Hindu gods described in the Hindu beliefs section on page 190.

Activity 8.11

Reflecting

Write a structured paragraph explaining why you chose the particular god you used as a basis for the altar in Activity 8.10.

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Bhakti

Bhakti, a special form of worship, is a deep, personal devotion to god, which expresses love to one's god. *Bhakti* is sometimes expressed in devotional, congregational worship (*kirtan*) where devotees gather and sing *bhajans* (hymns) written by famous poets. *Bhakti* worship has a long tradition in India and is believed to have influenced the Krishna Consciousness group, who express their worship in chanting.

Mandir

A ***mandir*** or 'house of god' is a Hindu temple. It is often the most prominent building in a village or town and is decorated with the images of gods. Larger *mandirs* are associated with pilgrimage points and are served by priests. Great care is taken in choosing the site for a *mandir*, including checking the soil colour, which can indicate caste, or class. *Mandirs* are a refuge from the busy world and are symbols of the Universe, designed to draw the individual in to engage with their god in a special way.

The outside of the temple is covered in many elaborate images of deities, representing the infinity of being. As adherents enter the temple and come closer to the centre, the images become less elaborate. At the centre is the *garbhagrha* or 'womb house' where the image of the deity is installed. The path to the *garbhagrha* is spiral, moving in a clockwise direction so that the left side of the body, which is thought to be impure, is facing away from the image of the divine. Directly above the *garbhagrha* is the *shikhara*, or tower, which symbolises the sacredness of the place and represents the leading of the mind towards liberation. In some temples entry to the *garbhagrha* is restricted to priests.

Devotees remove their shoes and prostrate themselves before the deity. Others circle the temple three times, with the temple on their right side as a mark of respect. Women who are menstruating and members of some of the lower classes are banned from entering temples.

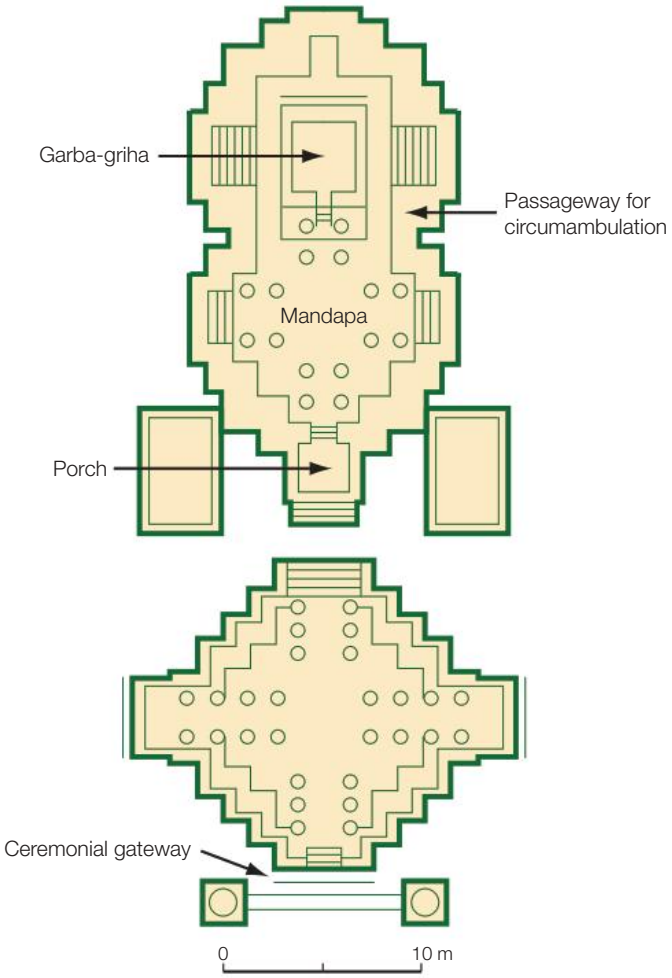

FIGURE 8.14
Floor plan of Hindu temple

FIGURE 8.15
Hindu temple in Matale, Sri Lanka

mandir
Hindu temple or house of worship

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Vikram calendar
Hindu calendar used widely in northern India, established by King Vikramaditya in 56 BCE

Shalivahana calendar
Hindu calendar used widely in southern India, established at the time of King Shalivahan's accession to the throne in 78 CE

Sleep of Vishnu
a feast celebrating the original cosmic sleep

Raksha Bandan
a celebration symbolising loyalty and protection that takes place on the full moon in the month of *Shravana*

Janmashtami
a Hindu festival celebrating the birth of Krishna, an avatar of Vishnu

Navaratri
a Hindu festival of worship and dance that honours the feminine form of *Brahman*

Maha Shrivratri
a Hindu religious festival for devotees of Shiva

Holi
a joyful celebration for Hindus that celebrates the coming of spring and celebrates family, happiness and friendship

Divali
a celebration symbolising loyalty and protection that takes place on the full moon in the month of *Kartika*

Activity 8.12

Investigating and reasoning

1 Design a Hindu Temple. Use your knowledge of Hinduism to ensure that it contains all necessary elements. Explain your design in a structured paragraph of 150 words.
2 Prepare a five-minute information video on Hindu *mandirs* for tourists. Your presentation should include the communal, cultural and religious aspects of the *mandir*.

Hindu festivals and celebrations

Hinduism, like many other religions, marks its days, months and years by the moon, but it follows more than one calendar. The **Vikram calendar**, used in northern India, commences each month with the full moon and counts years from King Vikramaditya's reign, which commenced in 56 BCE. Southern India uses the **Shalivahana calendar**, which takes King Shalivahan's accession to the throne in 78 CE as the first year. This calendar's month begins with a new moon divided into the bright half, while the moon waxes, and the dark half, while the moon wanes. In both systems there are twelve lunar months of 354 days and every two or three years there is an extra month.

Each calendar calculates the New Year differently. In the north, it is celebrated on the full moon of *Kartika* (around October/November) and in the south in the new moon of *Chaitra* (March/April).

Due to the huge variety of regional and religious diversity within Hinduism, there are an extraordinary number of festivals celebrated, probably more than any other religion. In 1947, the Indian government identified over 30 religious calendars in operation.

Maha Shrivratri

In the month of *Magha* a special religious festival for devotees of Shiva remember when Shiva saved humanity from disaster by drinking poison, which a demon was planning to use to kill the population of the world. This is a solemn day when people fast and when a special *puja* is offered to Shiva in late afternoon. Unmarried women also keep a vigil during the night, repeating the name of Shiva and offering

TABLE 8.1
Hindu festivals

Season	Month	Gregorian month	Time of month	Holy day
Spring	*Chaitra*	March/April	New moon	New Year
Summer	*Vaishakha*	April/May		
	Jyaistha	May/June		
Rains	*Ashadha*	June/July	11th day of bright fortnight	**Sleep of Vishnu** commences
	Shravana	July/August	Full moon	***Raksha Bandan*** ***Janmashtami***
Autumn	*Badra*	August/September	14 days of the dark fortnight	Ancestor's fortnight
	Ashvina	September/October	10 days following the new moon	***Navaratri***
Winter	*Kartika*	October/November	New moon	***Divali***
	Agrahayana	November/December		
Cool	*Pausha*	December/January		
	Magha	January–February		***Maha Shrivratri***
Spring	*Phalguna*	February–March	New moon Full moon	***Holi*** *Maha Shivratri*

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flowers and grain in the hope that Shiva will find them a husband. When the fast is broken, people celebrate with special foods.

New Year – *Janmashtami*

Janmashtami celebrates the birthday of Krishna. Because many Hindus believe that Krishna was born at midnight, they stay awake all night to keep vigil. In the temple, a baby's cot is sometimes placed on the shrine and people leave gifts for the baby.

Holi

Holi is a seasonal feast, which celebrates the coming of spring and also celebrates family, happiness and friendship. It is a joyful celebration for Hindus. Celebrated on the full moon of *Phalguna*, it also begins India's hot season. Bonfires are lit on the eve of *Holi* to roast grains, chick peas and coconut, which are later shared as ***prashad***. The roasted grains are called *Holuk* giving *Holi* its name.

Holi is also known as the festival of colour because people throw coloured powders at each other. This type of behaviour breaks the usual rules and barriers of rank and caste. The festival celebrates the triumph of good over evil and unites people in families and communities.

Raksha Bandan

Celebrated on the full moon in the month of *Shravana*, during the Sleep of Vishnu, *Raksha Bandan* or 'band of protection' symbolises loyalty and protection. On this day, wives, sisters and girlfriends tie a thread (*rakhi*) around the wrists of their husbands, brothers or boyfriends as a sign of spiritual protection. The myth concerns Indra's wife Sachi, who after praying over a thread, tied it to Indra's arm prior to a battle: sometimes women tie *rakhi* to arms of soldiers before they leave for war. When a *rakhi* is tied to the arm of a male they are bound to care for the woman. *Rakhis* are highly decorated and made of silk.

A month later, in *Bhadra* when Vishnu is still sleeping, Hindus pray for deceased family members. As well as prayers, food offerings are made to assist family members on their journey to the higher worlds.

FIGURE 8.16
Holi festival participant, covered in coloured powder

Navaratri

On the new moon the nine-day festival of *Navaratri* (Nine Nights) begins, to honour the feminine form of *Brahman*. While the festival has many forms, one common celebration concerns three sets of three days; one for each of the embodiments of the goddesses, Shakti (Mother Goddess) Sarasvati (goddess of learning and the arts), Lakshmi (goddess of wealth) and Durga (goddess of strength and courage).

In many homes a special shrine is made and *puja* is performed twice daily while an oil lamp burns for nine days. In some parts of India a special Durga *puja* is performed and Durga images are paraded through the streets. On the tenth day, there are firework displays and figures of the demon Ravanna are set on fire to symbolise the triumph of good over evil.

Holi
a joyful celebration for Hindus that celebrates the coming of spring and celebrates family, happiness and friendship

prashad
offerings to the deities that are later shared with and consumed by believers

FIGURE 8.17
Burning effigy of Ravanna

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Divali

One of the most popular festivals in Hinduism, *Divali* (row of lamps), is celebrated at the beginning of *Kartika*. For this festival of light, linked to the New Year in the northern calendar, houses are decorated with thousands of lights and *rangoli* floor patterns. *Divali* commemorates the safe return of Rama and Sita and according to the *Ramayana*, people lit the way home for them.

Divali is also a time when Lakshmi visits the earth, bringing prosperity and success. Therefore homes are cleaned and lamps lit so she knows which homes to bless. During this festival people exchange cards and gifts.

FIGURE 8.18
A street lit up for *Divali*

Hindu festivals are times when families gather to celebrate and recall sacred myths and historical events that link people to their religious commitments.

yoga
refers to traditional physical and mental disciplines in Hinduism; it is a way for Hindus to perfect their union with the divine

Activity 8.13

Investigating and reasoning

Read about 'The Rebirth of Lakshmi' and 'The Killing of the Demon Ravana' online at www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/hinduism and complete the questions following:

1 Who are the main characters in the legend of Ravanna's defeat?
2 How is the story of goddess Lakshmi's rebirth an important part of the *Divali* festival?
3 What are the main themes of these two legends?
4 Explain the significance of light for Hindu people as they celebrate the festival of *Divali*.
5 Investigate the rituals that take place over the five days of *Divali*. How do these rituals serve to celebrate the legends of Rama and Sita, and Lakshmi?
6 How does participation in the festival of *Divali* reinforce the religious life of Hindu people?

Activity 8.14

Investigating and reasoning

Using the information in this chapter, along with additional information available on the BBC religion and ethics site (www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/hinduism/holydays), create a set of information cards: one for each of the seven festivals explored in this chapter. On each card, explain the 'what' 'when' 'how' and 'why' of each festival.

The yogas

The word **yoga** means 'union' and is a way for Hindus to perfect their union with the divine. Because there are many ways of reaching the divine, yogas suggest a variety of paths, or *margas*, which meet the needs of individuals and different personality types.

Raja Yoga

Raja Yoga, or royal yoga, promotes meditation. This yoga was compiled by the Hindu sage Patajali in the second century. Patajali defined yoga as the ceasing of all mental activity so that the true Self can be known.

Living a moral life and not stealing, lying or harming any living thing, as well as completing physical exercises are important practices in developing strength for the yogic quest. Some forms of mediation

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FIGURE 8.19
A person practising *Raja Yoga*

involve emptying the mind of thought while others involve focusing on an object. Often a word or phrase is repeated as a mantra. The *Aum*, the sound of creation, is often used.

Jnana Yoga

Jnana Yoga, or knowledge yoga, is the Path of Transcendental Knowledge and emphasises a mental and meditative approach to self-realisation. Belonging to the *Vedanta* school and promoted by the eighth-century philosopher Shankara, *Jnana Yoga* is a useful path in penetrating ignorance (*maya*), which separates people from *Brahman*.

Shankara thought that spiritual liberation was achieved when the individual personally came to understand the unity of all things as well as understanding that devotion to a god thought to be different from the worshipper is mistaken. His rejection of devotion posed a problem and later members of the *Vedanta* school modified his ultimate monism, quoting passages from the *Upanishads* to prove that *Brahman* was separate from the world – so making room for religious devotion.

Karma Yoga

Karma, or action, *Yoga* reconciles tension between *Vedic* ritual religion and meditative renunciation. The *Bhagavad Gita's* teachings on *Karma Yoga* brought a new perspective to how *karma* may be used to attain liberation, insisting that actions should be performed without a connection to the end result: 'Desire for the fruits of work must never be your motive in working' (*Bhagavad Gita*, Chapter 2). Gandhi used the principles of *Karma Yoga* in his active but non-violent opposition to British rule.

Bhakti Yoga

Bhakti Yoga, the path of loving devotion, is one of the most widely applied approaches in contemporary Hinduism and is held in the highest regard in the *Bhagavad Gita*. *Bhakti Yoga* involves chants, songs, food offerings and the anointing of statues. It is available to everyone in Hinduism, including women. The intention behind *bhakti* is expressing a selfless love of the divine without expecting anything in return.

Many Hindus use a mixture of yoga approaches, which is one of the hallmarks of Hinduism. But whatever method is used, sincerity in one's quest is necessary for salvation.

Activity 8.15

Investigating and reasoning

Explain the yogas in diagrammatic form.

Pilgrimage

For Hindus, pilgrimage (*Tirthayatra* or *Yatra)* is a religious act, performed to gain a blessing or spiritual benefit. *Yatra* is both a personal expression of faith and an act of thanksgiving and, while not a compulsory practice, it is nevertheless considered highly desirable.

The motivation behind embarking on a pilgrimage varies considerably from person to person, but such journeys often take the form of petitionary prayer:

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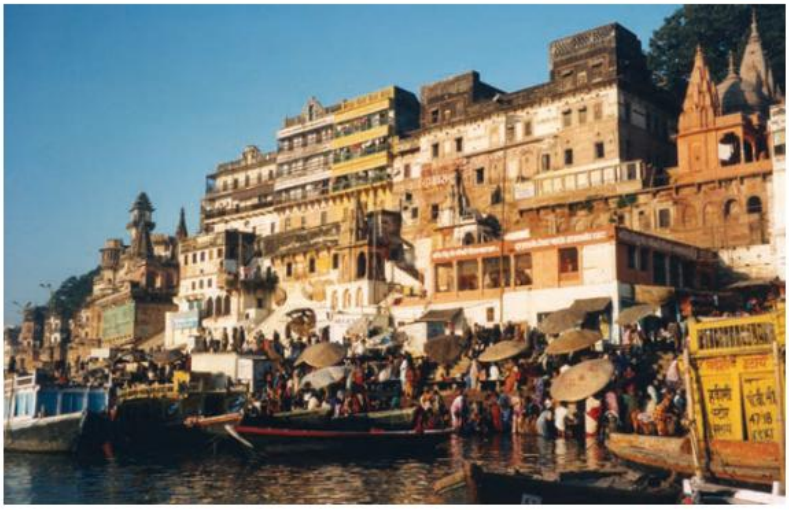

FIGURE 8.20
Three scenes from Varanasi, one of India's holiest cities, where pilgrims bathe in the River Ganges

people address to the gods for something, such as success in their goals or to find a marriage partner. Others make the pilgrimage in thanksgiving for something already given. Like most pilgrims, Hindus believe that holy sites are special and that sacrifices offered there will be more effective.

Because water is seen as purifying, many Hindus travel to one of the seven sacred rivers in India to wash away bad *karma* or, one of the strongest motivations to go on a pilgrimage, to seek liberation from *moksha*. Some of the most popular rivers to visit are the Ganges, the Yamuna and the Narmada. Pilgrims also often visit the city of Varanasi. Many pilgrims travel to Varanasi to die and to have their ashes scattered in the Ganges, as they believe death in Varanasi circumvents the cycle of *samsara* and enables the person to gain access to liberation.

Activity 8.16

Investigating and reasoning

Design a travel brochure appropriate for Hindu pilgrims. Your brochure should include a map and all the major places of pilgrimage.

The four classes of Hinduism

For centuries Indian society has been divided into four classes, or *varnas,* according to people's occupations:

1 *Brahmins*, the priestly class
2 *Kshatriyas*, the warriors
3 *Vaishyas*, the peasants, merchants and craftsmen
4 *Shudras*, the labourers.

Each class must maintain its own rules and perform certain duties.

Some scholars think that an ancient *Vedic* hymn presents an explanation for the class divisions:

> When they divided Purusa how many portions did they make?
> What do they call his mouth, his arms? What do they call his thighs and feet?

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The Brahman was his mouth, of both his arms was the Rajanya made.
His thighs became the Vaisya, from his feet the Sudra was produced.

Rig Veda X, XC:11–12

Activity 8.17

Reasoning

What evidence does this *Vedic* hymn provide that might support the class system?

The *Bhagavad Gita* teaches people that it is better to carry out the duties of their class badly than to perform the duties of another class well. According to the Laws of *Manu*, the class system exists for the good of the people and if it does not support people then it should be abolished.

The *Brahmins* maintain ritual purity by not eating meat or drinking alcohol, as this is seen as ritually unclean. They perform *Vedic* rituals, study the scriptures, teach, sacrifice and give and receive gifts. In contemporary times, they are in demand as cooks because of their relationship with fire and sacrifice and because they may prepare food for their own class as well as other classes.

It is duty of the *Kshatriyas,* or warriors, to protect others. This class was traditionally considered part of the aristocracy.

The *Vaishyas,* or merchant class, includes landowners, moneylenders and some artisans. It is their duty to breed cattle, till the earth and trade. The males of these upper three classes are called 'twice born' and during their youth they are entitled to receive a sacred thread given in a special rite of passage ceremony, in practice, however, the *Kshatriyas* and *Vaishyas* classes largely ignore the sacred thread ceremony.

The fourth class, the *Shudra,* or peasants, perform manual labour and are expected to serve the higher classes. They may eat meat and consume alcohol but are considered ritually unclean and therefore cannot study the scriptures. The *Shudra* are considered 'once born'.

Untouchables

Outside these four classes are the *mlechcha* ('Untouchables' or 'outcasts') who are considered so low that they do not even rank within the class system and are separated from pure-caste Hindus in order not to pollute them.

Offences listed against 'Untouchables' include: living in a village; coming too close to or casting a shadow on a caste Hindu; acquiring wealth such as land or cattle; wearing clean clothes, shoes, a watch, silver or gold ornaments; sitting on a chair in the presence of a caste Hindu; and taking water from the village well or tank.

Jobs that Untouchables have to perform, without pay, for caste Hindus include: carrying messages of death or marriage to relatives living in other villages and working at a caste house when a marriage is taking place. At certain festivals untouchable women are made to submit themselves to members of the village community to be made the subject of indecent fun.

Because Untouchables are unable to buy land, they are unable to practice agriculture except as labourers and must accept what wages Hindu farmers choose to pay. They are paid in cash or privy corn: corn that the bullocks consume while working with corn threshers but which is undigested and is later sieved from the dung. Untouchables have no rights and their position is established on hereditary basis and justified by the law of *karma*. According to *karma*, the position one is born into is the direct result of actions of one's previous life. In many ways, modernisation has made the touchable/untouchable divide even more rigid than in its earlier village setting. Mohandas Gandhi referred to them as *Harijan* 'children of God' and urged society to include rather than exclude them.

Many people believe that Gandhi ultimately changed the law related to Untouchables. However, Gandhi believed that moral persuasion was the best means of social change and therefore opposed legal measures that would mandate change. Shortly after Gandhi's death in 1948, untouchability was made illegal in India. Dr Ambedkar, himself an Untouchable, believed that Untouchables should fight for their own freedom to become educated and he imbedded these ideas into the draft of the Indian constitution. However, today, the situation for Untouchables remains unchanged in many ways.

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The four *varnas* are subdivided into several thousand smaller divisions, called castes or *jatis* based on occupation, geographic regions and various religious and ethnic groupings within Hinduism. As society developed and occupations became more specialised, *jati* or caste divisions became more obvious. Potters, weavers, shoemakers and carpenters initially formed guilds to protect the interests of their members, but these guilds eventually became exclusive and hierarchical. The hierarchy became more rigid when rules regarding eating and inter-marriage were introduced. While the four *varnas* may intermarry, *jatis* rule out intermarriage.

As part of traditional Hinduism, the caste system is considered part of the cosmic order and sacred. If a person lives a good life then he or she will be reborn into a higher caste. A Hindu has greater purity higher up the caste system, so marrying a person from a lower caste is considered degrading.

While the caste system was officially banned when India gained independence in 1947, it nevertheless remains a factor in Hindu life today. Discrimination on the basis of caste is forbidden by the Indian constitution and there are now special places in education reserved for the untouchables.

One area where caste distinctions are particularly noticeable is in temple worship, where people from lower castes are often banned from the temple. Many argue that the caste system has kept an extremely diverse people stable and peaceful for thousands of years, while others would argue that it is oppressive and dangerous.

Ashramas
four stages of life in Hinduism laid out in classical Sanskrit texts

The religious origin of caste is presented differently in the *Bhagavad Gita*:

> Those who have serenity, self control, austerity,
> Purity, patience, honesty, knowledge, Self-realisation,
> And belief in God are labelled as *Brahmanas*, the intellectuals.
>
> Those having the qualities of heroism, vigour,
> Firmness, dexterity, not fleeing from battle,
> Charity and administrative skills
> Are called *Kshatriyas*, the protectors.
> Those who are good in cultivation, cattle rearing,
> Business, trade and industry are known as *Vaishyas*.
> Those who do service and labour type work are classed as *Shudras*.
>
> *Bhagavad Gita* 18:42–44

Activity 8.18

Investigating and reasoning

1 Design a diagram to represent the four *varnas*.
2 What is the difference between *varna* and *jati*?
3 Provide three reasons why some people think the caste system is unfair. Use evidence to support your claims.
4 What benefits might exist in the caste system?
5 Speculate why the caste system is still a prominent feature of Hindu life.
6 Examine the two theories of the caste system and explain why one theory is more convincing than the other.
7 All societies are divided socially in some way. How is Australian society divided? Which divisions are helpful? Which divisions ignore people's rights? Write an opinion piece for a newspaper on this topic.

Stages of life in Hinduism

Ashramas: four stages of life

Ashramas, or the four stages of life, follow the natural process of maturing within society as well as recognising the spiritual needs of each phase of the life journey. The ancient Laws of *Manu* describe four stages: *Brahmacharyi*, or student; *Grihasta*, or householders; *Vanaprastha*, or retirement and *Sannyasin*, or renunciation.

Brahmacharyi

The *Brahmacharyi* begins with the Sacred Thread ceremony and is only available to the three upper classes. Interestingly, in ancient times, girls were part of this rite of passage but this is no longer the case. The student phase involves young males leaving home to study the *Vedic* texts under the guidance of a guru and living a life of self-discipline and celibacy. Today young males attend a school in the neighbourhood rather than leave home.

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Grihasta

The householder stage begins when the student returns home from his studies and marries. This is an important stage for Hindus because they must continue the family line as well as adhere to religious duties. No man can perform a religious duty without his wife and no man or woman's life is seen as complete without marriage. Householders are expected to:

- give to charity
- offer hospitality to guests
- provide a well-organised house
- care for aged parents.

Married women are expected to:

- organise the celebration of religious rites and festivals
- bring up the children
- manage the house expenses
- prepare food
- clean.

Married men are expected to:

- provide for their wife and children
- educate and arrange marriages for their children
- earn money honestly
- spend their money in a way that is beneficial to family and others.

Vanaprastha

The retirement stage begins when the children are old enough to look after themselves and when the first grandson of the first son is born: at this point in time the father hands over his responsibilities to the eldest son.

In ancient times, *Vanaprastha* was marked by becoming a forest dweller. The duties of this stage include:

- becoming detached from the world and material concerns
- devoting time to solitude
- studying the scriptures
- practising meditation.

Not all Hindus take part in this stage but those who do are highly respected and called upon for advice.

Sannyasin

This final stage involves renouncing all worldly possessions and devoting one's life to liberation or *moksha*. Some elderly men follow this path, which should not be confused with the class of ascetics called *Sadhus,* or holy men, who are of any age or class.

Four ends of life

There are four basic aims or motives that are expressed in the Laws of *Manu*. A Hindu can do something because it is a right or duty, which is *dharma*; they should earn material wealth honestly, *artha*; they may enjoy the pleasure and beauty of life, *karma*; and they aim for release from rebirth to attain liberation, *moksha.* Hindus are true to their *dharma* if they carry out their religious and moral duties according to their stage in life, caste, occupation and within their financial means.

Activity 8.19

Investigating, reasoning and judging

1 Compare the Hindu understanding of marriage with contemporary Western understandings of marriage.
2 What effect might the Hindu sense of duty have on social and family life?
3 What differences exist between Hindu student stage of life and a Western view of this stage of adolescence?
4 What are the advantages and disadvantages of the Hindu attitude to old age?

Modern Hinduism

From the eighteenth century until 1947, the British ruled over India and during this time, Christian values were applied to Indian culture. Ram Mohan Roy (1772–1833), a Bengali *brahmin*, created the Brahmo Samaj society, which promoted the monotheistic values he saw in both the *Upanishads* and Christianity. The society fought to abolish practices such as *sati*, the expectation that a devoted Hindu wife would throw herself on the funeral pyre of her husband and be cremated. Roy also established three guidelines for developing modernity:

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1 Faith in rationalism and the human capacity to reason in issues such as religion, economics, science or social issues.
2 The dignity of humankind, which emerged from religious beliefs that he used to critique the treatment of women and lower castes in Hindu society.
3 For Indian and Hindu society to modernise using a strategy call 'cultural grafting' that involved blending Hindu and Western teachings and ways of living.

He attacked the attitude that resulted in the disempowerment of women and the teachings that specifically said that women possessed inferior understanding, were untrustworthy and void of virtuous knowledge.

Dayananda Saraswati (1824–1883), unlike Roy, based his reforms on interpretations of the *Veda*s and has been called the 'Luther of India' after his call for reform grounded in Hindu scripture. He established the *Arya Samaj,* a simplified *Vedic* worship using only a ritual flame, with offerings of flower petals and without images. Every Hindu could be involved in this worship, no matter what class, age or gender. He also argued against the traditional view of Hindu castes and untouchability and promoted the cause of illiterate families to educate their children. He believed that education was the key to greater equality and he worked to reform the inequalities in Hindu society.

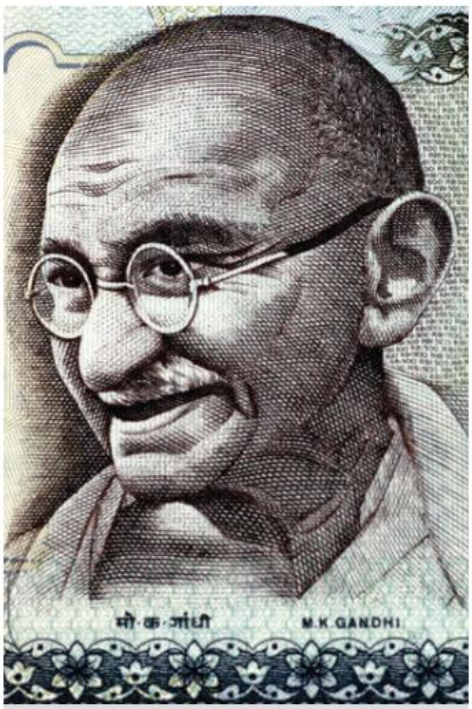

FIGURE 8.21
Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi

Swami Vivekananda's (1863–1902) reform was more radical, and advocated equality on the basis of the *Vedanta* contention that the essence of all humans is Divine, therefore they are all equal. However, in spite of his emphasis on equality for all, Vivekananda was not willing to give up the caste system. He believed that equality in social status could never be achieved but he aimed at eliminating privileges. Vivekananda made a strong impression at the first Parliament of the World's Religions in Chicago in 1893.

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi (1869–1948) dominated the drive for Indian independence from 1920 through to 1947. The ideals of a simple and ascetic life led Gandhi to oppose many aspects of modernity that had been adopted by Hindus. During his life, he focused attention on sanitation practices at pilgrimages sites, the acceptance of untouchables and the promotion of spinning wheels, so village Hindus could produce their own cotton as a way to recover self-sufficiency.

More recently, religious tolerance, which was once the hallmark of Hinduism has been reduced. Fundamentalist Hindu groups have promoted Hindu values over democracy and in some places these views are gathering support. The Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP), the right wing of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), is working to restore Hindu temples that were destroyed and replaced by Muslim mosques hundreds of years ago. In 1992, Babari Masjid mosque, which was built in the sixteenth century, was destroyed by members of the VHP because they believed it marked the birthplace of Rama.

Conclusion

Hinduism is difficult to define because it has no common creed and is comprised of many different worship traditions. From a complex collection of sacred texts and rituals, beliefs have developed that are located within a caste system. Hindu practices have spread throughout the world, partly through migration, the popularity of yoga practices, some of the music of the Beatles and the public chant and dance of the Hare Krishna movement, yet these convey only some of the rich amalgam of ideas that go to make up Hinduism. Hinduism allows for pluralism within the tradition as it encompasses many different approaches to ritual, practice and spirituality.

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End of chapter activities

Activity 8.20

Framing

There are Hindus all over the world but the religion is most closely associated with India.

1 Suggest two reasons why this might be so.
2 Interview five friends and/or family members to see how many Hindu gods and goddesses they can name.
3 Generate 10 questions, each of which could be answered with the word 'Hinduism'.

Activity 8.21

Investigating

1 Find out where Hindus in your state could go to join in community celebration of two different festivals and how the festivals are celebrated in these locations (e.g. www.gaq.org.au/events01.php).
2 Find out how many Hindus there are in Australia. What proportion of the world population of Hindus does this represent? What proportion of the Australian population does this represent? What proportion of Australian Hindus live in your state?

Activity 8.22

Investigating and reasoning

1 The partition of India occurred in 1947. How did religion contribute to this event?
2 Mohandas Gandhi shunned many aspects of modernity and favoured a return to traditional practices for many, village Hindus in particular. Script two opposing sides of a discussion about the merits of Gandhi's approach to modernity.
3 Prepare an information leaflet on 'the Hindu home', which could be given to teachers and social workers with no knowledge or understanding of Hinduism.
4 How could the resources of Hinduism be brought to bear on one's approach to global issues and challenges, such as environmental degradation or violence?

Activity 8.23

Investigating, reasoning and judging

Read the latest editions of the Hindu Council of Australia's newsletter online at www.hinducouncil.com.au/newsletter.html.

1 Shape a hypothesis about the aims, interests and concerns of the Hindu Council of Australia and then, in dot-point form, provide evidence from the newsletters to support your hypothesis.
2 To what extent are popular ideas about Hinduism in Australia (or ideas about Hinduism held by members of your community) accurate?
3 'Even a few hundred years ago "Hinduism" was not a Hindu word, nor were there Hindu "beliefs" articulated as such. But traditions are dynamic and ever-changing, even when they change into more rigid and static forms, as seems to be happening today.' This quote was taken from www.pluralism.org/resources/tradition/essays/hindu7.php. Suggest factors that have led to the tendency for Hinduism to have become more 'static' in the last century. How might this tendency affect Hinduism in the future?

Activity 8.24

Reflecting

1 What is the most interesting thing I have learned about Hinduism?
2 How could my learning process have been improved?
3 Has this process of inquiry affected my view of Hindus in Australia?
4 Can I apply any of what I have learned to my own ideas about life and religion?

CHAPTER REVIEW

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JUDAISM: THE FACTS

Number of adherents
- Approximately 14 million (worldwide)
- 888 000 (Australia)

Sacred text
- The *Torah*

Place of worship
- Synagogue

Symbol
- Star of David

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CHAPTER NINE

JUDAISM

'You shall love the Lord your G-d with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.'

(Deuteronomy 6:5).

'You shall love your neighbour as yourself: I am the Lord.'

(Leviticus 19:17)

CHAPTER OBJECTIVES

This chapter discusses:

- The history of Judaism
- Sacred texts of Judaism
- Groups within Judaism
- Jewish festivals and celebrations
- Jewish prayer and worship
- Synagogue

KEY terms

Torah	*Pesach*	*Simchat Torah*	*mitzvot*
Nev'im	*Purim*	*Havdalah*	*tefillin*
Ketuvim	*sukkah*	*Shabbat*	*yarmulkah*
Reform Judaism	*Rosh Hashanah*	*Shoah*	*Kiddush*
Orthodox Judaism	*Yom Kippur*	*shofar*	
Conservative Judaism	*Yom HaShoah*	*tallit*	
Zionism	*Hanukkah*	*tzitzit*	

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Introduction

Judaism, one of the oldest world religions, dates back approximately 4000 years. What sets Judaism apart from other religions of that time is its belief in only one G-d, who is personal and intervenes in human history. The Jewish religion is based on revelation, which begins when G-d called Abraham and Sarah to leave their home and journey forth in faith.

In her old age (and through a miracle from G-d), Sarah gave birth to a son, Isaac, and in turn, his twelve sons become the leaders of the twelve tribes of Israel. In the covenant made between G-d and Abram (later Abraham), G-d promises Abraham, 'To your offspring I will assign this land' (Genesis 15:18).

The belief that G-d intervenes in history on behalf of the Jews is illustrated in the Book of Exodus. It tells the story of Moses leading the Hebrew people to escape from slavery in Egypt, the receiving of the Ten Commandments at Mount Sinai and the eventual arrival at the Promised Land. G-d's covenant continues with the Jewish people as is shown by Exodus 19:4–6.

For Jews, Abraham is considered the 'father' of Judaism and Moses their greatest prophet.

FACT

'When Moses demanded to know the name of G-d, G-d said to Moses "Ehyeh-asher-ehyeh" (I am who I am, YHWH).' (Exodus 3:14)

Traditionally rather than uttering the sacred name, Yhwh, Jews say Adonai, Lord. This respect, or prohibition, is expressed in English as G-d.

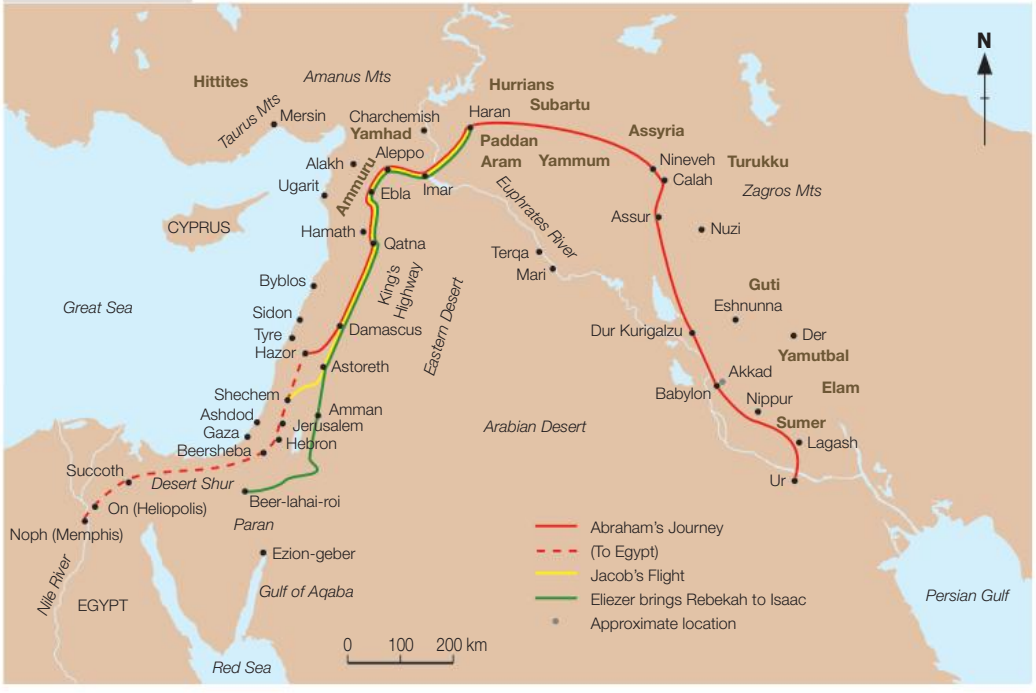
Activity 9.1

Framing

1 What do you know about Judaism?
2 What do you know about Israel?
3 What are some distinctive customs of Judaism?
4 What enabled a relatively small religion to have such an impact on Western culture?
5 How has Judaism changed over time?
6 Who are some key people associated with Judaism?
6 What is the *Shoah*?
7 Are there Jewish communities in Australia, your state or your local area?
8 How do the media present Judaism?
9 Complete the KWHL chart related to Judaism on Worksheet 9.1

Judaism is a religion intimately bound up with the history of a people and culture marked by exile and suffering over many centuries. One way to understand Judaism is through the lens of memory, which forms the core of many rituals. Central to memory is the suffering of Jews, from slavery in Egypt, to exile under Nebuchadnezzar, through the Roman period, the Crusades, the Inquisition and ultimately to Hitler's 'Final Solution', the *Shoah*, during World War II.

FIGURE 9.1
Abraham's journey



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Timeline (dates are approximate)

BCE	
1800	Abraham enters the Promised Land
1250	Moses, Exodus
1200	Re-entry into the Promised Land
1050	Saul, David, Solomon
950	Construction of First Temple in Jerusalem
922	Northern Kingdom separated from South after Solomon
725	Isaiah
722	Assyrians conquer Northern Kingdom
586	Babylonians conquer Jerusalem, destruction of First Temple, deportation of Jews
500	Return from Babylonian exile
331	Jerusalem conquered by Alexander the Great
165	Maccabean revolt, rededication of Temple
63	Romans, under Pompey, take Jerusalem Age of Rabbis

CE	
70	Destruction of Second Temple by Romans
200	*Mishnah* completed
600	*Talmud* completed
1000	Golden Age of Judaism in Spain
1290	Jews expelled from England and France
1492	Jews expelled from Spain
1700s	Rise of Hassidic movement
1808	Napoleon grants Jews European citizenship
1817	Chevra kadish established in Sydney
1881	Persecution of Jews in Russia, migration to US
1938	*Krystallnacht*
1942-45	The ***Shoah***
1945	Post-war migration of Jews
1948	Establishment of State of Israel
1950	Israeli parliament passes Law of Return
1967	Six-Day War
1972	Ordination of the first female rabbi
1983	**Reform Judaism** accepts **patrilineal** Jewish descent

Shoah
a word used by Jews in preference to Holocaust, which means a burnt offering to G-d given in the temple and therefore, something sacred

Reform Judaism
adapts its beliefs and practices to the norms of modern society – also referred to as Progressive or Liberal Judaism

patrilineal
involving the inheritance of names, titles, property or religion through the male line

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Judaism, the religion of 888 000 people in Australia and of many more in Israel, North America, Europe, Latin America and South Africa is defined by Jewishness, the ethnic identity of people who are descendents of Jewish parents. When studying Judaism, it is important to pay close attention to the various groups of Jews within Judaism.

The history of Judaism

From the time of the Babylonian exile in 586 BCE until the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, Jews have lived under foreign rule, except for a short period under the Maccabean kings (140–163 BCE). The history of Judaism can be roughly divided into four periods:

1 500 BCE to 70 CE
2 70 CE to 640 CE
3 640 CE to 1800
4 1800 to the present.

The first period begins with the writing of the five books of Moses, the *Torah*, which drew together oral tradition and other writings of ancient Israel that existed prior to the destruction of the First Temple of Jerusalem in 586 BCE. The priests and the surviving leadership of the Temple produced the Hebrew Scriptures.

Torah the first five books of the Jewish Scriptures (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy)

The destruction of the Temple in 586 resulted in a crisis of faith, because the Jewish people presumed that the G-d of the conquerors had conquered the G-d of Israel. The Prophets of Israel (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel) had an alternative interpretation: G-d was punishing the people of Israel for their sins. Throughout this period a number of groups of Jews existed in Israel that interpreted the Five Books of Law and the Prophets differently.

By the time of the Second Temple in 450 BCE, the *Torah* was central to Judaism and the history of the Jews. The destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE merged the Judaism of previous times into a single form, Rabbinic Judaism. Rabbinic Judaism, was marked by the doctrine of the dual *Torah*: the written *Torah* and the oral *Torah*. The written *Torah* comprises much of the same books that Christians know as the Old Testament and the oral *Torah* includes writings of sages, the *Mishnah*, a philosophical law code, two commentaries on the *Mishnah* and the *Talmud*.

FACT

There are two *Talmuds* – the Jerusalem *Talmud* and the Babylonian *Talmud*. When people speak of the *Talmud* they are generally referring to the more comprehensive of the two, the Babylonian *Talmud*.

During the third period, 640 CE to 1800, philosophy and mysticism emerged. The Judaism of this period is characterised by its principal authorities, the rabbis and the *Talmud*, and has been described by some as Classical Judaism.

The fourth period is marked by diversity within Judaism. The rise of Reform Judaism and the response to many political changes in Europe as well as migration to North America have all impacted on Judaism. The most significant impact was caused by the National Socialist Party in Germany in 1933. Under their extreme racist doctrine, the Nazi Party systematically organised the murder of six million European Jews between 1939 and 1945.

In the aftermath of World War II, Jews who survived the *Shoah*, supported by Jewish people in all parts of the world, petitioned the United Nations to create a Jewish state in what was then called Palestine. The establishment of the State of Israel on 15 May 1948 began a new chapter in the history of Judaism.

Activity 9.2

Investigating

Annotate the timeline on Worksheet 9.2 by providing facts related to dates and events to increase your basic understanding of key events.

Sacred texts of Judaism

Torah

The *Torah* is the cornerstone of Judaism – containing both the written law and the oral law of the Jews. The written *Torah* (*Torah Shebichtav*), the first five books of the Hebrew *Bible* (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy), was, according to tradition, written by Moses.

For Jews, the *Torah* is the source of all wisdom, offering guidance for everyday life. The Hebrew scriptures are also known by the acronym TaNaK

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(Tanach) from the first letter of the three sections of the Hebrew Bible:

1 *Torah* (Law)
2 *Nev'im* (Prophets)
3 *Ketuvim* (Writings).

The oral law, *Torah Sehb'al Peh*, provides details on the written law and is found in the *Talmud*, a combination of *Halachah* (Law) and *Aggadah* (Story). The *Talmud* has two parts, *Mishnah* and *Gemara.*

The *Torah* is written in Hebrew, which is read from right to left. Below is an extract from Genesis 1 showing the Hebrew with an English translation:

FIGURE 9.2
Reading the *Torah* scrolls

FACT

The *Mishnah* is a large work written by 200 CE, which is divided into six sections and covers a range of topics discussed by the rabbis: sacrifice, *Shabbat*, festivals, civil and criminal matters, agriculture and issues such as marriage and divorce.

Genesis Chapter 1

א בְּרֵאשִׁית, בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים, אֵת הַשָּׁמַיִם, וְאֵת הָאָרֶץ.	**1** In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.
ב וְהָאָרֶץ, הָיְתָה תֹהוּ וָבֹהוּ, וְחֹשֶׁךְ, עַל-פְּנֵי תְהוֹם; וְרוּחַ אֱלֹהִים, מְרַחֶפֶת עַל-פְּנֵי הַמָּיִם.	**2** Now the earth was unformed and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep; and the spirit of God hovered over the face of the waters.
ג וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים, יְהִי אוֹר; וַיְהִי-אוֹר.	**3** And God said: 'Let there be light.' And there was light.
ד וַיַּרְא אֱלֹהִים אֶת-הָאוֹר, כִּי-טוֹב; וַיַּבְדֵּל אֱלֹהִים, בֵּין הָאוֹר וּבֵין הַחֹשֶׁךְ.	**4** And God saw the light, that it was good; and God divided the light from the darkness.
ה וַיִּקְרָא אֱלֹהִים לָאוֹר יוֹם, וְלַחֹשֶׁךְ קָרָא לָיְלָה; וַיְהִי-עֶרֶב וַיְהִי-בֹקֶר, יוֹם אֶחָד. {פ}	**5** And God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, one day. {P}

Activity 9.3

Investigating

1 How do the *Mishnah* and *Talmud* support the *Torah*?
2 How do the *Mishnah* and *Talmud* assist the believer in daily life?

FACT

The *Gemara* developed as a body of commentary around the *Mishnah*, which eventually became included in manuscripts of the *Mishnah* creating a very large collection called the *Talmud*.

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Groups within Judaism

Reform Judaism

Orthodox Judaism the most traditionally observant stream of Judaism

Reform Judaism, or Progressive or Liberal Judaism, adapts its beliefs and practices to the norms of modern society. Reform Judaism, which emerged with the emancipation of the Jews late in eighteenth-century Europe, believes in the legitimacy of change and accepts that ideas of the divine are expressed in human terms and therefore belief and practice may change and evolve. This group is influenced by social, scientific, ethical and other human developments.

The first Reform Jews were Germans, who hoped that by making worship services more attractive to apathetic Jews, it would encourage them to practice. The changed worship services included males and females singing together accompanied by the organ and while some Hebrew prayers were maintained, prayers in German (the vernacular) were introduced. Israel Jacobson, considered to be the founder of Reform Judaism, initiated many of the changes in his school chapel in Seesen in 1810.

By 1818, the Hamburg Temple had a full-service calendar in the Reform tradition. In the US, German-Jewish emigrants saw the influence that liberal religion had on Protestants and they wanted to develop a form of Judaism that would be equivalent to Presbyterianism or Episcopalianism. As a result, Reform Judaism developed an Americanised form of worship and religion. Classical Reform emphasised equality – Jews no longer needed to live in ghettoes and, working beside and with Christians, they could make the world a better place. Reform Jews were encouraged to work for the disadvantaged and to promote ethical monotheism throughout the world.

Yom Kippur the most solemn and important of the Jewish holy days – also known in English as the Day of Atonement

Zionism the international Jewish political movement that originally supported the re-establishment of a homeland for Jews in Palestine, it concentrated on secular components such as land, language and culture

After World War I, significant numbers of American Jews left the city centres and moved to the suburbs. By the 1960s, many Reform Jews were involved in civil rights struggles including protests against the war in Vietnam. The Israeli Six-Day War in 1967 increased the loyalty of American Jews to the State of Israel as did the *Yom Kippur* War in 1973. In 1972, the first female rabbi, Sally J. Priesand, was ordained in the Reform tradition. Since this time, women have made up half the population in Reform rabbinical classes.

Orthodox Judaism

Orthodox Judaism advocates the full observance of Jewish religious law (the *halakhah*), interpreted in traditional ways. Orthodoxy in Jewish society emerged towards the end of the eighteenth century as a reaction to the rise of Reform Judaism, assimilation in western and central Europe and secularisation. Within the Jewish population at the time, some struggled to preserve and protect their tradition while others advocated reform and change.

Orthodoxy sees the law recorded in the *Torah* as a direct expression of G-d's will and of an unchanging nature. While Orthodox Jews accept changes in the *halakhah*, the changes must be based on specific Talmudic texts, halakhic codes and commentaries, and be recognised by rabbinical authority. The changes cannot be based solely on historical, sociological or psychological considerations. The word orthodox means 'right belief' but for Jews it is also very much about 'right practice' so Orthodox Jews often refer to themselves as 'observant' Jews.

Orthodox Judaism appears to have three main stages of development. The first, from 1790–1890, is marked by the emancipation of Jews in Hungary, Germany and Eastern Europe. As the gates of Jewish ghettos opened in Europe, Jews took advantage of new professional, social and intellectual opportunities. Many Jews converted to Christianity, while others assimilated or joined Reformed Judaism. Because the changes were so rapid, rabbinic authorities felt that they were losing their communities and in an effort to halt the changes, the Rabbis focused on tradition, particularly observance of *halakhah*.

Unfortunately there was no united approach, religious leaders of each geographical region: Hungary, Russia and Germany, adopted their own strategies to preserve the *halakhah*. Hungarian Jews adopted militant adherence, while German Jewish responses were more moderate and open to change. It was not until the end of the nineteenth century, under the challenge of **Zionism** that Orthodox groups united on several important matters.

The second stage, 1890–1945, is marked by suffering and crisis. Orthodox Judaism was abandoned by many young Jews who opted for a secular way

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of life or joined secular political movements. These people saw Orthodox Judaism as something belonging to the past. By the end of World War II and in the aftermath of the *Shoah*, Orthodox Judaism in Europe was almost completely destroyed.

During the third stage, beginning in 1948, Zionism became more than a political issue, causing a deep division, especially in Israel. Two groups emerged – the Zionist-Religious, or Modern Orthodox, and the Orthodox anti-Zionist Jews, or Haredi. Some within the Haredim indirectly blamed assimilation and the actions of Reform and secular Jews for the *Shoah*. They concentrated all their efforts into rebuilding the world of the *Torah* in the land of Israel.

The most obvious difference between the Religious-Zionists and anti-Zionist Jews lies in their distinct attitude towards ritual observance. This difference between the two groups is most obvious in their dress. Haredim and Hasidic Jews preserve the traditional dress of their European ancestors (long black coats, hats and beards for males) while Zionist-Religious Jews dress the same as secular Israelis with the addition of a **yamulkah** (skull cap). The dress code is also distinctive for women. Haredi women wear modest dresses and usually refrain from wearing long pants. After marriage they cover their head with a cloth, hat or sometimes a wig.

Orthodox Jews are mainly concentrated in Israel and America but every large Jewish centre in the world has a significant Orthodox population. The movement away from Orthodoxy in the early twentieth century has ceased and in some instances has been reversed. The birth rate among Orthodox Jews, particularly Haredim, is significantly higher than in other sections of the Jewish population. The percentage of Jews who identify as Orthodox is increasing.

Conservative Judaism

Conservative Judaism occupies a middle position within Jewish society: their synagogues are perceived to be more traditional than those of Reform Judaism but less traditional than the Orthodox synagogues. Conservative Judaism shares with Orthodoxy the ongoing authority of Jewish law, *halakhah*, but stresses the historical development of Judaism and believes that Jewish law can be changed. Conservative Judaism is uniquely American, although its roots can be traced to nineteenth-century Germany. It is the largest and most popular form of Judaism in America and there are smaller groups of Conservative Jews throughout the world.

As far as religious behaviour is concerned, Conservative Jews expect that the rabbi and the cantor will be more traditional than their counterparts in the Reform community. Conservative Jews usually maintain traditional Jewish practices such as lighting Sabbath candles and attending Passover *Seder*. Very few Conservative Jews inter-marry.

Conservative Judaism
a modern stream of Judaism that arose out of intellectual currents in Germany in the mid-nineteenth century and took institutional form in the US in the early twentieth century

yamulkah
thin, slightly-rounded skullcap worn by Jewish males during prayer

FIGURE 9.3
Hasidic Jews

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What distinguishes Conservative Jews from Orthodox Jews is their acceptance that change is permissible and necessary. This is most evident with regard to the role of women. Most traditional Jewish texts restrict women from reading the *Torah* in public, from reciting the worship service on behalf of the congregation and from being counted as part of a *minyan*. Conservative Judaism has made modifications to all these rules: women read from the *Torah* in Conservative synagogues, women lead services and in most, but not all synagogues, women are counted in the *minyan*. For many, Conservative Judaism is attractive because it is traditional without being rigorous and stresses communal standards without compromising personal autonomy.

minyan
quorum of ten adult Jewish men

Activity 9.4

Framing

1 How are different groups of Jews portrayed in media, film and television?
2 What Jewish communities exist in Queensland or your local area?
3 What do we know about New York Jews?

Activity 9.5

Investigating

Read the extract from the novel *The Chosen* by Chaim Potok on Worksheet 9.4. As you read the extract, look for examples of how groups of Jews are portrayed in the story. Answer the following questions:

1 How are they differentiated?
2 What seems to be their attitude to each other?
3 How do they see themselves fitting into society? How do they see themselves fitting into wartime American society? How do they think Americans view Jews?
4 How many types of Orthodox Jews are presented in *The Chosen*? Provide evidence to support your statement.
5 Complete a character analysis for a member of each group using the following headings:
   a dress
   b history
   c language
   d cultural lineage/descent
   e attitudes to life and religion
   f sense of identity.

Activity 9.6

Reasoning

Complete the Venn diagram on Worksheet 9.6 to show the relationship between Orthodox and Hasidic Judaism. Using the information gathered, construct a hypothesis about similarities and differences between these two groups within Judaism.

Activity 9.7

Judging

Assume the persona of a player from one of the two teams mentioned in the extract from *The Chosen*. Construct a statement expressing their perception of themselves and their place within their Jewish community and within American society at that time.

Jewish festivals and celebrations

The Jewish calendar is lunar. The Moon takes approximately 29.5 days to orbit the Earth and as it approaches the end of its orbit, less of the Moon is seen until it disappears altogether. The reappearance of the Moon marks a new month for Jews. It is impossible for a month to last for 29.5 days so in the Jewish calendar, months are grouped in pairs that add up to 59 days – the first month has 30 days, the second month 29. There are 354 days in an ordinary Jewish year but every eleventh year there is a solar year that is 11 days longer. The Jewish calendar also has a leap year, which has an extra month called *Adar*.

Activity 9.8

Investigating

Using the Jewish calendar on page 215, identify any religious or secular festival or celebration in the Australian calendar that may coincide with a Jewish festival or celebration within the given years.

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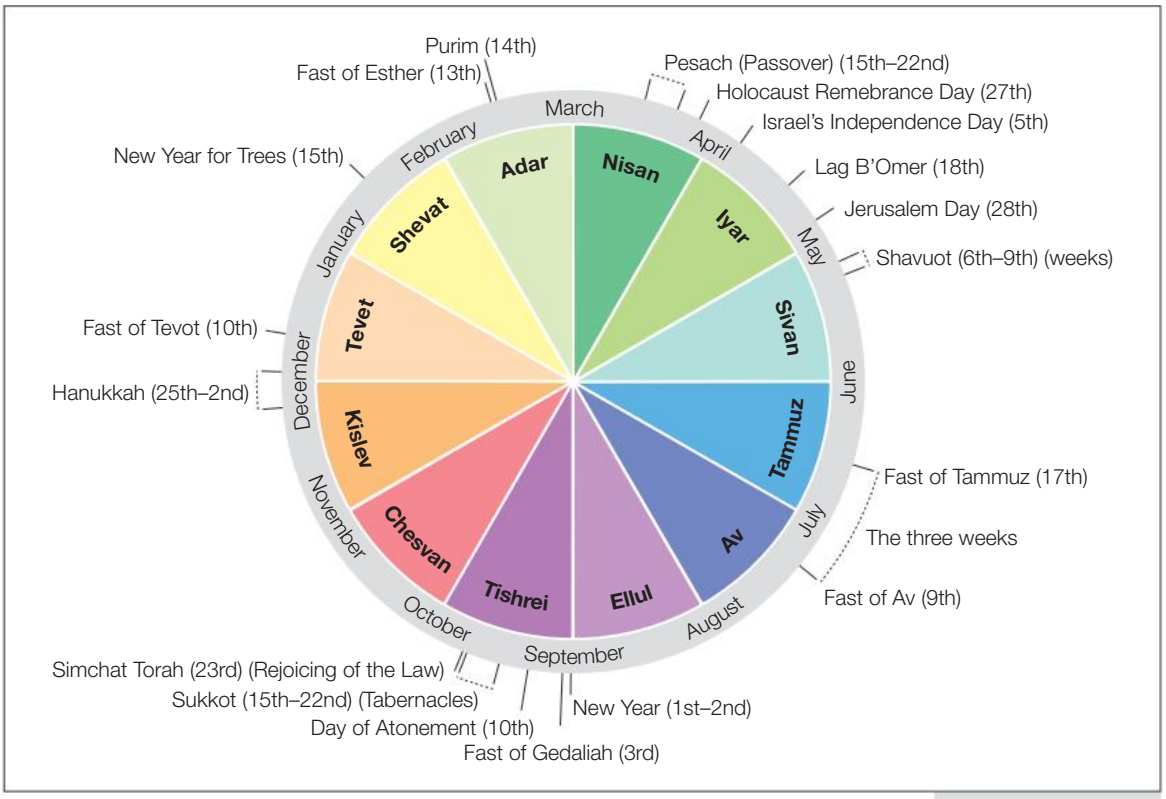

FIGURE 9.4
The Jewish calendar

FACT

Chametz is anything made from the five major grains (i.e. barley, wheat, oats, rye and spelt) that has not been completely baked within 18 minutes of coming into contact with water. Some observant Ashkenazi Jews avoid rice, corn, peanuts and beans during Passover, as these are often processed with wheat and they fear that wheat may be mixed in.

Activity 9.9

Judging

1 What implications might knowledge of the Jewish calendar have for public policy?
2 What consequences might there be for schools and workplaces?

Annual celebrations

Pesach (Passover)

Pesach celebrates the time when G-d delivered the Jewish people from slavery in Egypt. It is celebrated in the month of *Nisan* and is a spring festival. *Pesach* is the first pilgrim festival of the year and lasts for seven days. The first and last days of *Pesach* are holy days when no work, apart from the preparation of food, can be done (Exodus 12:16). The preparations for Passover require great effort to prepare the home as all *chametz* must be removed from the house (Exodus 12:17–19).

FIGURE 9.5
Jewish Passover meal

Pesach
a holy day and festival commemorating the time when G-d delivered the Jewish people from slavery in Egypt

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FIGURE 9.6
People burning *chametz*

FIGURE 9.7
Matzah

FACT

On the night before *Pesach* children hide pieces of bread (usually 10) and their father has to find them. This not only adds to the excitement for young children but it also teaches them the importance of the thoroughness of the search.

The entire home and, in particular, the kitchen, must be cleaned and made *chametz*-free. On the night before Passover a search, called *bedikat chametz*, usually takes place and any *chametz* that is found is wrapped and burned the following day.

Not only must all *chametz* be removed from the home but any utensil or crockery that has come into contact with *chametz* must not be used during this time. Some households have an entire set of kitchenware that is used exclusively for Passover.

During the seven days of *Pesach*, *matzah* or unleavened bread is eaten. *Matzah* is a grain product made of flour and water that is baked quickly so that it does not rise.

Not eating *chametz* and instead eating *matzah* is a reminder of the Jews' dependence on G-d.

On the night of the first Passover in Egypt, the Israelites were directed to offer and eat a lamb (Exodus 12:3–6). Later the *Torah* commanded the Israelites to sacrifice a lamb every year to recall what had happened in Egypt (Deuteronomy 16:2).

Pesach reminds Jews of the time their ancestors were slaves in Egypt and how G-d acted on their behalf and saved them. Exodus chapters 7–11 recount the plagues G-d sent on the Egyptians trying to persuade Pharaoh to let the Israelites go. The final plague (Exodus 11) was the killing of the Egyptian first-born. In Exodus 12, the Israelites are told to mark their doorposts with blood from a lamb so that G-d would know that they were not Egyptians and would 'pass over' their home. *Pesach* is a celebration of freedom and commemorated by Jews all over the world.

The highlight of *Pesach* is the *Seder* meal that is celebrated on the first night of the festival.

Families gather together for the *Seder*, which begins when the mother says the blessing and lights the candles. Often male members of the family attend an evening service in the synagogue and when they return home, the *Seder* begins. The *Seder* revolves around the story of the Exodus and is expressed in a book called the *Haggadah*, which also includes accounts from Exodus and the *Mishnah*. The youngest child present at the *Seder* asks a series of questions 'Why is this night different from other nights?' This leads into four specific questions about the ritual:

- Why on this night do we eat unleavened bread?
- Why on this night do we eat bitter herbs?
- Why on this night do we dip our herbs?
- Why on this night do we recline?

The person leading the *Seder*, usually the father, answers these questions and explains the various symbols. The *Seder* follows a set order.

On the *Seder* table there will be highly symbolic food that is consumed at different times throughout the meal. A *Seder* plate will feature as the centre piece of the table.

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The order of the *Seder*

1 Recite the ***Kiddush***
2 Wash hands – before eating green herbs
3 Eat green herbs
4 Divide the *matzah* – so that the fourth piece can be put away
5 Read the *Haggadah*
6 Wash hands for the meal proper
7 Recite blessing over *matzah*
8 Recite a second blessing over *matzah*
9 Recite the blessing over bitter herbs
10 Eat the *Hillel* sandwich
11 Serve the Meal
12 Eat fourth piece of *matzah*
13 Say grace after meals
14 Conclude the Hallel Psalms
15 Pray that G-d will accept your *Seder* service with favour.

FIGURE 9.8
A *Seder* plate

Descriptions vary slightly but include the following:

1 *Karpas*: green vegetable, usually parsley, which is dipped into salt water to remind people of the tears of the slaves.
2 *Charoset*: mixture of chopped walnuts, grated apple, wine and cinnamon reminiscent of the mortar used by the Hebrew slaves when in Egypt.
3 *Maror*: bitter herbs, usually horse radish that represents the bitterness of slavery.
4 *Beitzah*: a roasted (hardboiled) egg rolled over a pan, a reminder of the sacrifices offered in the Temple and the continuity of life.
5 *Zeroa*: a roasted shankbone that represents the sacrifice of a lamb.
6 *Lettuce*: symbolises enslavement in Egypt. At first life appeared bearable, eventually it became forced and cruel labour. Lettuce leaves are not bitter but the stem is often bitter.

All the food on the *Seder* plate is eaten except for the roasted egg and the lamb shank. Wine is also part of the *Seder*. When one of the ten plagues is mentioned, each person spills a drop of wine to express sorrow at the suffering of the Egyptians.

The *Seder* ends with the following words:

> The redemption is not yet complete …
> Peace, shalom …
> Next year in Jerusalem …
> Next year may all be free.

Kiddush
a prayer used to bless the *Shabbat* meal

FACT
Seder means 'order'.

Shavuot (Festival of Weeks)

Shavuot, the Festival of Weeks, completes *Pesach* by celebrating G-d's gift of freedom and the giving of the *Torah* on Mount Sinai. It is a one-day summer festival coming seven weeks after *Pesach*, during the time of the wheat and barley harvest. Jews count 49 days between the second day of *Pesach* to *Shavout:* the counting is known as the *Omer*. An *Omer* was a measurement of barley that was offered in the Temple, according to Leviticus 23:15. The barley offering was made daily until the next crop, wheat, was harvested about seven weeks later. The next day, the fiftieth day after *Pesach*, is *Shavuot,* sometimes called Pentecost (Greek for fifty days).

For Orthodox Jews, the first 32 days of *Omer* include a period of mourning for the dead. The thirty-third day of *Omer* is a minor festival that acknowledges G-d's intervention in Israel's history. *Shavout,* the second pilgrim festival, commemorates the day when

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Rosh Hashanah Jewish New Year – literally 'head of the year'.

shofar a horn used for Jewish religious purposes

Shabbat the weekly Sabbath or day of rest in Judaism, starting from sundown on Friday till sundown on Saturday

mitzvot 'commandment'

Jewish tradition says G-d gave the *Torah* to Moses on Mount Sinai. It includes the ritual of decorating the synagogue with flowers and plants representing the flowering of Mount Sinai when the *Torah* was given.

Another custom includes eating dairy dishes, especially cheesecake. One important tradition of *Shavuot* is staying awake most or all of the night to study the *Torah*. This practice, *Tikkun Leil Shavuot,* began sometime in the sixteenth century in Safed, Israel. In the synagogue on *Shavuot* morning, *Torah* readings include Exodus 19:1–20:23. Congregations also read from the Book of Ruth to remind Jews that if Ruth, a Moabite, could accept and live the *Torah*, then they too can do so.

Days of Awe

The most important days in the Jewish calendar are the Days of Awe: ***Rosh Hashanah*** (New Year) and *Yom Kippur* (Day of Atonement). This is a time when Jews not only reflect on their responsibilities but also confess their sins. This is seen as a return to G-d through a conscious effort to become better people. Two *Torah* passages exhort Jews to observe *Rosh Hashanah*: Leviticus 23:24–25 and Numbers 29:1.

Preparations for the Days of Awe begin in the preceding month, Elul, when the ***shofar*** is blown every morning (except ***Shabbat***) in synagogue services. It is a ***mitzvot*** (plural *mitzvoth*) to hear the *shofar* and to refrain from work on *Rosh Hashanah*.

Because *Rosh Hashanah* is a special time for Jews, every effort is made to make the home ritual special. The customary greeting on the evening of *Rosh Hashanah* is 'May you be inscribed for a good year'. *Rosh Hashanah* is welcomed by lighting two candles while the mother recites two blessings. The father says the *Kiddush* and a special blessing over the wine.

Most of the day of *Rosh Hashanah* is spent in the synagogue. A popular ritual practised in the afternoon is *Tashlikh* (casting off), which involves going to a river, lake or sea, reciting a verse from Micah 7:19 and casting all sins into the depths of the water by throwing something into the water.

Yom Kippur

Rosh Hashanah begins a period of ten days of repentance, which provide people with time to examine themselves and their behaviour and culminates in *Yom Kippur,* Day of Atonement. It includes the Fast of *Gedaliah* and *Shabbat Shuvah* when Hosea 14 is read. During *Rosh Hashanah* and *Yom Kippur,* the holiest day of the Jewish year, people attend services in the synagogue rather than conducting ritual at home.

On the eve of *Yom Kippur*, some people give money to the poor. This stems from a ceremony when

FACT

The *shofar* is made from a ram's horn and makes a trumpet-like sound. In ancient times the *shofar* was blown to mark special events. Today it is a signal for soul-searching and repentance.

FIGURE 9.9
A man blowing the *shofar*

Activity 9.10

Reasoning and judging

Read Hosea 14:2–10 on Worksheet 9.10. Jews come to the text Hosea 14:2–10 from within a sombre period of repentance.

1 How does the context of *Yom Kippur* shape the believer's reading of this text?
2 How might the text affect the believer?
3 What actions might the believer take as a result of engaging with this text?
4 How does this text affirm the beliefs and practices of Jews?
5 *Yom Kippur* is considered the holiest day in the Jewish year. Having read Hosea 14:2–10, why do you think this is so?

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a goat, symbolically carrying the sins of the people, was driven out of Jerusalem into the wilderness (the idea of a 'scapegoat' originates from this practice).

Yom Kippur is a 25-hour-long fast. The last meal before the fast is a festive meal. After the meal, everybody prepares for evening prayers. Sometimes, the males in the family dress in a long white garment called a *Kittel*. This clothing symbolises a verse from Isaiah 1:18 '… though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be like snow'. In addition to fasting, Jews often observe *Yom Kippur* by not washing or bathing; not using creams and oils; not engaging in sexual relations and not wearing leather shoes.

Before the evening service begins, the *Kol Nidrei* is chanted. This annulment of vows was written during the Spanish Inquisition when Jews were forced to accept Christianity or be killed. Many Spanish Jews lived outwardly as Christians but secretly gathered to celebrate *Shabbat* and other Jewish festivals. Each year before *Yom Kippur,* they declared null and void the allegiance they had made to Christianity. When Jews chant this today it reminds them that their ancestors took great risks to live and practice as Jews.

Sukkot

Sukkot, the third pilgrimage festival of the year, is celebrated from 15–22 *Tishrei* (seventh month of the year in the Hebrew calendar) and takes place at the conclusion of the fruit harvest in Israel. *Sukkot* celebrates G-d's protection of the Israelites for the forty year journey from Egypt through the wilderness. A ***sukkah*** (plural *sukkot)* is built in the garden or in the synagogue grounds, to commemorate their ancestors' time in the desert when they lived in small huts with palm leaf roofs. The flimsiness of the structure reminds Jews to put their trust in G-d.

Another important ritual of *Sukkot* is praying while holding four plants, which are mentioned in Leviticus 23:40. The plants used are symbolic and many agree they represent the following:

- ***etrog*** – Jews who practise and study the religion
- palm branch (*lulav*) – Jews who practise religion without study
- myrtle branch – Jews who study and have the spirit of the *Torah*
- willow – Jews who neither practise nor study.

FIGURE 9.10
A *sukkah*

sukkah
a three-sided dwelling with a roof made of leaves

The seventh day of *Sukkot* is known as *Hoshanah Rabbah* (The Great Hosanah – meaning 'save us'). On this day, Jews holding the *lulav* and *etrog* process round the ***bimah*** seven times. On the eighth day, Leviticus 23:39 commands that there be a solemn rest called *Shemini Atzeret* or ***Simchat Torah***.

bimah
a raised platform in a Jewish synagogue from which the *Torah* is read

Simchat Torah
'Rejoicing the Law'

etrog
the Hebrew name for the citron or *Citrus medica*

FIGURE 9.11
A man holding the *lulav*

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Hanukkah an eight-day Jewish holiday commemorating the re-dedication of the Temple in Jerusalem in the second century BCE, also known as the Festival of Lights

menorah a branched candelabra, used in Jewish services

Purim a Jewish holiday that commemorates the deliverance of the Jewish people of the ancient Persian Empire as recorded in the Book of Esther

Simchat Torah

Simchat Torah commemorates the giving of the *Torah* and is a time of celebration and rejoicing. During this celebration, synagogues are places of lively activity. All the *Torah* scrolls are taken out of the Ark and carried around the *bimah* seven times, as everyone joins in the procession. The *hakafot* (seven times, circling of the *bimah)* represents Joshua's march around Jericho (Joshua 6). Sometimes children join the *hakafot* and carry miniature *Torah*s, while others carry banners or flags. Many people are invited to read from the *Torah*.

Hanukkah

Hanukkah means dedication, and commemorates the re-dedication of the Temple after it was desecrated in the second century BCE. This story of the Temple is told in Maccabees 1 and 2. The most significant rite of *Hanukkah* is the lighting of the *Hanukkiah*, a nine-branched ***menorah***, in memory of the seven-branched *menorah* used in the temple. The *Hanukkiah* has eight candles, one for each day of the festival and the ninth candle, the *shamash* (servant candle), is used to light the candles on each successive night of the festival. Part of the purpose of lighting the *Hanukkiah* is to publicise the miracle of *Hanukkah*. Therefore it is customary for the *menorah* to be placed in a front window of the home.

During this eight-day festival, which is a special time for children, families sing songs that celebrate Hanukkah and play the *dreidel* game. They also consume food cooked in oil as a reminder of the miracle of the oil that lasted for eight days. *Hanukkah* is celebrated in the month of *Kislev*, which often falls during November–December. More recently, gift giving for children has become popular.

Purim

Purim, another minor festival, is also a joyous celebration that commemorates a difficult period in Jewish history, recorded in the Book of Esther. The festival involves children re-enacting the story of Esther. In the synagogue, children are encouraged to boo, stomp their feet and swing *graggers* (rattles) every time Haman's name is mentioned in the reading of the *meggillah* (scroll).

FIGURE 9.12
Procession with the *Torah*

FIGURE 9.13
A *Hanukkiah*

FIGURE 9.14
Dreidels

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Purim also carries a serious theme of trust, courage and honesty when standing up for one's belief. As a festival, it provides hope to Jews living in difficult times. It is a time for giving baskets of food to friends and relatives and to charity.

Shabbat (Sabbath)

Shabbat means to cease or rest. It is the last day of the week, beginning at sunset on Friday and ending at sunset on Saturday. The *Shabbat* lasts for 25 hours.

Activity 9.11

Investigating and reasoning

Using the websites provided on Workheet 9.11, record the time of *Shabbat* for this week for:

1 Brisbane, Sydney, Perth, Darwin, Byron Bay and Melbourne.
2 Account for the differences in time at various locations.
   a www.ajn.com.au/news/news.asp?catID=34
   b www.chabad.org/calendar/location_cdo/AID/6226
   c www.join.org.au/shabbat/derivati.htm

Shabbat, a day of celebration that occurs every Saturday, is focused on spiritually and physically invigorating people for the week ahead. Exodus 20:8–11 reminds Jews that G-d rested on the seventh day after creation and Deuteronomy 5:12–15 reminds Jews to rest after labouring for six days and to make the seventh day a Sabbath to the Lord. On *Shabbat*, Jews must stop work and remember the powers G-d has given them. The *Talmud* (*Mishnah Shabbat*) lists thirty-nine activities that are prohibited. These activities are listed on Worksheet 9.12.

According to Exodus 35, these were the tasks that were needed to build the Tabernacle (temporary dwelling or sanctuary) so they are prohibited on *Shabbat*. In the synagogue, *Shabbat* is welcomed by the singing of special hymns, usually Psalms, some of which refer to *Shabbat* as a queen or bride. The service ends with a hymn called the *Yigdal*, which attempts to put into words the foundation of all Jewish belief.

FIGURE 9.15 *Shabbat* candles and foods

In the home, many Jews plan for *Shabbat* as if an honoured guest was coming to dinner. *Shabbat* is welcomed by the mother or woman of the house, who lights two special candles that represent the *mitzvoth* to 'remember' and 'observe' and are a symbols of joy, blessing and peace. As the candles are lit, the mother recites the following blessing (*berachah*) in Hebrew:

> King of the Universe, who has hallowed us by the commandments and commanded us to kindle the Sabbath lights.

In some homes, a candle is lit for every member of the family and a blessing said for the children. Then the father recites the *Kiddush* over the wine.

The *Kiddush* begins with Genesis 2:1–3. A blessing over two plaited loaves of white bread (*challah*) reminds people of the *manna* given in the desert. A piece of bread is dipped in salt and given to each person.

On *Shabbat* morning, Jews worship in the synagogue. The service includes a reading from the *Sefer Torah* and from the *Prophets*. Some Jews also attend an afternoon service in the synagogue.

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Havdalah
a Jewish religious ceremony that marks the symbolic end of *Shabbat* and holidays and ushers in the new week

Havdalah

The ***Havdalah*** ceremony ends *Shabbat* and begins after three stars appear in the evening sky on Saturday night. Havdalah means *division* and the ceremony praises G-d for dividing: secular – sacred; dark – light; other nations – Israel; six days – *Shabbat*.

FIGURE 9.16
A *Havdalah* set

FIGURE 9.17
Memorial at Yad Vashem

During *Havdalah*, blessings are made over the wine and over a specially platted multi-wick *havdalah* candle and a spice box, called *samin,* which contains sweet smelling spices. The cup for the wine is filled to the brim, expressing hope that the coming week will be filled with divine blessings. The *Havdalah* candle's flame signifies light and guidance through life. The spices remind Jews to make an effort to bring the sweetness of *Shabbat* into the coming week. Children are included in the ceremony and together the family recites the final blessing.

Special days of celebration

Yom HaShoah (Holocaust Remembrance Day)

Yom HaShoah is observed as a day of special remembrance for Jews who perished during the *Shoah*. As well as attending special services in synagogues, some people make a pilgrimage to Yad Vashem, the Holocaust Memorial, in Jerusalem.

Yad Vashem was built as a memorial to those who perished and the spirit of those who survived. To walk through the museum is to go on a journey through space and time. Visitors trudge through graphic displays of concentration camps, which show the history of the camps and tell some of the personal stories of the people who laboured there. Actual relics of these camps have been brought to Israel, piles of children's shoes, a patch of railway line, small sections of ghetto reconstructed and even pictures of gas chambers. The upward journey through the main museum is graphic and emotive but the design leads one from the grim historical realities to the clear light pointing to a Jewish hillside and the heavens beyond.

In another section, the names of all the concentration camps are displayed and in the *Children's Memorial* the names of children who perished are spoken over and over. Many people visit Yad Vashem on *Yom HaShoah* to light candles and recite psalms on behalf of the Jews who were murdered during the *Shoah*.

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Activity 9.12

Investigating, reasoning and judging

Yom HaShoah is commemorated in schools across the world in a similar way in which ANZAC Day is commemorated in Australia.

1 You have been invited to prepare a presentation for *Yom HaShoah* for your school assembly. Yad Vashem in Jerusalem has provided some guidelines for preparing commemoration events for *Yom HaShoah,* refer to www1.yadvashem.org/education/lessonplan/english/guideline.pdf.

2 Read the guidelines. In light of the material presented in this chapter and in the guidelines, prepare a 10-minute presentation for your school assembly.

Jewish prayer and worship

Jews believe that people should try to develop a relationship with G-d through prayer. At the heart of Jewish prayer is the idea that G-d listens to prayer and that prayer is a conversation between people and the Creator G-d. This relationship with G-d is implicit in the statement from Genesis 1:27, 'G-d created humankind in G-d's image … male and female, G-d created them'.

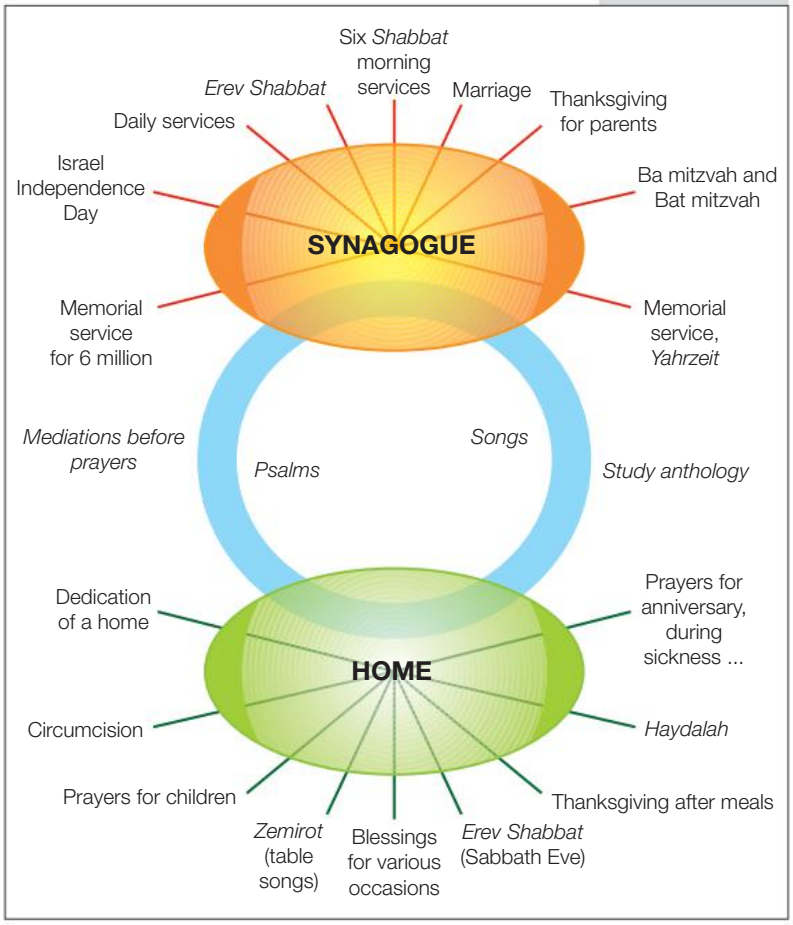
Throughout the *Torah*, G-d engaged in dialogue with the forefathers, foremothers and prophets. These people even argued with G-d, and Sarah laughed at G-d when told she was going to have a child in her old age. There are a variety of prayers in the Jewish liturgy that express the relationship G-d has with humanity. While it is possible for a Jew to pray alone, Judaism encourages communal worship and prayer. Some key prayers may only be recited in the presence of a *minyan*.

Praying in community serves many functions. It can sometimes represent humankind's attempt to create meaning in a chaotic world. Jewish prayer rituals are designed to reinforce a sense of community, and to link the individual into a history that began with the covenant between G-d and Abraham and still exists today, four thousand years later. The complex web of relationships between the individual Jew, the community of worship and the Jewish people past and present is an essential part of the Jewish experience of communal prayer.

Observant Jews pray three times a day in formal worship and, in addition, many blessings and prayers are also uttered throughout the day. All Jewish prayers are in Hebrew. The morning prayer service, *(Shacharit),* is composed of the following:

- morning blessings
- *Pesukei D'Zimra* (verses of praise)
- *Shema* and its blessings
- *Shemoneh Esrei* also known as *Amidah*
- *Musaf* (added on *Shabbat* and during holidays)
- *Hallel* (said only on special days)
- *Torah reading* (Monday, Thursday, *Shabbat* and holidays)

FIGURE 9.18
Links between synagogue and home



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- *Ashrei*, *Aleinu and* other closing prayers, psalms and hymns (not on *Shabbat* and holidays).

The afternoon service, the *Mincah*, consists of:

- *Ashrei*
- *Shemoneh Esrei*
- *Aleinu.*

During the evening service, the *Ma'ariv* service, the congregation recites:

- *Shema*
- *Shemoneh Esrei*
- *Aleinu*.

tallit Jewish prayer shawl

tzitzit fringes or tassels hanging from the four corners of prayer shawls

A fundamental Jewish prayer is the *Shema*, which means 'hear' and is the first word of the Hebrew in Deuteronomy 6:4–9:

> Hear O Israel: The Lord is our G-d, the Lord alone. You shall love the Lord your G-d 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.

The *Shema* is really a declaration of faith that states what is central to Judaism: that there is only one G-d and that G-d requires wholehearted love.

The next most important prayer is the *Amidah*, which means 'standing' and, as the name suggests, the worshipper recites this prayer standing and facing the old city of Jerusalem. In Jerusalem, they face the Temple Mount. The *Amidah* originally contained 18 blessings but now has 19, all of which are said on weekdays. On *Shabbat* only the first and last three are said. No movements or gestures are prescribed in the *Torah*, but some have developed that provide an emphasis to prayer. These may include bowing, covering the eyes and swaying.

Jewish males wear special clothing when they pray, to remind them of G-d and their obligations to G-d. The ***tallit***, prayer shawl, is a white rectangular garment usually made of wool or silk and has a ***tzitzit*** in each of its four corners. The tassels consist of a series of knots that act as a constant reminder of the *mitzvoth*, the commandments. The biblical basis for wearing a *tallit* is found in Numbers 15:37–41. During prayer, the *tallit* is worn around the shoulders and sometimes over the head.

Another garment called a *tallit katan* (small tallit) is worn by some men under their usual clothes throughout the day. Its tassels hang down the side and constantly brush against the hands, as a reminder of the *mitzvot*.

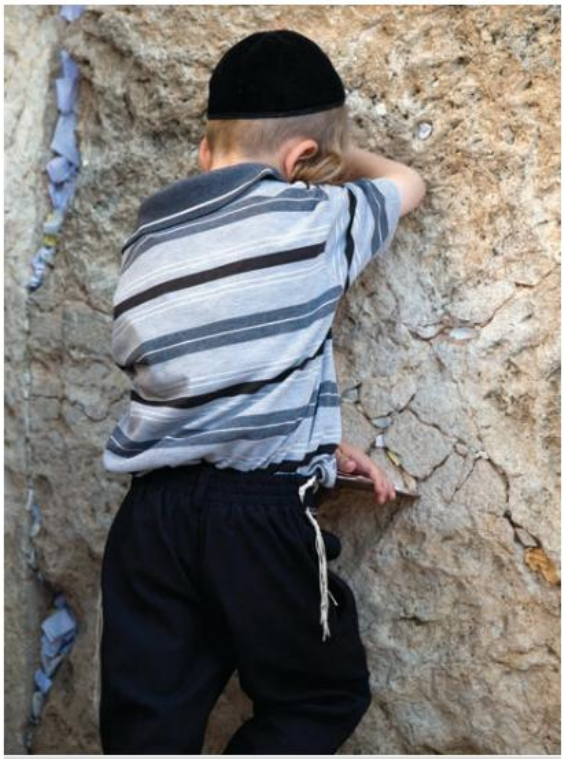

FIGURE 9.19
Tallit katan

tefillin a pair of black leather boxes containing scrolls of parchment inscribed with *Torah* verses. The hand-tefillin is wrapped around the arm, hand and fingers and the head-tefillin is placed on the forehead

The second item of clothing worn for prayer is the ***tefillin*** or phylacteries, two small black boxes that hold four passages from the *Torah* instructing Jews to 'bind the *Torah* to their hand and between their eyes' (Deuteronomy 6:4–9; 11:13–21; Exodus 13:1–16). The *tefillin*, always treated with great respect, is bound to the right arm opposite the heart and the other is bound to the forehead as a reminder to worship G-d with their whole body, heart and head.

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The third item worn for prayer, the *yamulkah* or *kippah*, is a skull cap worn by most Jewish males when praying. Some Jews wear the *yamulkah* all the time as an expression of respect before G-d.

Activity 9.13

Investigating and reasoning

List the items worn during prayer and complete the table on Worksheet 9.13.

FIGURE 9.20
Jewish man with prayer shawl, *kippah* and *tefillin*

Any ten adult male Jews can form a *minyan* and hold a service in a reasonably appropriate place. In fact, any Jewish male over the age of thirteen can lead a service, read from the *Torah* and give a sermon. In a women's *tefilah*, prayer group, any girl over the age of twelve can perform these tasks. In Reform congregations, women are counted in a *minyan* and can perform any of the functions allotted in a worship service. For the vast majority of practising Jews, except for Hasidic communities, Judaism is still non-hierarchical in worship and does not require a rabbi to lead the service. The only thing a Rabbi can do that cannot be done by an ordinary Jew is sign a marriage licence.

FIGURE 9.21
Synagogue in Margaret Street, Brisbane

A Rabbi is a person who has completed study at a *yeshiva*, or seminary, and is learned in Jewish law and texts. The ordination is usually performed by the Chief Rabbinate. In Reform synagogues, the Rabbi leads services, in other congregations the Rabbi, as a teacher, also rules on Jewish law, including liturgical questions.

Synagogue

Jews can pray anywhere but group prayer often occurs in the synagogue. Synagogue, from the Greek meaning 'to gather together', designates a place of worship. Synagogues differ depending on when and where they were built and whether they are for Orthodox or Reform Jews. While it is not known when synagogues were first built, they have been used as meeting places from as early as 6 CE. Synagogues probably became more prominent after the destruction of the Temple in 70 CE and over fifty synagogues from the first century have been excavated in Israel.

Jews come together to share their joys and sorrows and the various names for synagogues reflect this purpose: *Bet Haknesset* (house of assembly), *Bet Hatephilah* (house of prayer) and *shul*, a Yiddish word, meaning school.

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bimah raised platform from which the *Torah* is read

There are very few set requirements for the architecture of synagogues and frequently they mirror the style of the period in which they were built and the cultures to which they belong. Synagogues do, however, have to have windows for letting in light, as light is a sign of the strength and guidance of G-d. Orthodox synagogues have a separate section, often a gallery, for women. Progressive Jews do not separate men from women in the synagogue.

An important feature of the synagogue is the ***bimah***. It is normally in the middle of the synagogue but during the nineteenth century, some Reform synagogues placed it directly in front of the Ark. The Ark, *Aron Hakodesh*, was originally the wooden box in which the two stone tablets were kept in the Tabernacle (Exodus 25:10–16). It disappeared during the destruction of the First Temple. During the Middle Ages, a cupboard fixed against the east wall of each synagogue was referred to as an Ark and one or more copies of the *Torah* kept there. The Ark thus became the focal point in the synagogue.

FIGURE 9.22
The white synagogue in Capernaum

Conclusion

Judaism is a living faith of a people who believe in one G-d and recorded the early history of their relationship with G-d in the TaNaK. Their ritual actions acknowledge and remember G-d's intervention in their history. While Judaism is difficult to define, some have said that Judaism is a religion that grows out of what Jewish people do as a result of their beliefs and practices.

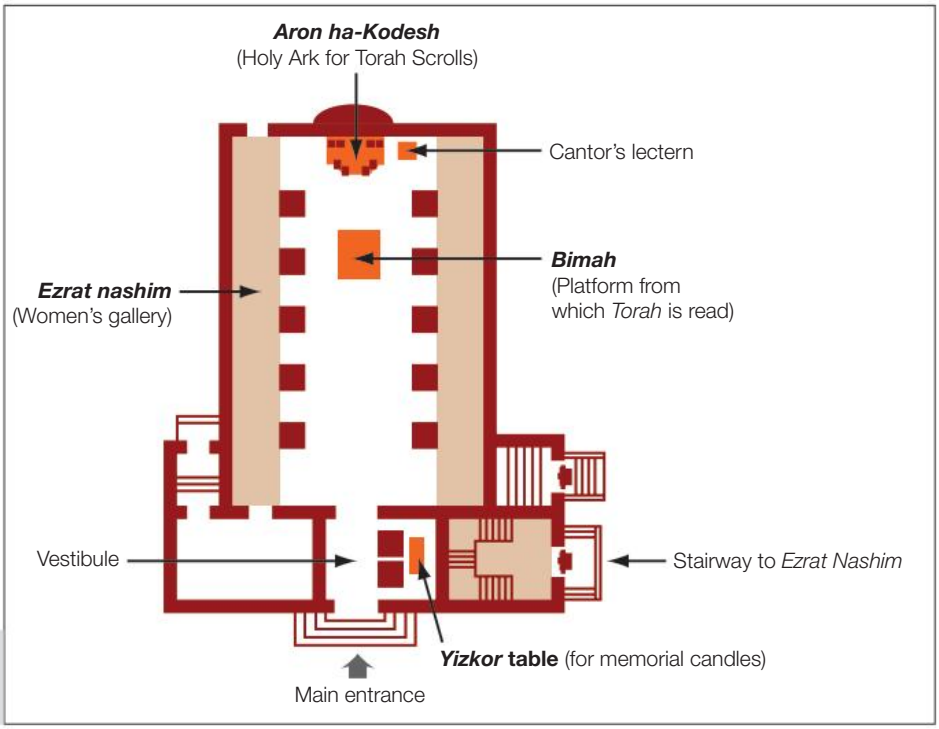

FIGURE 9.23
Floor plan of a synagogue

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End of chapter activities

Activity 9.14

Framing

Round Robin placemats

Divide class into groups of five or six. Each group has an A3 sheet with one of the following topics printed in the centre of each page. Each group devises one question related to the topic and records it on the sheet before passing it to the next group. Repeat the process until each group has devised a question for each page.

1 History: when did Judaism start?
2 Sacred texts: what are the names of the books in the *Torah*?
3 Groups: why do some male Jews wear tassels hanging below their shirt?
4 Ritual celebrations: what do Jews do to celebrate *Hanukkah*?
5 Judaism today: is Judaism maintaining levels of adherence?
6 Religion, values and ethics: what shapes Jewish values and ethics?
7 Ultimate questions: what do Jews believe about the afterlife?
8 Religion–state relationships: what is the place and function of religious law in the State of Israel?
9 Australian religious perspective: how many Jewish survivors of the *Shoah* are there in Australia?

Activity 9.15

Investigating

1 Locate the following countries on the map of the world on Worksheet 9.15.
   a Australia
   b Israel
   c US
   d Poland
   e Spain
   f United Kingdom.
2 Use the table on Worksheet 9.15 to record the percentage of Jews as a part of each country's population for the years shown.
3 Using Microsoft Excel or a similar program, translate the above information into pie or column graphs showing the changes in population across time.
4 Choose a country and, using the information gathered, develop a possible hypothesis regarding the changing levels of population.

Activity 9.16

Reasoning

1 Construct a diagram or diorama showing the inter-relationships among the Book of Exodus, memory, *Pesach* and living Judaism.
2 What ultimate questions of origins, identity, meaning, purpose and destiny are addressed by and expressed in the Jewish festivals of *Shabbat*, *Yom Kippur*, *Rosh Hashanah*, *Pesach*, *Sukkot* and *Yom HaShoah*?

Activity 9.17

Investigating, reasoning and judging

Examine a range of sources to construct a feature article exploring the relationship between Judaism and Christianity. Some possible avenues of investigation could be:

1 Anti-Semitism through the arts (e.g. Shakespeare, Da Vinci, Chagall, folk tales, film).
2 Construction of Judaism in Christian texts (e.g. Gospels, writings of early Church Fathers, writings of Luther, *Nostra Aetate*, World Council of Churches).
3 Historical events (e.g. Pogroms, Zionism, Formation of Jewish Ghettos in European cities).
4 Celebration of Righteous Gentiles.

Activity 9.18

Reflecting

1 What have I learned about and from Judaism?
2 How has this study helped my understanding of religion?
3 Where do I stand in relation to religious diversity?

CHAPTER REVIEW

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BUDDHISM: THE FACTS

Number of adherents
- Approximately 376 million (worldwide)
- 418 800 (Australia)

Sacred text
- The Pali Canon

Place of worship
- Temple

Symbol
- *Dharma* wheel

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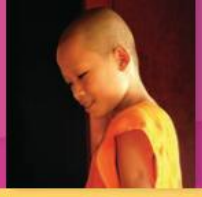

CHAPTER TEN

BUDDHISM

'Love and compassion are necessities, not luxuries.
Without them humanity cannot survive.'

Dalai Lama

CHAPTER OBJECTIVES

This chapter discusses:

- The history of Buddhism
- Buddhist councils
- Buddhist teachings
- Buddhist beliefs
- The Buddhist calendar
- Buddhist festivals and celebrations
- Buddhist temples and shrines
- Meditation
- Pilgrimage

KEY *terms*

Tipitaka	*anatta*	Eightfold Path	Mahayana Buddhism
Pali	*khandhas*	Ten Precepts	*bodhisattva*
Sanskrit	*dukkha*	*karma*	*mantra*
anicca	Four Noble Truths	Theravada Buddhism	*Sangha*

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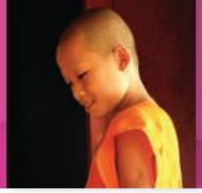

Introduction

Buddhists follow the teachings of Siddhartha Gautama, a man born in northern India in approximately 6 BCE. They believe that, after a time of searching, he reached enlightenment and became the Buddha. In some lineages of Buddhism, people believe that everyone has the same potential to attain enlightenment. Although Buddhism has adapted to different cultures and accrued slightly different practices, the essential beliefs of Buddhism remain similar across traditions.

Activity 10.1

Framing

1 What do you know about Buddhism?
2 What words and images do you associate with Buddhism?
3 Where did Buddhism originate? Where is it now in the world?
4 Are there Buddhists in Australia? Which lineage? Are there Buddhists in your local neighbourhood?
5 On a map of the world, indicate where there are significant Buddhist populations.
6 How is Buddhism presented in the media?
7 Complete the KWHL chart related to Buddhism on Worksheet 10.1

Activity 10.2

Investigating

Annotate the timeline on Worksheet 10.2 by supplying facts related to key dates and events that you have discovered to increase your understanding.

The history of Buddhism

The life-stories of Siddhartha Gautama are debated by scholars, but most Buddhists generally believe that he was the son of a Hindu prince of the Shakya tribe, in what is today known as Nepal.

Legend says that his mother dreamt that a white elephant, with six tusks and a ruby-coloured head, entered her womb through her right side. Eight *Brahmins* told the king that this dream was a good omen and that the child would be holy. When he was born, Siddhartha emerged from her side, took seven steps and at each step a lotus flower bloomed. He then declared that he would have no more births and that this was his last body. A week later, his mother died and he was raised by an aunt, who married his father.

At his naming ceremony, Vedic priests predicted that he would either inherit his father's role, or if he was exposed to suffering, become a spiritual leader. Siddhartha was born into the *Kshatriya* warrior caste and was allowed to read the scriptures but not teach them. Many stories of his youth describe him as a talented young man who enjoyed luxurious lifestyle. At an early age, he married a woman chosen by his father and they had a son, Rahula. Anxious that Siddhartha would become the next king, his father kept him within the palace surrounds.

One day, Siddhartha disobeyed his father and left the grounds to go to a town close by. In the town he saw old age, suffering and disease, and a corpse. He then came across a *sannyasin* (holy man) who appeared to be at peace even though he had no possessions. At

FIGURE 10.1
The Buddha

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Timeline

BCE	
563–483	Life of Siddhartha Gautama
c. 525	Siddhartha gains enlightenment and becomes the Buddha
c. 480	Death of Siddhartha; first Buddhist Council at Rajagaha
c. 272–232	King Ashoka, Indian king, spreads Buddhist values

CE	
1–100	*Lotus Sutra* and **Mahayana** texts composed
50	***Tipitaka*** completed in Sri Lanka
50–100	Buddhism enters China
300	Buddhism spreads in South-East Asia
400	Buddhism enters Korea Pure Land Buddhism emerges in China Sacred tooth relic of Siddhartha brought to Sri Lanka
552	Buddhism enters Japan
618–917	Golden Age of Buddhism in China under the Tang Dynasty
630	Buddhism enters Tibet
800	Construction of Borobudur Temple in Java, Indonesia
c. 820	Tendai and Shingon Buddhism in Japan
845	Third persecution of Buddhism in China
1000	Revival of **Theravada** Buddhism in South-East Asia and Sri Lanka
1100	Buddhism almost extinct in India Zen Buddhism appears in Japan
1357–1419	Life of Tsong Kha-pa, Tibetan Buddhist reformer
1587	Sonam Gyatso given title Dalai Lama
1800–1900	Buddhist writings translated
1950s	Communist government in China Invasion of Tibet by Chinese
1952	World fellowship of Buddhists founded
1958	Buddhist nationalist policies ignite civil war in Sri Lanka
1959	Dalai Lama flees Tibet after failed uprising
1965–1980	Buddhist monks protest against Burmese government
1966–1967	Buddhism suppressed in China and Tibet
1989	Dalai Lama wins the Nobel Peace Prize
1991	Aung San Suu Kyi of Burma wins Nobel Peace Prize

Mahayana Buddhism one of the two main schools of Buddhism and a term for classification of Buddhist philosophies and practice; literally 'Great Vehicle'

Tipitaka the sacred writings that contain the teaching of the Buddha; also known as the Pali Canon; literally 'three baskets'

Theravada Buddhism the oldest surviving Buddhist school; literally, 'the Teaching of the Elders'

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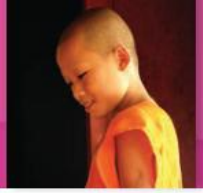

age 29, he left palace life, his wife and family to ponder the meaning of life: this event is called the Great Going Forth. He went to two Hindu holy men, learnt meditation but was dissatisfied with their teachings. After approximately six years of following this way of life, he undertook severe physical work and nearly starved himself to death in the hope of gaining spiritual powers.

Eventually, he rested under a sacred tree. Some versions of the legend say he had been there for a night, while others say a week and some even say 49 days. A kind woman offered him food and he realised that his austere way of life had not given him the answers he sought. Various traditions tell different versions but they all tell of his struggle with weakness, hunger and doubt. Some speak of Mara, an evil spirit, whose daughters tempted Siddhartha but he did not succumb. After meditating under the tree in the full moon, he entered a state of consciousness where he reached *bodhi* (a state of awakening or enlightenment). From that time on he was known as the Buddha, the Awakened One.

Under the guidance of **Brahma**, he travelled to the Deer Park near Benares where his five former companions were. There he preached his first sermon on the **Four Noble Truths** and the **Eightfold Path**. The five companions abandoned their ascetic habits, reconciled with him and became his first disciples. He spent the next forty years preaching his message of the 'middle way' – neither severe austerity nor of absolute luxury – throughout northeast India, where many people from the warrior-noble caste gave land to this new movement. The Buddha began the first ***Sangha*** for monks because he believed that his disciples should be willing to give up family, social life and all dependence on wealth. Men were admitted to the *Sangha* by reciting the following formula, known as the *Tisarana* (**Pali**) that is still used today.

Buddham saranam gacchami	(I take refuge in the Buddha)
Dhammam saranam gacchami	(I take refuge in the *Dharma*)
Snagham saranam gacchami	(I take refuge in the *Sangha*)

Brahma
the Hindu god of creation

Four Noble Truths
fundamental Buddhist teachings relating to the nature, origin and cessation of suffering, and the path leading to the cessation of suffering

Eightfold Path
is one of the principal teachings of the Buddha, who described it as the way leading to the end of suffering and the achievement of self-awakening

Sangha
a Pali word meaning 'assembly' and more generally understood as a group of people who follow the Buddha and his teachings. It also refers to a community of Buddhist monks

Pali
a historical middle Indo-Aryan language used in the sacred texts of Buddhism

Ten Precepts
fundamental Buddhist values related to ethical and moral teaching

stupas
bell-shaped constructions that store relics of the dead

FIGURE 10.2
Wheel of Dharma in Mandalay

Later, after much consideration, when asked by his cousin Ananda, the Buddha allowed women to join the *Sangha*. The women, or nuns known as *bhikkunis*, follow the **Ten Precepts** the Buddha gave to the monks.

When the Buddha was about eighty years of age, he became ill after a meal. Knowing that his life was near its end, he gathered his followers and reminded them that everything must die. Legend records his last teaching as:

> 'Be lamps unto yourselves. Rely on yourselves and do not rely on external help. Decay is inherent in all compounded things: work out your salvation with diligence.'

He died and his body was cremated according to Indian custom but his bones remained unburned and eventually the bones were distributed among various rulers of the tribes who built ***stupas*** over them.

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Activity 10.3

Investigating and reasoning

1 Locate three different versions of the early life of Siddhartha. What to do they have in common? What is different? What appears to be the central message of the story?
2 View a short segment from a DVD on the life of the Buddha. In visual form, summarise the main events of the life of the Buddha in no more than six storyboard frames.

Buddhist councils

Not long after the Buddha's death, followers began to dispute the exact nature of the Buddha's teachings. One common source of disagreement was the application and interpretation of monastic rules. Some members favoured a strict reading, while others were more relaxed in their interpretation. According to tradition, in the first wet season after the death of the Buddha, the First Council was held in Rajagriha to collect and categorise the Buddha's teachings.

Approximately five hundred monks gathered to recite the teachings of the Buddha and two *Pitakas* (collections or baskets) were recorded:

1 the *Sutra Pitaka* (discourses)
2 the *Vinaya Pitaka* (monastic discipline teachings).

The third *Pitaka*, *Abhidharma Pitaka* (philosophical teachings) was recorded later.

One hundred years after the First Council, another dispute emerged related to monastic discipline. A Second Council was convened but it did not resolve the tension and the *Sangha* split into two groups: the Sthaviravada, or Doctrine of the Elders, and the Mahasanghika, or Great Community. Over time, others split off from the Sthaviravada and the Mahayana or Great Vehicle movement was formed.

When the Third Council was called in around 250 BCE by the Emperor Ashoka, the *Abhidharma Pitaka* reached its final form. Emperor Ashoka committed himself to Buddhism after recognising the harm he had caused to people when he suppressed an uprising in the Kalingas. After he accepted the *Dharma* his reign was characterised by tolerance, non-violence and respect and he began to call himself Priyadashin, the Humane One.

While he allowed his subjects to practice any religion they chose, Buddhism became the religion of the empire. He is said to have opened 10 of the original *stupas*, which, according to legend, hold the cremated remains of the Buddha. He also inscribed stones and pillars with edicts such as 'King Priyadashin wishes members of all faiths to live everywhere in his kingdom' and 'Everywhere provision has been made for two kinds of medical treatment, treatment for men and for animals'. At the end of the Third Council, the Pali Canon was established, even though it was not written down until about one hundred BCE.

Buddhist teachings

None of the teachings of the Buddha were written down when the Buddha was alive and the texts we have today were recorded hundreds of years later. Even at the time of the Buddha, there were multiple interpretations of the stories as well as translations in different languages. Two of the most common languages used are Pali and **Sanskrit**. Core to the teachings of the Buddha are *The Three Jewels*:

1 The Buddha – considered as the ideal that every Buddhist should follow and as existing in a dimension beyond this world.
2 The *Dharma* – the totality of Buddhist teachings about the world and how to live in it.
3 The *Sangha* – the community of monks and nuns.

Three inter-related concepts are central to Buddhism: *impermanence, no self* and the *five aggregates.* Impermanence is called ***anicca*** in the Pali language, and *anitya* in Sanskrit. It is the doctrine that all things will pass away and that decay is inherent in all things.

The 'no self' doctrine, expressed as ***anatta*** in Pali and *anatman* in Sanskrit, is the doctrine that there is no 'being' only 'becoming'. Human beings are transient: there are no souls, no ego and after death, people are reincarnated into another body. There is no God, no

Sanskrit
historical Indo-Aryan language and one of the scared texts of Buddhism

anicca
a central concept of Buddhism; translated as 'impermanence'

anatta
a central concept of Buddhism; translated as 'the absence of self or soul'

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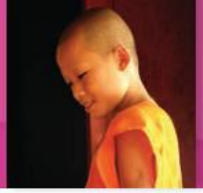

Brahman and no *Atman*. These two doctrines explain why all desire causes suffering.

khandhas five aggregates (or groups) that categorise all individual experience

Khandhas in Pali, and *skandhas* in Sanskrit, means 'the five aggregates'. It explains that a human being consists of five aggregates – matter, sensations, perception, mental formations and consciousness.

The five aggregates

1 Matter: What we call matter is not a substance but a bundle of energies.
2 Sensations: Every sensation is a type of craving. The mind is just another organ of sensation and there is no distinction between spirit and matter.
3 Perception: Every perception is craving.
4 Mental formations: This is paying attention, having confidence, which is also a form of craving.
5 Consciousness: Every instance of consciousness is a type of craving.

The five *khandhas* never remain the same, they are constantly changing. They come together when a person is born and fall apart when they die. Buddhists accept the Hindu concept of rebirth but understand it differently in Buddhism. They believe that when life ends, a person's desires and attachments ignite a new round of desires and attachments in a new body. This differs from the Hindu concept of the soul being reborn in another body.

Activity 10.4

Investigating and reasoning

Represent impermanence, no self and the five aggregates in visual form.

dukkha a central concept of Buddhism; the basic element of the human condition, translated as 'suffering', 'desire' or 'anguish'

Buddhist beliefs

Three Marks of Existence

The Three Marks of Existence or Three Eternal Truths of Buddhism are *anicca*, *anatta* and ***dukkha***.

1 *Anicca* – impermanence, nothing is fixed, everything is changing.
2 *Anatta* (no permanent identity or no self) – all existence is interdependent so when conditions change, people also change.
3 *Dukkha* (suffering) – all life is suffering, because the world is unable to satisfy people's desires.

The Four Noble Truths

Legend holds that the Buddha announced the Four Noble Truths to his five disciples in his first sermon. While each truth can be named in a single word the concepts need elaboration.

Dukkha: all life involves suffering

This refers to several ideas: the first is that human life is permeated by suffering, which includes pain, sickness, old age or even death. *Dukkha* does not mean that people never experience pleasure, nor that they are in constant pain, but that people need to realise that all life experiences are transient. Therefore we never really enjoy anything fully because we know that it will not last.

Tanha: the origin of suffering is craving

Craving, or desiring power, wealth and self-image, is one of the drivers of suffering. It is grasping for things that we do not possess that creates an inner emptiness, which the Buddha says leads to suffering.

Niroda: the cessation or end of suffering

The Buddha taught that the only way to end suffering was for desire to be extinguished and for a person to gain inner satisfaction. If people are able to end their suffering (*dukkha*) then nirvana (*Nibbana*) or peace is achieved. People who have achieved nirvana may still continue living, as the Buddha did, but their actions are motivated by selflessness. Nirvana is not the same as extinction and does not mean that people feel nothing, rather, it is a state of happiness where people still experience pain and pleasure, but do not respond to them as in an unenlightened way.

Magga: the middle path or way

This is called the Eightfold Path and is set out as eight steps, or features, of Buddhist life. These are not

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eight separate steps but simultaneous dimensions to be cultivated.

Activity 10.5

Reasoning

1 List 20 life experiences that could be used to provide evidence of *Dukkha*.
2 How could it be argued that craving gives rise to *Dukkha* in each case?
3 Devise a system with which to categorise the experiences you have listed.

The Eightfold Path

FIGURE 10.3
Dharma wheel

The first two dimensions of the Eightfold Path are classified as *Prajna* (wisdom).

1 *Darshana*, or Right Understanding, involves developing a philosophical understanding of life and comprehending the first three Noble Truths.
2 Right Thought involves developing thought or intention to follow the Buddhist path to liberation with diligence. Because thoughts lead to actions, people need to change how they think to change how they behave.

The third, fourth and fifth dimensions concern *Sila* (ethical conduct).

3 Right Speech involves Buddhists abstaining from using speech that adds to suffering in the world. They should avoid:
   – telling lies
   – spreading gossip
   – speaking harshly
   – time-wasting chatter.
4 Right Conduct or Action involves taking action that does not cause harm and tries to lead a person to liberation. Buddhists should refrain from:
   – harming or killing
   – stealing
   – using intoxicants
   – sexual misconduct.
5 Right Livelihood for Buddhists means their work should benefit others rather than harm them: for example, arms dealing and selling intoxicating drinks should be avoided.

   The final three dimensions are concerned with meditation or mental discipline (*Samadhi, Samatha*).
6 Right Effort involves the effort to prevent negative thoughts, or cravings, to create a healthy state of mind.
7 Right Mindfulness is the deepening of mindfulness, which leads to a focused state of consciousness, such as being aware of emotions, motives and actions. It begins by paying close attention to breathing, with the aim of focusing the mind on what one is doing.
8 Right Concentration is the practice of deep concentration and meditation, which enables a person to develop loving kindness and gain insight into the truths of life. The ultimate goal of this practice is nirvana.

Activity 10.6

Reasoning

With reference to the Three Marks of Existence and Four Noble Truths, provide justification as to why each part of the Eightfold Path is useful in Buddhists' pursuit of liberation.

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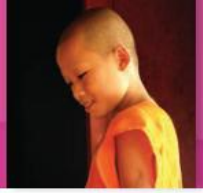

Right conduct is guided by the Ten Precepts, which are given to the disciples as a guide for everyday living:

1 Do not destroy life.
2 Do not steal.
3 Do not commit adultery.
4 Do not tell lies.
5 Do not take intoxicants.
6 Do not eat after midday.
7 Do not dance, sing, or act on a stage.
8 Do not use perfumes.
9 Do not use a high or broad bed.
10 Do not receive gold or silver (do not handle money).

Members of the *Sangha* are expected to follow all ten precepts, while lay Buddhists need only follow the first five precepts.

The Wheel of Life

The Wheel of Life, found particularly in Tibetan Buddhism, illustrates *samsara* – the cycle of birth, death and rebirth. Buddhists examine the wheel to see what parts of it are reflected in their own lives, as each feature on the wheel represents a part of life and each component is connected to the next. In the centre of the wheel are three animals, called the three mental poisons: a snake, a pig and a rooster, which represent greed and ignorance. Each animal is depicted as biting the other's tail, suggesting that they feed on each other. Around the inner hub is a circle, divided in half. Inside the first half are people in various states of unhappiness, falling downwards. The other half depicts happy people, facing upwards. The images in this divided circle are symbolic of the changes that can occur in life.

The next circle is divided into six segments representing six realms:

1 the realm of the gods, or superior beings, where everything is provided
2 the realm of *asuras*, angry beings
3 the realm of *pretas,* hungry ghosts, beings who want more but are never satisfied
4 the realm of hell, symbolic of human suffering
5 the realm of animals, concerned with food and comfort
6 the realm of humankind.

According to tradition, people do not remain permanently in any of these realms, but move from one to the other. The realms are not seen as separate entities but as different states of mind. The outermost circle consists of twelve scenes depicting twelve *nidanas* (links). These illustrate the way in which one thing happens because of another: the wheel of *samsara* keeps moving. The twelve images include:

karma the effects of one's actions in life, good or bad; the natural consequences of actions

TABLE 10.1
Images from the Wheel of Life

Image	Explanation
Blind man	Ignorance
Potter working	Because of ignorance people make choices and create ***karma***
Monkey climbing a tree	Start of consciousness of a new life
Four passengers in a boat	The new body with perceptions and acts of will
Empty house with five windows and door	Five senses and the mind
Couple embracing	People form relationships with others and objects
Man with an arrow in his eye	Contact with objects can lead to good, bad or neutral feelings
Woman offering a drink to a man	Feelings lead to cravings
Man gathering fruit	People become attached to things and crave them
Pregnant woman	Attachment leads to more life, *bhava* or 'becoming'
Childbirth	'Becoming' leads to new life
Corpse	Everything eventually dies and the cycle is completed

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Around the outside of the whole wheel is a monster, representing death. The Wheel of Life includes the idea of escape, which can occur between the seventh and eighth links of the outer wheel: the point between pleasure, pain and craving. If a person stops craving, then the outer circle ceases revolving and people can escape the consequences. The Wheel of Life is not a literal view of life but more like a mind map, which guides Buddhists through their choices and consequences.

Activity 10.7

Reasoning

Write a paragraph explaining which images in the Wheel of Life a Buddhist might draw on to account for population growth and how this phenomenon might be explained by a Buddhist.

Activity 10.8

Judging

In your opinion, how effective is the Wheel of Life's visual representation of the philosophical ideas it exemplifies? Explain why you think this way.

FIGURE 10.4
The Wheel of Life

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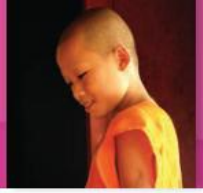

Karma

Karma is the consequences of our actions. It is not generated by every action, only by ethical actions that reflect personal attitudes. *Karma* is not a punishment or a reward, rather, it reflects the extent to which a Buddhist overcomes or fails to overcome ignorance and greed. It is described in this extract from the *Dhammapada*:

> What we are today comes from our thoughts of yesterday and our present thoughts build our life of tomorrow: our life is the creation of our mind … If a person speaks or acts with an impure mind, suffering follows them as the wheel of the cart follows the beast that draws the cart … if a person speaks and acts with a pure mind, joy follows them as their own shadow.
>
> *Dhammapada* 1, 2

Rebirth

For Buddhists, life is a series of births and rebirths, in different forms and into different realms. What a person 'becomes' is the result of their actions and deeds.

Activity 10.9

Investigating and reasoning

Draw a diagram that shows the inter-relationship between the Three Marks of Existence, the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path.

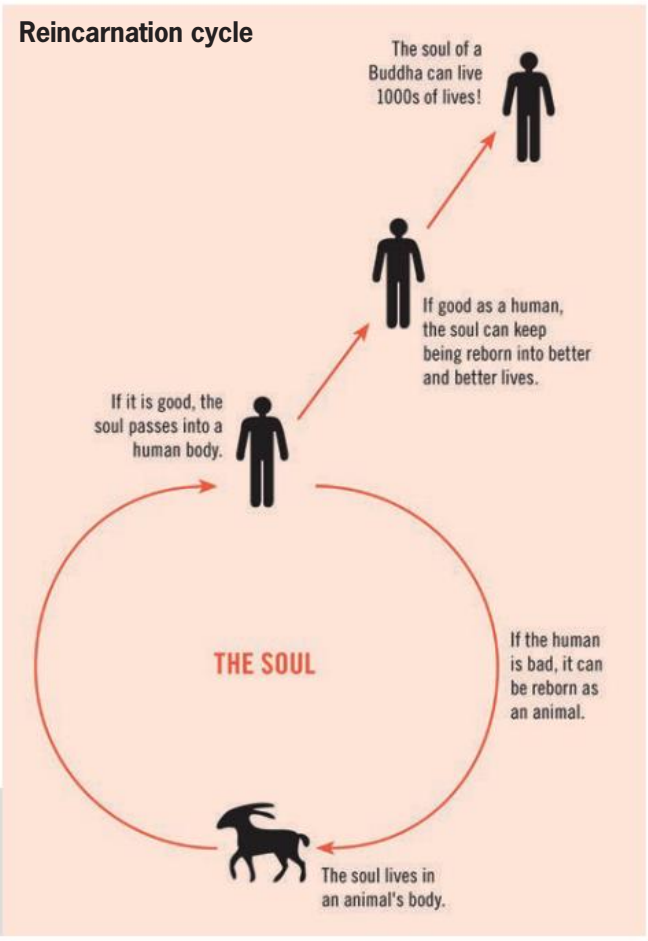

FIGURE 10.5
Reincarnation: Buddhists believe that the soul is reborn after death

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Theravada Buddhism

Theravada Buddhism is practiced in Sri Lanka, Burma, Cambodia, Laos and Thailand. It reflects the culture and traditions of its host country and is practiced differently in each location. Its name comes from *vada* (the way) and *thera* (elders) and in this conservative lineage Buddhists believe that they pass on the Buddha's teachings unchanged.

Monks are at the heart of Theravada Buddhism and there is a significant difference between monks and lay people. In fact, Theravada Buddhism does not believe that lay people can attain nirvana and so the life of a monk, focused on detachment and meditation, is the sure path. Lay people should provide for the needs of monks, particularly by providing food. By providing for the monks, people receive good *karma*. The monasteries often run meditation centres and, in some cases, schools or aged care centres.

The teaching of Theravada Buddhism is contained in the Pali Canon. The *Tipitaka* (Pali) or *Pripitaka* (Sanskrit) is a collection of three sacred texts sometimes referred to as the Three Baskets.

Activity 10.10

Investigating

Using the map of Asia on Worksheet 10.10, indicate which countries predominantly practise Theravada Buddhism.

Mahayana Buddhism

Mahayana means 'great vehicle'. The term 'great or large vehicle' is not used in a way that degrades Theravada Buddhism. Instead, the term describes the more comprehensive outlook taken by Mahayana Buddhists. Mahayana Buddhists believe that all people, regardless of their gender and social status, have the capacity to become enlightened and that enlightenment is a call to compassion. While Mahayana

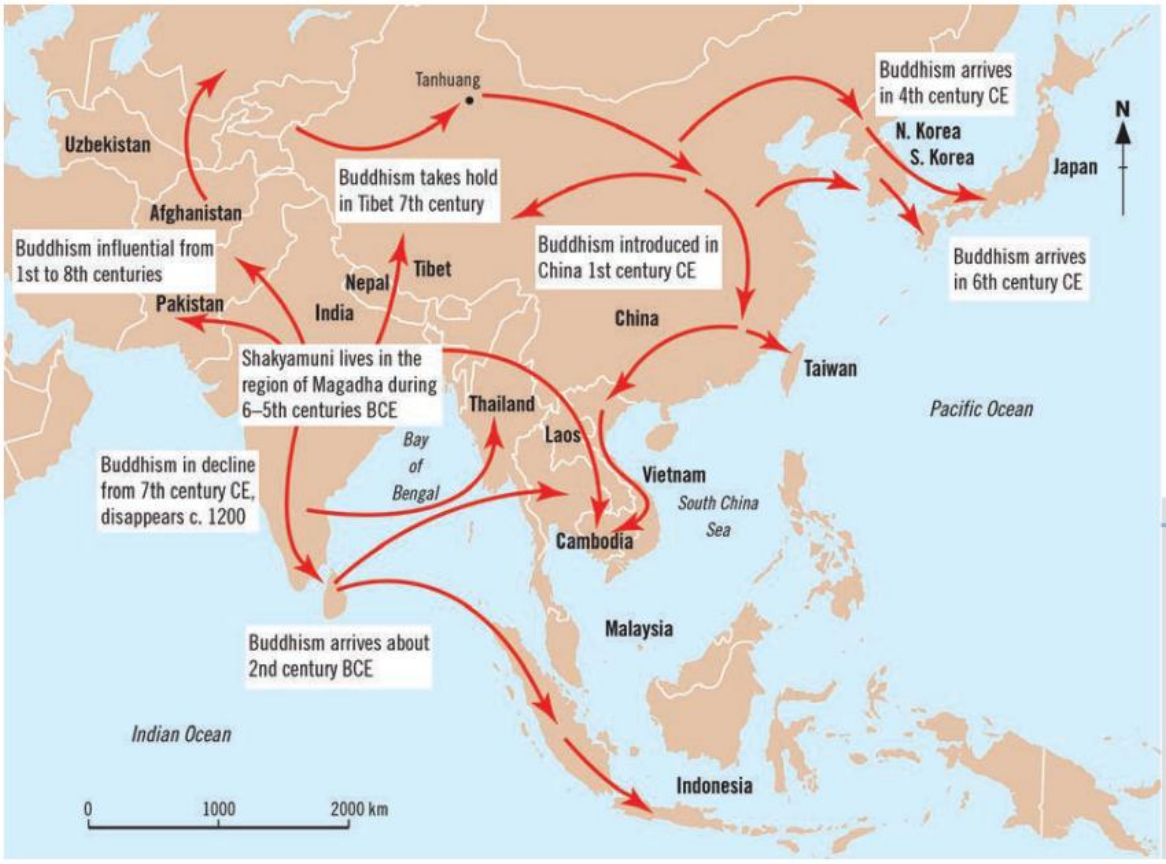

FIGURE 10.6
The heart of Buddhism's lies in South-East Asia (Theravada), East Asia (Mahayana) and the mountain regions around Tibet (Vajrayana). More recently, Buddhism has been reintroduced back into its homeland of India.

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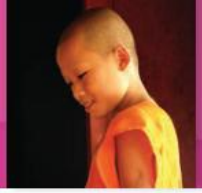

Buddhists agree that the Buddha was an enlightened man, they are not overly concerned about the history and life of the Buddha – what is important to them is the Buddha's enlightenment.

The pairing of wisdom and compassion (*karuna*) is important in Mahayana Buddhism because to care for someone else is to care for oneself. The idea of *karuna* plays such a central role in Mahayana Buddhism that a person of deep compassion, ***bodhisattva***, is said to delay entering nirvana in order to help others. There are four stages on the *bodhisattva* path: intention, vow, the course of the *bodhisattva* and Buddhahood.

bodhisattva
enlightened being

1 Intention – the *bodhisattva* must be sincere in their search for enlightenment because sincerity provides the determination to reach enlightenment.
2 Vow – this stage is known in Sanskrit as *pranidhana* (vow or fixation) and the *bodhisattva* makes two vows: to become a Buddha and to lead others to enlightenment.
3 Course of the *bodhisattva* – this is when the *bodhisattva* sets out on the path of the six perfections:
   i *Dana* (charity) – giving without expecting anything in return
   ii *Sila* (morality) – perfecting goodness through thoughts, words, actions and respect for life
   iii *Kshanti* (patience) – perfecting composure to accept things as they are
   iv *Virya* (vigour) – perfecting energy for the benefit of all beings
   v *Dhyana* (meditation) – perfecting concentration and perception to see all things clearly
   vi *Prajna* (wisdom) – perfecting wise understanding and insight into the nature of all *dharmas* and realising that everything is empty.
4 Buddhahood – this final stage is when the *bodhisattva* becomes enlightened. It is when they realise that actions taken in the service of others are the actions of the Buddha.

The nirvana attained by the *bodhisattva* is understood differently from nirvana in Theravada Buddhism. In Theravada Buddhism, nirvana is the absence of self-centeredness and therefore the absence of suffering. While Mahayana holds this interpretation, it adds the state of spiritual perfection of total compassion and concern for others. In Mahayana Buddhism, nirvana has a more altruistic character than in Theravada Buddhism because there is no gap between nirvana and *samsara*: *nirvana* is *samsara* and *samsara* is *nirvana*.

FIGURE 10.7
Avalokiteshvara, in her many-armed form

Heavenly *bodhisattvas*

As well as earthly *bodhisattvas*, Mahayana Buddhism believes that there are many other *bodhisattvas* in other realms. These *bodhisattvas* once lived on Earth and are now reborn beyond this world. They nevertheless retain an interest in this world and can appear on Earth when needed or to help others to be reborn. One of the most popular is Avalokiteshvara, whose name means 'looking down with compassion'. In India, Avalokiteshvara is portrayed as male, but in China she is considered female because of her association with mercy and compassion. In Japan, she is known as Kannon (the Canon photographic company is named after her). There are many stories about Avalokiteshvara and the *Lotus Sutra* says that she has 33 different forms that come to save people. In Chinese art, she is sometimes represented as a bull warning butchers away from killing. The Dalai Lama is considered an incarnation of Avalokiteshvara (known in Tibet as Chenrezig).

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Another *bodhisattva* is Maitreya, the Kindly One, who is also mentioned in Theravada writings. In China, Maitreya is known as Mi-lo-fo and is represented by a large pot-bellied man with a sack of presents for children. In the West he is known as the 'Laughing Buddha'.

The Sukhavati-vyjha *Sutra* tells the story of a king who heard a sermon of the Buddha and was so impressed that he left his home and decided to become a Buddha. He heard that Buddhas presided over pure lands and so he decided that when he became a Buddha his Pure Land would have outstanding qualities. The eighteenth of his forty-six *bodhisattva* vows says:

> 'If, after my attaining Buddhahood, all beings should not sincerely desire to be born into my Pure Land and if they should not be born by reciting my name ten times may I not attain the highest Enlightenment'.

The king obtained enlightenment and as a Buddha is known as *Amitabha* ('Infinite Light').

In order to be reborn into the Pure Land, people must fulfill certain conditions: they must really desire it, they must gain merit and dedicate it towards rebirth and they must recite the Buddha's name in the Sanskrit form 'Namo Amitabhaya Buddhaya'. By reciting the ***mantra***, Buddhists believe that they can draw out their own Buddha nature and achieve happiness. The Pure Land school has had significant influence in Japan since World War II.

Mahayana Buddhism seeks enlightenment through meditation so that adherents can achieve the realisation that true nature is no less than Buddha nature. For monks and nuns, meditation can take up to eight hours a day. While they maintain their central focus, the Eightfold Path and the Ten Precepts are less important in Mahayana Buddhism than in Theravada Buddhism.

Major schools of Mahayana Buddhism

The schools within Mahayana Buddhism display great variety, particularly towards the use of art, ritual and worldly success. These differences are made obvious in the major groups that exist in Japan. The Shingon ('true word') school uses sacred chants or mantras accompanied by ritual objects in the hope of experiencing union with the cosmic Buddha nature.

FIGURE 10.8
The Laughing Buddha

Shingon was brought to Japan from China in the late 700s CE. One Shingon ritual is the *Goma,* or fire ritual, in which the priest builds a fire within a sacred square enclosed by coloured cords. Leaves and wood are thrown onto the fire as a symbol of destroying all traces of ego that might hinder the mystical union. Shingon also uses two mandalas. One, the *Kongo-dai* (diamond world) shows the Universe from the point of view of wisdom and the other *Tai-so* (womb) shows the Universe from the view of compassion.

mantra
a devotional prayer or incantation used for meditation and worship

Tendai, named after Mount Tiantai in China, was brought to Japan by a Japanese monk, Saicho (767–822) and focuses on rituals similar to those in Shingon. Tendai was favoured by the emperor and his court because it was considered to bring protection to the country.

Nichiren was founded in Japan by Nichiren (1222–1282) who wanted to simplify the many sutras and practices used in Tendai. Nichiren decided that the Lotus Sutra held all the essentials of the teachings. This group repeats the mantra Numu Myoho Renge Kyo ('Praise to the mystic law of the Lotus Sutra') many times a day, in the hope that they will connect with the power of the Universe. Nichiren is materially oriented. A secular organisation of Nichiren Shoshu, Soka Gakki, works to reform society through political

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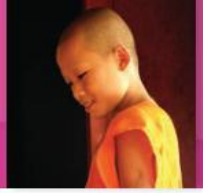

means. Some of its members have even been elected to the Japanese parliament. Nichiren only became well-known after World War II when American soldiers married Nichiren Buddhists who brought the beliefs and practices to America.

Activity 10.11

Investigating

Using the map of Asia on Worksheet 10.11, indicate which countries predominantly practise Mahayana Buddhism.

Activity 10.12

Investigating and reasoning

Create a list comparing the similarities and differences between Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism. Use evidence to support your statements.

Zen Buddhism

Zen Buddhism takes its name from the seventh step of the Eightfold Path, *dhyana* (meditation), and says that it is useless to rely on vows, rituals or scripture to reveal enlightenment because even our brains can misinterpret information. The solution, according to Zen, is to abandon traditional ways of thinking to get to enlightenment. The actions used by Zen Buddhists to free the mind of traditional thinking patterns are *mondo* and *koan*. *Mondo* is a form of rapid question and answer to speed up the thought process. A *koan* is a question that defies conventional logic – like a riddle or joke, it requires pondering.

Activity 10.13

Investigating and reasoning

Examine the following *koans*. What insights can be gained from them?

1 A famous soldier came to the master Hakuin and asked: 'Master, tell me: is there really a heaven and a hell?'

'Who are you?' asked Hakuin.

'I am a soldier of the great Emperor's personal guard.'

'Nonsense!' said Hakuin. 'What kind of emperor would have you around him? To me you look like a beggar!' At this, the soldier started to rattle his big sword in anger. 'Oho!' said Hakuin. 'So you have a sword! I'll wager it's much too dull to cut my head off!'

At this the soldier could not hold himself back. He drew his sword and threatened the master, who said: 'Now you know half the answer! You are opening the gates of hell!'

The soldier drew back, sheathed his sword and bowed. 'Now you know the other half,' said the master. 'You have opened the gates of heaven.'

2 A great official came to the master Takuan asking for help in passing his days more eventfully. All day long, he explained, he sat receiving supplications and reports and he found it all very dull. Takuan took brush and paper and wrote eight Chinese characters. Translated, they said: 'No day comes back again: one inch of time is worth a foot of jade'.

Tibetan Buddhism

For thousands of years, Vajrayana Buddhism has been practiced in Tibet. It involves the emotions as well as the mind and includes chanting, hand movements, highly decorated robes and images.

In pre-Buddhist Tibet, people worshipped the powers of nature, which involved animal sacrifice, bones, dances and incantations to control demonic powers. As Tantric Buddhism spread from northeast India, it opposed the original idea of detachment from the world and taught that the body could be used to reach enlightenment. Tantric Buddhism first entered Tibet in the seventh century, when it was already over one thousand years old, and it blended with traditional shamanistic practices. According to tradition, the king became its patron and made it the national religion.

In the fourteenth century, a monk called Tsong Kha-pa reformed the Tibetan Buddhist practices and demanded that monks remain celibate. He reintroduced strict monastic practice and his reform movement became known as Gelug-pa ('party of

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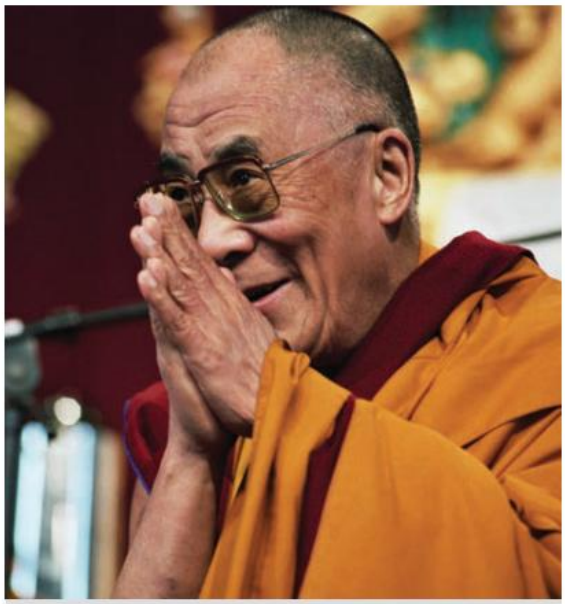

FIGURE 10.9
The fourteenth Dalai Lama, Tenzin Gyatso

FIGURE 10.10
Thousand-armed Avalokiteshvara

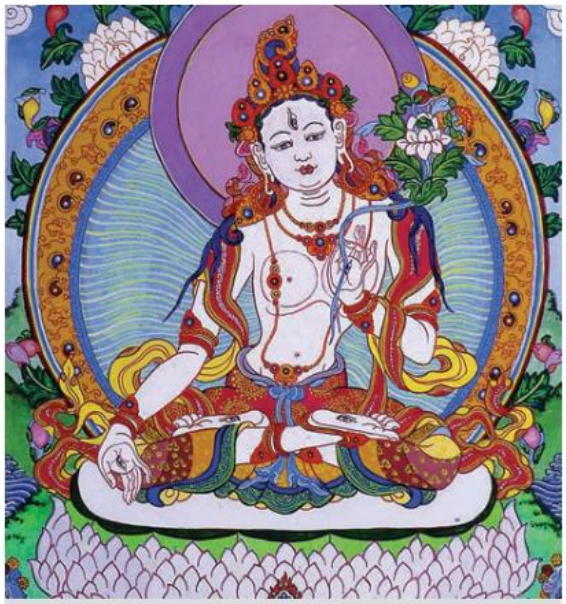

FIGURE 10.11
White Tara

virtue') the leader of which is called the Dalai Lama ('great ocean superior one'). Each Dalai Lama is considered to be an embodiment of Avalokiteshvara, the heavenly *bodhisattva* of compassion. When a lama dies, it is thought that he has been reincarnated as another person, who is sought and trained to be the next Dalai Lama.

Vajrayana Buddhism recognises the Three Jewels and the Ten Precepts but also includes distinctive teachings such as tantric ritual, *mudras*, *mantras*, the *vajra*, visualisations, prayer wheels and flags. Tibetan Buddhism employs a variety of images of the Buddha and *bodhisattvas* to express various aspects of enlightenment. Avalokiteshvara, one of the most popular *bodhisattvas* in Tibetan Buddhism, represents compassion and is often depicted with one leg in the meditation position and the other touching the ground. Other images show him with many arms indicating that he will assist in any situation.

Another popular image is Tara, who is often shown in green and white and who expresses compassion. Many people find her easier to relate to because she is female.

Tibetan Buddhist shrines often include images of teachers from the past. Famous examples include Padmasambhava, who is regarded as bringing Tantric Buddhism to Tibet, and Milarepa, a guru who lived in the Himalayas and is believed to have kept warm by participating in a special kind of meditation that generated body heat.

Worship in Tibetan Buddhism has features similar to other lineages of Buddhism and also includes the blowing of horns that produce long, low notes. Another important symbol of Tibetan Buddhism is the ritual object, a short metal weapon called a *vajra*, which means 'diamond' or 'thunderbolt'. The *vajra* is

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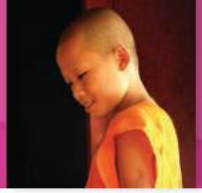

symbolic of the determination needed to cut through illusion to achieve enlightenment.

The *vajra* is held in the right hand, which suggests kind action. At its centre is a sphere, from which two lotus flowers emerge. One faces up and the other faces down, representing growth, which can be either positive or negative. From each of the flowers, five spokes emerge, one at the centre and four at each compass point. The five spokes at the top represent five special Buddhas each with a particular form of wisdom; the five spokes at the bottom represent the five *skandhas* and five poisons of infatuation, hatred, conceit, passion and envy. The *vajra* is used with a bell, which is held in the left hand and together they represent the union of wisdom and compassion. Both objects are central to Tibetan Vajrayana ritual.

FIGURE 10.12
A *vajra* and a bell with *vajra* handle

Chanting a *mantra* is also common in Tibetan Buddhism, and the syllables used are called 'seed syllables' because they are said to contain the whole of the Buddhist path. The three seed syllables are *'om'* which stands for reality itself and includes the idea of freedom; *'ah'* which represents communication; and *'hum'* (pronounced 'hoong') which is wisdom. All three seed syllables are used at the beginning of Buddhist worship. Mantras such as *om mani padme hum* are written on paper and placed in prayer wheels. People turn the large prayer wheels as they pass by. Hand-held prayer wheels are also common. Sometimes *mantras* and seed syllables are painted on prayer flags to remind people of the Buddha's teaching.

The *mandala*, used in Mahayana Buddhism, becomes more complex in Tibetan Buddhism. In some ceremonies monks create a *mandala* in sand and at the end of the ritual they immediately destroy it, as a sign that nothing is permanent. Cloth paintings called *thangka* are also common. These often include

FIGURE 10.13
Tibetan prayer wheel and prayer flags

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images of the Buddhas and *bodhisattvas* painted in both friendly and frightening forms to discipline the believer.

Activity 10.14

Investigating and reasoning

How might chanting, prayer wheels, images and elaborate costumes assist an adherent to enter into Buddhist practices?

The Buddhist calendar

The beginning of the year varies according to each Buddhist tradition. In Mahayana and Tibetan traditions, New Year is established by the full moon in either January or February. The Tibetan New Year lasts from the new moon to the full moon. In Theravada Buddhism, the New Year is linked to the full moon in April.

Buddhist festivals and celebrations

Theravada Buddhism

Theravada Buddhism is expressed differently according to local customs. While the celebrations vary from country to country, they hold some common elements.

Magha Puja

Magha Puja, Fourfold Gathering Day, occurs on the full moon of the lunar month of *Magha* around February–March and commemorates a large gathering of monks at Veruvana Monastery just prior to the Buddha's death. Tradition says that four miracles occurred at the assembly:

1 the assembly was spontaneous
2 all of the monks were *arhats* (monks so advanced that they are assured of nirvana)
3 all of the monks had been ordained by the Buddha
4 there was a full moon.

FIGURE 10.14
Buddhist monks creating a *mandala* from sand

TABLE 10.2
The calendar of Theravada Buddhism

Holy Day	Time period
New Year	Full moon (March/April)
Wesak	Full moon (April/May)
Asalha Puja	Full moon (July) Three month *Vassa* period begins
Pavarana	*Vassa* ends
Kathina	Within one month of *Vassa*
Anapanasati	One month after *Pavarana*
Magha Puja	Full moon (February/March)

The Buddha is also said to have announced his death and summarised the main points of his teachings at this gathering.

Wesak

Wesak celebrates the birth, enlightenment and death of the Buddha and is a most important Theravadin festival (in Mahayana calendars the three events are separated). On this day, people show respect for the Buddha and his teaching and hope to gain merit for a better rebirth. In some communities, lanterns are lit around temples and shrines and light is also used as a symbol of discovering the *Dharma* in one lifetime.

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FIGURE 10.15
Wesak celebrations

Kathina
a special wooden frame used for sewing clothes

Lay Buddhists make special efforts to give to *bhikkus* and some lay Buddhists take on the extra five precepts that monks follow for the duration of the festival. Buddhists gather in temples to listen to sermons, the scriptures, chanting and to meditate. Sometimes stalls are set up in the streets to give food away to people, caged birds are released symbolising the relinquishing of anxiety and people who are not vegetarian abstain from eating meat. People bring offerings to place before the Buddha, such as lights representing understanding and enlightenment, and flowers to show the fragility of life.

Asalha Puja

Asalha Puja (*Dharma* Day) occurs two months after the full moon in July and celebrates the Buddha's first sermon at Sarnath. It is also known as 'Setting in Motion the Wheel of Law' because it was the beginning of the *Dharma*. Tibetan Buddhists walk in a procession with scriptures written on long wooden blocks, which symbolise the spread of the Buddha's teachings.

Vassa

The following day is the beginning of *Vassa* (Rains Retreat), a time when *bhikkus* and *bhikkunis*, because of the rainy season, retreat from the usual activities of life to study and meditate. Throughout most of the year, the Buddha travelled and preached but during the monsoon season he stayed at a monastery. This has become a tradition that monks now follow. Lay Buddhists often join a *Sangha* during this time and in Thailand, there is an expectation that all young boys will join the *Sangha* for a short time during adolescence.

Kathina

At the end of the wet season (October/November) a celebration called ***Kathina*** welcomes children home from the *Sangha* and congratulates the *bhikkhus* on their retreat. Special food is prepared and lay Buddhists give *bhikkhus* new robes, bowls and other essential equipment. *Kathina* shows the link between the inner life of the *Sangha* and the role of the laity in supporting the *Sangha*.

New Year

In Thailand, New Year falls at the beginning of spring (early April) when people bring gifts to the *bhikkus* and offerings to the Buddha. As a symbol of a fresh start, images of the Buddha are washed in scented water. The festival usually lasts for three days and is marked by joyous celebrations, the performing of traditional plays, dancing and kite flying. In Brisbane, the Bathing of the Buddha festival is celebrated by Fo Guang Shan

FIGURE 10.16
Bathing of the Buddha hosted by Chung Tian Temple

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Buddhist monks and the Buddha Light community on the long weekend in May, at Southbank.

Mahayana Buddhism

Twice yearly, Mahayana Buddhists remember people who have died: these services are not sad occasions but times of celebration. The first celebration is *O-bon* and the second is *Higan*.

O-bon

O-bon is celebrated from 13 to 15 July. During this time, candles, lamps and bonfires are lit to welcome the spirits of the deceased. People often take holidays from work to visit their family and the graves of their dead relatives. Buddhist monks are invited to homes to recite prayers for the dead and *toba* (flat wooden sticks with prayers), flowers and fruit are left at the family shrines.

Higan

Higan occurs at the spring and autumn equinoxes. These are times when Buddhists reflect on the changes that occur in life. Japanese Buddhists think about those who have died and pray for a speedy rebirth into more fortunate circumstances.

Activity 10.15

Investigating and reasoning

1 Construct a wheel of the year calendar diagram showing when the major Buddhist festivals occur. Use northern hemisphere seasons.
2 Complete the table on Worksheet 10.15 showing how Buddhist festivals perform a range of functions. Some cells may be left blank if necessary.

Buddhist temples and shrines

Temples and temple complexes vary from country to country and according to the particular lineage of Buddhism. Some resemble palaces; others are more like a simple house. While Buddhist temples vary in design, they tend to have the following common features: a study hall, a library and a guest area. They can also include:

- A shrine hall or room for worship. This is the most publically accessible section of the temple complex. The shrine room usually contains images of the Buddha and is often highly decorated. In Mahayana Buddhism, the Buddha is often accompanied or even replaced by a variety of celestial Buddhas and *bodhisattvas* such as Amitabha or Manjusri.
- A meditation room that is also used for *Vinaya* ritual.
- Spartan living quarters for the monks.
- *Dagoba*, a relic mound.
- A bo-tree, symbolising the Buddha's enlightenment.

As a sign of respect, visitors to Buddhist temples are asked to remove their shoes and to ensure that the soles of their feet do not face the Buddha.

FIGURE 10.17 Shrine room at Chung Tian Temple

Shrines

Many Buddhists have a Buddha *rupa*, or image of the Buddha, on a high shelf in their home. They often use the image as a focus for meditation. When standing before a Buddha *rupa*, Buddhists join their hands and bow before the image and, with their hands pressed together, touch their forehead, mouth and chest as a

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FIGURE 10.18
A Buddhist shrine

reminder that mind, speech and body are all involved in devotion. All shrines are highly decorated. At the centre of the shrine is a statue of the Buddha. Mahayana shrines include a variety of Buddha images. Common features across the various traditions include:

- a statue of the Buddha
- flowers – symbols that life is short (some traditions use green vegetation)
- water – a symbol of respect and reverence
- candles – symbols of enlightenment
- incense – to purify the air and to symbolise the *Dharma* being spread throughout the world
- bell – to separate the sections of the ceremony and as a symbol of *karma*
- food – some traditions offer food.

Shrines are prepared and treated with great care and respect, cleaned daily, food and flowers are replaced and the water offered may even be recycled into tea water. The objects presented on the shrine stimulate the senses and attempt to involve the whole of the person in ritual.

Prayer beads

Some Buddhists use *mala* (prayer beads) to count the *mantra*. Monks usually have 108 beads representing the 108 passions. Monks sometimes wear the beads around their necks. Lay people generally have fewer beads, usually a number divisible by three, and wear the beads as a bracelet. The beads are usually strung on silk thread and drawn together with three beads symbolising the Three Jewels. In Japanese Buddhism, prayer beads are called *juzu* and have two tassels at each end to represent the Buddha and the *Dharma*.

Stupas

A *stupa* is a bell-shaped construction that stores relics or the ashes of the dead. They are made in five sections, each representing the elements of earth, water, fire, air, spirit (from the base to the top). Traditionally each

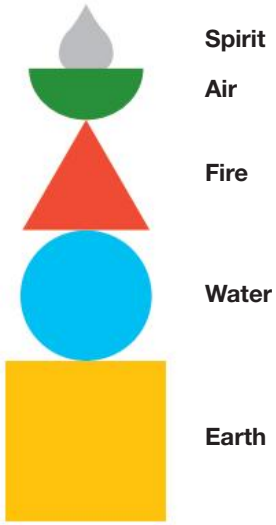

FIGURE 10.19
A *stupa*, and what it means

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side of the *stupa* represents a moment in the life of the Buddha: east is his birth; south his enlightenment; west his teachings; and north his death. Buddhists walk round *stupas* in a clockwise direction following the life of the Buddha from birth to death. The *stupas* provide visible monuments to the Buddha and his teachings.

In east Asia, *stupas* evolved into pagodas, which are more pyramid shaped with six levels representing six cosmic realms.

Activity 10.16

Investigating

Relics of the Buddha are kept in *stupas*. What other religions keep relics? Why do believers consider relics important?

Images of the Buddha

For hundreds of years, Theravada Buddhism did not have any images of the Buddha. They wanted to emphasise that he was an ordinary man. Today there are thousands of images of the Buddha but, interestingly, the Buddha is shown in only three positions: sitting, standing or lying down – and each posture has a particular meaning. When the Buddha is sitting, the position of his hands indicate either enlightenment, teaching or meditation; standing with one hand raised indicates protection; and lying down usually reminds people of his death and entry to nirvana.

The *mudras* (symbolic hand gestures) of the Buddha are also significant. One hand placed on top of the other with the palms facing upwards indicates concentration and meditation; a hand in front of the chest indicates instruction; and a hand touching the ground indicates resistance to temptation. According to tradition, the Buddha has 32 major and 80 minor marks of a superior being. One of these is the *ushinisha*, a lump on his head either in the form of fire, representing spiritual energy, or in the shape of stubble, left from cutting his hair on the night he renounced his former life. Another is the *urna*, which is the mark in the centre of his forehead symbolising the third eye of wisdom.

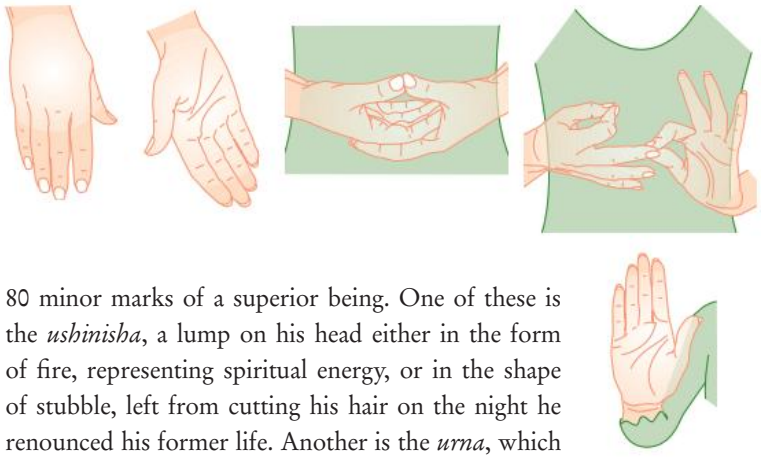

FIGURE 10.20
Hand *mudras*

Tibetan Buddhism has Five Wisdom Buddhas who inhabit pure lands at north, south, east, west and centre and each Buddha has a particular colour, *mudra*, symbol, cosmic element and vehicle.

Each of the five Buddhas is accompanied by a *bodhisattva*.

Meditation

The Buddha became enlightened after meditating under the *bodhi* tree and during his life, he is said to have practiced seated meditation lasting from a few days to three months. His followers also practiced meditation and their day was divided into six periods of four hours in the following pattern:

1 seated meditation
2 sleeping
3 seated meditation
4 washing, working, meditating, receiving food
5 eating food, meditating while allowing for digestion
6 meditation, listening to the Buddha and discussing the *Dharma*.

TABLE 10.3
The Five Wisdom Buddhas

	North	South	East	West	Centre
Name	Amoghasiddhi	Ratnasambhava	Akshobhya	Amitabha	Vairocana
Colour	Green	Yellow	Blue	Red	White
Element	Air	Earth	Water	Fire	Ether
Mudra (hand position)	Protection	Giving	Touching the earth	Meditation	Teaching

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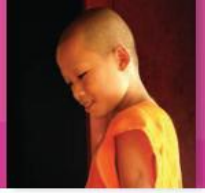

Buddhist meditation originates in the Hindu yoga exercises that consist of eight stages:

- Stages 1 and 2 involve not harming others and creating good relations.
- Stages 3 and 4 focus on posture and breath control.
- Stage 5 aims at focusing on the inner self and disassociating oneself from outer distractions
- Stage 6 involves focusing the mind on a single object
- Stages 7 and 8 involve meditating to rise above ordinary thought. While congregational worship is not common in Buddhism, chanting within a group is common in some lineages of Buddhism.

Pilgrimage

According to legend, the Buddha indicated that followers should visit four places: Lumbini, his place of birth; Bodhgaya, where he attained enlightenment; Sarnath, where he began the wheel of *Dharma*; and Kusinegara, where he entered nirvana. Many of the practices of Buddhist pilgrimage are drawn from Hinduism. Buddhist pilgrims mainly stay in monasteries and donate food and clothing to the monks in the hope that they will earn *karma* and rebirth in a higher realm. Buddhist pilgrimages began relatively early, as the Emperor Ashoka, a convert to Buddhism, is believed to have completed a pilgrimage to all four sites in 249 BCE. He is also credited with building a monument at each site. Lumbini, the birth place of the Buddha, was declared a World Heritage Site in 1997.

For Buddhists, Bodhgaya – 240 kilometres east of Varanasi – is considered more significant than Lumbini because it is here that Siddhartha Gautama became the Buddha. The original shrine was destroyed by Muslims in the twelfth century and later became a place of Hindu worship. It was returned to the Buddhists eight hundred years later and declared a World Heritage Site in 2002. When pilgrims visit the temple, they circle around it to show their devotion.

At Sarnath, pilgrims visit the *Dharmarajika Stupa*, which once held the relics of the Buddha before well-meaning Hindus returned them to the Ganges. Pilgrims travel to Kusinegara, 160 kilometres south of Lumbini, not only to visit the place of the Buddha's death but also to see a seven-metre-long statue of the Buddha surrounded by three disciples. While these are the four main sites of pilgrimage for Buddhists, many other shrines and temples also attract pilgrims.

Activity 10.17

Investigating and reasoning

Design a travel brochure appropriate for Buddhist pilgrims. Your brochure should include a map and the major places of pilgrimage.

Activity 10.18

Investigating, reasoning and judging

Write an editorial, dated 26 June 2002, regarding the inscription of the Mahabodhi Temple Complex at Bodhgaya on the UNESCO World Heritage List. Refer to http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1056 to inform your writing.

Conclusion

Buddhism originated in the East but over the last one hundred years or so, has increased its presence in the West. Many Buddhist ideas have been made available to people who are not themselves practising Buddhists. Some of this influence occurs implicitly through statues of the Buddha available in garden and homewares shops. Also, practices of meditation have been made available through self-help books. Engaged Buddhism reaches out to the community to assist through acts of compassion and has a slightly more missionary edge than other forms of Buddhism.

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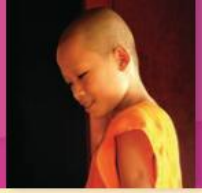

End of chapter activities

Activity 10.19

Framing

1 Engage in a whole-class brainstorm to generate information and ideas about Buddhism.
2 Generate a list of references to Buddhism in contemporary popular culture such as film, music, fashion, design, television, language and so on.
3 Sketch your impression of a likeness of the Buddha. Where have your ideas about the Buddha's appearance come from?

Activity 10.20

Investigating

1 Trace the history and development of Mahayana Buddhism in China, Japan and Korea. Present your investigation in multi-modal form.
2 Design a series of questions you could ask a Buddhist about their meditation practices.
3 Produce an information leaflet about Buddhist shrines.
4 Create a glossary of Pali and Sanskrit terms associated with Buddhism.
5 Teach a classmate or friend the mudras explained at www.buddhanet.net/mudras.htm. Afterwards, quiz your student to see how effective the teaching and learning has been.

Activity 10.21

Reasoning

1 How might a change of clothes, change of hairstyle and change of daily routine affect the young person joining the *Sangha*? In what ways are these three things symbolic of growing up within society?
2 View www.buddhistart.com.au/sculptures.html. Although there are some mythical and Hindu artworks listed, most are Buddhist. Choose one, print it out (or sketch it in your workbook) and annotate it to show connections between the visual art chosen and Buddhist beliefs. Which Buddhist artwork would you choose to purchase to illustrate Buddhist beliefs and why?
3 Complete the PMI chart on Worksheet 10.21 about the existence of variety within Buddhism.

Activity 10.22

Investigating, reasoning and judging

Read the Wildmind Buddhist Meditation list of 'Top Ten Celebrity Buddhists' at www.wildmind.org/blogs/on-practice/top-10-celebrity-buddhists.

1 List and categorise the reasons these celebrities give for practising Buddhism.
2 Write a paragraph explaining how much influence you think celebrities' religions have on religious trends in the wider community and why you think this. Extension: find evidence to support your claim.

Activity 10.23

Judging

1 What impact might the doctrines of Mahayana and Theravada Buddhism have on society, politics and the economy?
2 After investigating the spread of Buddhism to the West, construct a hierarchy showing what the most important factors in the spread of Buddhism to the West (and Australia in particular) have been.
3 Refer to Chapter 13. Which approaches described in this chapter are more useful or appropriate for the study of Buddhism than others? Why?

Activity 10.24

Reflecting

1 How has learning about Buddhism clarified my thinking about my own tradition?
2 How have my ideas about Buddhism changed as a result of this investigation?
3 What have I learned about Buddhism in Australia and/or in my local community?

CHAPTER REVIEW

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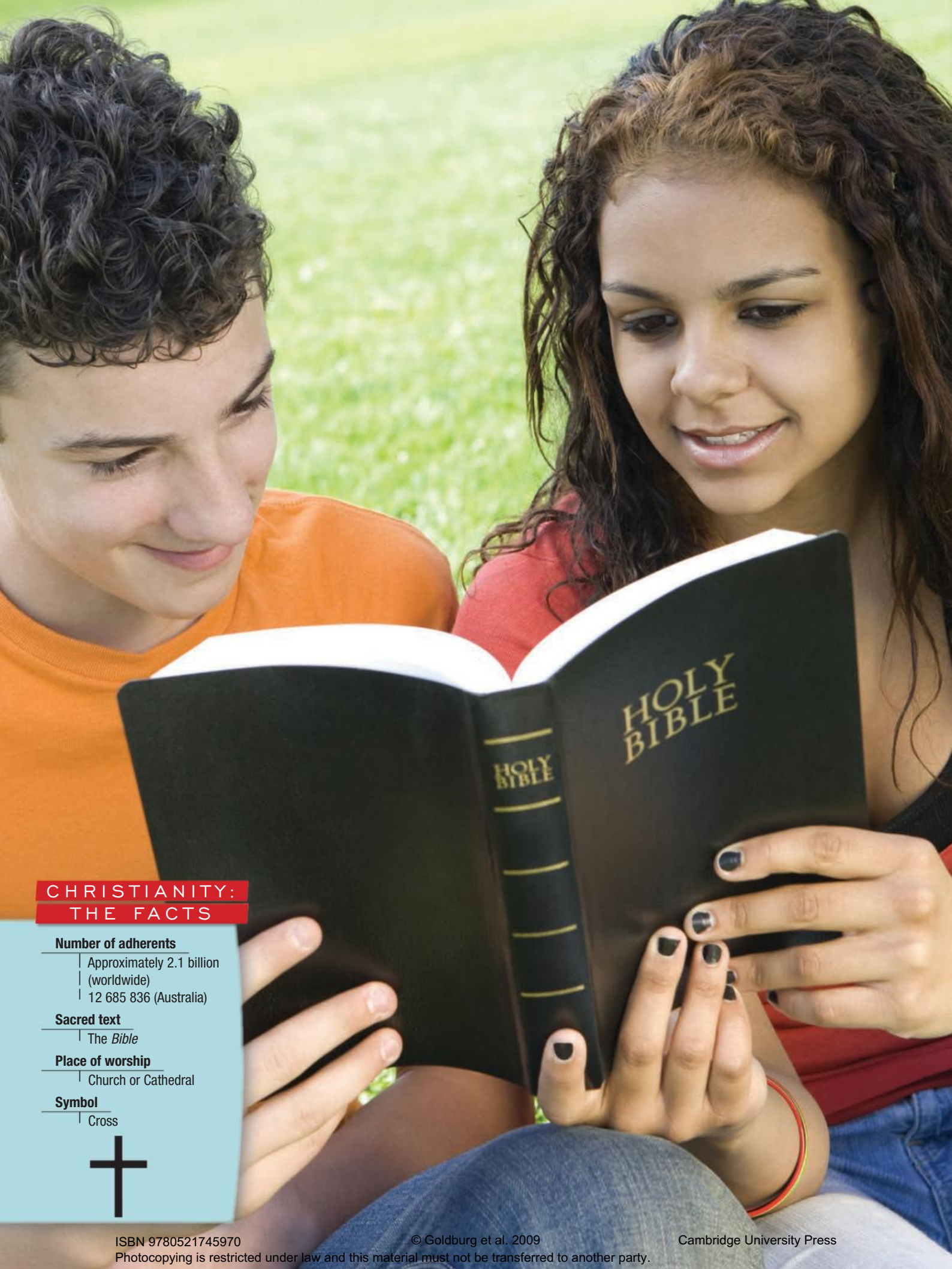

CHRISTIANITY: THE FACTS

Number of adherents
- Approximately 2.1 billion (worldwide)
- 12 685 836 (Australia)

Sacred text
- The *Bible*

Place of worship
- Church or Cathedral

Symbol
- Cross

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CHAPTER ELEVEN

CHRISTIANITY

'Ask and it will be given to you; search and you will find; knock and the door will be opened for you.'

Matthew 7:7

CHAPTER OBJECTIVES

This chapter discusses:

- The life of Jesus
- Sacred texts
- Key beliefs and teachings of Christianity
- Prayer, liturgy and worship
- Major festivals
- Pilgrimage
- The history of Christianity

KEY terms

schism	Epistles	sacraments	Orthodox Church
Protestant Reformation	Messiah	meditation	Protestants
Vatican Council	Trinity	mission	liturgy
World Council of Churches	resurrection	inter-religious dialogue	worship
Gospels	creed	Roman Catholic Church	prayer

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Introduction

FACT

The word Christ comes from the Greek for 'Messiah' or 'anointed one'.

Christians are followers of Jesus of Nazareth, called Christ. Christianity has spread throughout the world and has influenced the history, culture and thinking of Western civilisation. Christians believe in one God but also believe that within God there is a community of persons – the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit – addressed in more inclusive terms as God the Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer of the world.

Christianity began as a movement within Judaism. It became separated from Judaism as it spread through the Roman Empire and as Judaism attempted to rebuild after the destruction of the Temple in 70 CE.

Activity 11.1

Framing

1 What do you know about Christianity?
2 What are some distinctive beliefs and customs of Christianity?
3 What enabled a relatively small religion to spread so rapidly?
4 How has Christianity changed over time?
5 Who are some key people associated with Christianity?
6 What Christian communities/denominations exist in Australia, your state and your local area?
7 What groups exist within Christianity?
8 What contributions do Christian groups make to society?
9 How do the media present Christianity?
10 What is a symbol of Christianity?
11 Use Worksheet 11.1 to complete a KWHL related to Christianity.

Timeline

BCE	
6	Birth of Jesus
CE	
30	Death of Jesus
50–120	Writing of the New Testament
65	Death of Peter and Paul
70	Destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem
65–312	Periodic persecution of Christians
270	Christian monasticism begins
313	*Edict of Milan* makes Christianity legal
325	Council of Nicea
354–430	Life of Augustine
380	Christianity official religion of Roman Empire
400	Jerome produces Latin *Bible* (Vulgate)
451	Council of Chalcedon
476	Collapse of the Roman Empire of the West
480–547	Life of Benedict
525	Christian Calendar introduced
638	Muslim conquest of Jerusalem
787	Second Council of Nicea
1054	Great **Schism** between Eastern and Western Christianity
1095–1291	Crusades
1099	Conquest of Jerusalem during the First Crusade
1163	Construction starts on Notre Dame Cathedral Paris
1274	Thomas Aquinas writes *Summa Theologica*

schism
a split or a division, usually in an organisation or a movement

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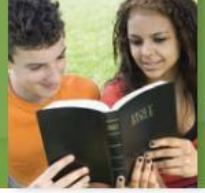

1237–1351	The Black Death affects Europe
1453	Conquest of Constantinople by Muslims
1455	First printed *Bible* by Gutenberg
1483–1546	Life of Martin Luther
1478	Spanish Inquisition begins
1492	Jews and Muslims expelled from Spain
1508–1512	Michelangelo paints the Sistine Chapel
1509–1564	Life of John Calvin
1517	Beginning of **Protestant Reformation**
1534	Foundation of Church of England by King Henry VIII
1545–1563	Council of Trent
1729	John and Charles Wesley begin Methodist movement
1869–1870	First **Vatican Council**
1947	Dead Sea Scrolls discovered
1948	**World Council of Churches** formed
1962–1964	Second Vatican Council

Protestant Reformation
a Christian reform movement that eventually led to the formation of the Protestant churches that moved away from the Catholic Church in Rome

Vatican Council
a conference of the bishops of the whole Roman Catholic Church convened to discuss and settle matters of Church doctrine and practice

World Council of Churches
an international Christian ecumenical organisation

Gospels
the story of Jesus' life and teachings, especially as in the first four books of the New Testament

Activity 11.2

Investigating

Annotate the timeline by providing facts related to dates and events to increase basic understanding of key events.

The life of Jesus

The story of Jesus of Nazareth, who later became known as Jesus Christ, is recorded in the Gospels.

According to Luke (1:26–2:20), Jesus was born to a virgin, Mary, who was betrothed to Joseph. Mary was visited by an angel, Gabriel, who asked her to bear a son. Mary replied 'Be it unto me according to your word' (Luke 1:38). According to the traditional story, Mary and Joseph travel to Bethlehem to be registered for a Roman census. When there, she delivers her child.

Matthew (1:18–2:18) recounts the story from the point of view of Joseph. Matthew's Gospel is intended for Jewish audiences and therefore events in the life of Jesus parallel the life of Moses. For instance, Matthew (2:13–23) says that Jesus was taken to Egypt to escape Herod, and was then brought out of Egypt.

Activity 11.3

Investigating and reasoning

1 Read the two accounts of the birth of Jesus in Luke (1:26–2:20) and Matthew (1:18–2:18). on Worksheet 11.3
2 Complete the summary sheet on Worksheet 11.3.
3 Why might the two accounts differ?
4 Analyse the two images of the birth of Jesus, opposite.
5 Which image reflects the account in the Gospel of Luke? Provide evidence to support your claims.
6 Which image reflects the account in the Gospel of Matthew? Provide evidence to support your claims.

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Jesus was raised in Nazareth in the Galilee area in northern Israel, which was, at the time, ruled by Rome. For most of his life, Jesus appeared to have lived an unremarkable existence. Only two milestones of his early life are recorded in the Gospels – and both concern religious observance. On the eighth day after his birth, he was taken to the Temple in Jerusalem to fulfil the Jewish requirement of dedication (Luke 2:21). Around the age of 12, he travelled with his parents to Jerusalem for the pilgrimage of *Pesach* and, according to Luke 2:41–49, remained behind in the temple precincts talking to Jewish religious leaders.

His public life began when he approached John the Baptist to be baptised in the River Jordan. Jesus began to preach throughout Galilee to large crowds, and gathered disciples including women and the twelve followers known as the Apostles. Throughout his ministry, the Gospels record stories of Jesus healing the sick, raising the dead and performing other cures and miracles. Some followers even thought he was the **Messiah**. Although he spoke out against injustice, the emphasis of his teachings was more a message of love, forgiveness and peace.

Messiah
from the Greek meaning anointed one

He was not the kind of Messiah that Jews were expecting and some of his teaching upset Jewish religious authorities. Finally, Jesus was arrested by the High Priests and taken before the Roman Tribune for trial. He was executed as a common criminal by Roman crucifixion and, according to the four Canonical Gospels, three days later he rose from the dead and after appearing to his disciples on a number of occasions, ascended into Heaven.

FIGURE 11.1
The Baptism of Jesus

In addition to the Gospels, which are statements of faith for people of faith and should be interpreted within that context, other sources verify that Jesus existed. Tacitus, a Roman historian, mentions Christians (followers of Jesus Christ) at the end of the first century.

Josephus, a Jewish historian from the first century, also mentions Jesus. Pliny and Suetonius, Roman writers, referred to Jesus in the second century CE. Even the *Talmud* mentions him. The four Gospel accounts of the life of Jesus were written thirty or more years after his death. Although based on earlier written sources, they have their origins in oral retellings of the life and teachings of Jesus.

Sacred texts

The *Bible*

Christians are referred to as 'people of the book' (along with Jews and Muslims). The Christian Scriptures contain twenty-seven books, consisting of four Gospels about the life of Jesus. In addition, there are 21 **Epistles**, the 'Acts of the Apostles' that tells the story of the life of the early Christians and finally the Book of Revelation.

Epistles
letters in the New Testament written by the Apostles to Christians

In addition to the Christian Scriptures, the *Bible* includes the Hebrew Scriptures, commonly referred to in Christian *Bible*s as the Old Testament. The Old Testament includes thirty-nine books. Some Christians also include the Apocrypha (seven books written in Greek about Jewish events). Christians read and interpret the Hebrew scriptures differently from Jews, and some read retrospectively and see references to Jesus in the Hebrew texts.

Christians believe that the *Bible* is the inspired Word of God. Some Christians read biblical texts literally and perceive them to be historically and

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scientifically accurate, while many others interpret biblical texts applying techniques of biblical criticism recognising that the Word of God has been transmitted through words of men. Biblical texts reflect an understanding of the time in which they were written and were intended to convey religious rather than scientific truth.

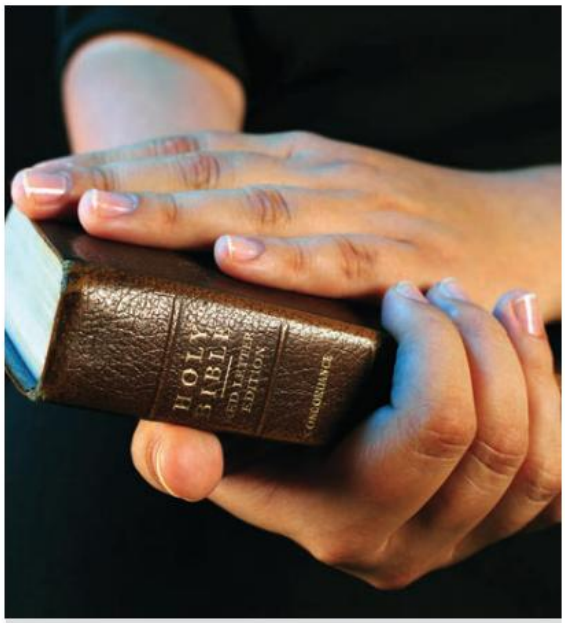

FIGURE 11.2
The *Bible*

Activity 11.4

Framing, investigating, reasoning and judging

1 Name as many English language translations of the *Bible* as you can.
2 How many are provided by the Bible Gateway 'quick search' facility at www.biblegateway.com?
3 Using the above website, look up Matthew's account of the Baptism of Jesus (Matthew 3:13–17). Locate four different translations of this text and note key differences and similarities.
4 Construct a PMI chart based on the fact that there are many different translations of the *Bible*.
5 Do you think that, overall, it is helpful for believers to have access to so many different translations of the *Bible*? Why?

Key beliefs and teachings of Christianity

Trinity

Christians believe in one God, but they also believe in the **Trinity**, a concept that is difficult to explain but that refers to communication within God or the self communication of God in the person of Christ and the activity of the Holy Spirit.

Although Christians believe that God is neither male nor female, God is often referred to as the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The first title, God the Father, refers to God as creator, omnipotent, omnipresent, eternal and unchanging. The second title, the Son, is central to Christian belief in the idea that God became incarnate in Jesus, that is, that Jesus is both human and divine. In Jesus, God became human flesh. In the Gospels, Jesus is referred to as Son of God. This expression also occurs in the Hebrew Scriptures and may refer to one favoured by God or even missioned by God, an especially beloved son or servant. The Holy Spirit, once referred to as the Holy Ghost, more properly refers to wind or breath. Belief in the Holy Spirit arises from the promise of Jesus that, when he left Earth, the Holy Spirit would be with people, inspiring, guiding, sustaining creation and humankind.

Although the Trinity is not fully explained in the Gospels, Mark's Gospel, for instance, speaks of the spirit and the voice of God,

> … and straightaway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens opened and the spirit like a dove descending upon him. And there came a voice from heaven, saying, 'thou art my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased' (1:10–11).

In the conclusion to Matthew's Gospel (28:19–20), Jesus commissions his disciples to go out baptising in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

The Christian belief in both **monotheism** *and* the Trinity presents a problem for many. Some theologians

FACT

The Christian calendar is centred on the birth of Jesus. The years before the birth of Jesus are recorded by counting backwards from his birth and are labelled as BC (Before Christ). After the birth of Jesus, the years move forward from 1 AD (Anno Domini or Year of the Lord) to the present day. In recent times, as an acknowledgment that the calendar is used more widely in the world by people of many religions, some have replaced BC with BCE (Before the Common Era) and AD with CE (Common Era). BCE and CE are used in this book.

Trinity
the unity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit as three persons in one God; tri meaning three and 'unity' or three in one

monotheism
a belief in only one god

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FIGURE 11.3
Traditional icon of the trinity

FIGURE 11.4
Mary Magdalene at the empty tomb

speak of three minds, spirits, or energy but it is difficult to convey the dynamic nature of the communication within the oneness of God. Belief in the Trinity is referred to by Christians as 'a mystery of faith'.

Activity 11.5

Investigating, reasoning and judging

1 Use a search engine to find five different ways in which the Trinity has been represented visually.
2 How does each image reflect beliefs about the unity of the three persons of God?
3 How does each image distinguish between the three persons of God?
4 Choose one image that you think is most effective and provide reasons for your choice.

creed a statement of religious belief

Resurrection

resurrection a central doctrine of Christianity in which Jesus is raised from the dead

Christians believe that Jesus was crucified, buried and that after three days, he rose from the dead and ascended into heaven. All four Gospels confirm the truth of the **resurrection**, even though no one witnessed it actually happen.

In the *Bible*, the resurrection is confirmed when Mary Magdalene discovers Jesus' tomb is empty and when, subsequently, Jesus appears to his disciples. The early Christians have experience of Christ's continuing presence. In light of these experiences, the disciples re-interpreted the life and death of Jesus in terms of the resurrection.

Creed

The central beliefs of Christianity are articulated in a concisely formulated statement called a **creed**, which comes from the Latin word *credo*, meaning I believe. While the creed was not formulated in its present form until about the second century, there are, nevertheless, brief statements in the Christian scriptures such as 'Jesus is the Son of God' (Acts 9:21) and fuller statements in 1 Corinthians 15:3–5 that 'Christ died for our sins ... he was buried ... was raised to life on the third day ... and he first appeared to Cephas'.

The creeds that exist today are the result of many years of theological development. Later versions show the complex nature of their formulation and how theological concepts were refined and developed.

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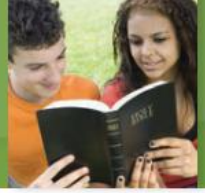

Symbols

The cross is the most recognised Christian symbol. Jesus was crucified by the Romans, along with two other men regarded as criminals, in what was a common form of execution at the time. Death on a cross was considered shameful and many people find it a scandal that Jesus died in such a manner. On the other hand, Christians see the cross as a powerful symbol of Christ having overcome death and sin and atoning for the shortcomings of the world.

Activity 11.6

Investigating

1 Create a list of the symbols used in Christianity.
2 Draw and write a brief explanation of the origin and meaning of each.
3 Research the origins of the following symbols, which are also associated with Christianity: Icthus, Chi Rho.
4 Prepare an information leaflet on the symbols of Christianity.

Mary, the mother of God

Most Christians honour Mary as the mother of Jesus. **Protestants** may feel uncomfortable with the emphasis that the **Roman Catholic Church** and the **Orthodox Churches** have given to Mary as they say she is able to 'intercede' on behalf of people who pray through her. It is Mary's title as 'Mother of God' or *Theotokos* in Greek that Protestants find most challenging.

The Gospel of Luke gives an account of the Annunciation, where an angel visited Mary and asked her to be the mother of a child. Mary's first response was that she was too young, pointing out the physical difficulty involved. Yet the power of the Holy Spirit overshadowed her and she became pregnant.

Given that Mary was the mother of Jesus, the Catholic Church developed the doctrine of the 'Immaculate Conception' where Mary herself was considered to have been born free from original sin.

FIGURE 11.5
Mary, Mother of God

Mary is scarcely mentioned in the Gospels. Only a few incidences of her interactions with Jesus are recorded. She is mentioned after he begins his public ministry, although she is named as being in the upper room at Pentecost.

Activity 11.7

Reasoning

1 In groups, design a series of questions for a 'hotseat interview' with Mary. Your questions should focus on the role she played in the life of Jesus and her subsequent place in Church history and tradition.
2 Write a paragraph explaining why Protestants might be uncomfortable with the way the Catholic and Orthodox Churches honour Mary.

Sacraments

Christians believe that God is revealed to humankind through creation, scripture, people and, in particular, through Jesus. Christians also experience God's **grace** through **sacraments**. The Roman Catholic and

Protestants
the churches that split from the Catholic Church during the sixteenth century Reformation

Roman Catholic Church
the world's largest Christian church, representing over half of all Christians and one-sixth of the world's population

Orthodox Church
the body of modern churches that is derived from the church of the Byzantine Empire, adheres to the Byzantine rite, and acknowledges the honorary primacy of the Patriarch of Constantinople

grace
self communication of the presence of God

sacrament
visible signs of God's invisible presence

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Orthodox churches have seven sacraments: baptism, confirmation, reconciliation, marriage, ordination or holy orders and anointing of the sick. Most Protestant traditions have two sacraments, Baptism and Eucharist; and some Christian groups, such as the Salvation Army, do not have sacraments at all.

Sacraments have physical elements, such as bread and wine, which represent spiritual aspects such as the body and blood of Jesus. The spiritual element is meant to effect a change in those who participate in the sacrament.

Eucharist

The Eucharist (derived from the Greek 'to give thanks'), or Holy Communion, re-enacts or reminds Christians of the Last Supper and the death and resurrection of Jesus (see Mark 14:17–25). There are differences in how the denominations of Christianity perceive the meaning of Eucharist. The Eucharist involves recalling the Lord's supper, breaking of bread and communion or sharing of the bread and wine.

The Roman Catholic Church holds a doctrine of transubstantiation, which says that the substances of bread and wine are changed into the body and blood of Jesus at Mass without changing the appearance of bread and wine. While Protestants accept that Christ is present in some way, they do not believe in transubstantiation but rather in consubstantiation, which says that the bread and wine remain bread and wine and are just a symbol of the body and blood of Jesus.

Baptism

Baptism is a ceremonial immersion in water, or application of water, as an initiatory rite or sacrament. Water signifies the washing away of sin and entering into a new life. Other elements that may be included in this ceremony are a lighting of a special candle and anointing with oil, as a sign of preserving the life that has been given.

Confirmation

For many, this sacrament is a rite of passage. It is administered at about twelve or thirteen years of age, when a young person is set to become a young adult. However, because it is a confirming of the sacraments begun in baptism, it is now sometimes given to children as they receive communion for the first time. Some Christian churches only confirm people once they reach adulthood. Oil is used to anoint the candidate who promises to be a committed member of the church community.

FIGURE 11.6
An altar with wine and water

FIGURE 11.7
A teenager being confirmed

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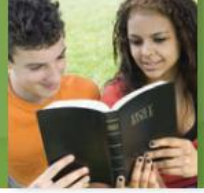

Reconciliation

This sacrament was once called penance or confession and each of these names reveal an aspect of it. People confess their sins, express sorrow and promise to try not to sin again. In granting forgiveness in the name of God, the priest asks a penance of the person. This may take the form of saying an extra **prayer** or of doing something that would make up for what was done wrong. The more modern name of *reconciliation* emphasises making right one's relationship with God and other people, although the elements of confession and penance are still retained.

Ordination

Through this sacrament some people are raised to the position of a Deacon, Priest or Bishop. Through the laying on of hands (seen as passing on spiritual power and authority) and the other symbolic gestures during the service, the person is raised to a particular level of ministry or service for church. For the Roman Catholic, Orthodox and Anglican Churches, ordination comes after a long period of training. However, some Christian denominations do not have ordination as a sacrament at all.

Anointing of the sick

This sacrament, once reserved for the time of death, to prepare a person to move on from this life, has in more recent times, been extended to a special anointing of those who are ill or elderly although not immediately in danger of death. The sacrament involves anointing with oil and praying for the wellbeing of the person.

Marriage

In Christian marriage services, the couple promise to take the marriage seriously and to undertake it as a lifelong commitment. The Roman Catholic Church regards it as a sacrament and requires both parties to be baptised and asks both parties to honour each other. Although divorce is frowned upon by many Christians, some churches recognise that marriages break down. The Catholic Church allows for a civil divorce but does not accept a second marriage unless an annulment of the first marriage has been granted. The Anglican Church allows remarriage after divorce, although the issue continues to be debated.

FIGURE 11.8
A priest being ordained

Prayer, liturgy and worship

Prayer plays an important role in Christian life. In a particular kind of prayer called **meditation**, a person prays while concentrating on an incident in the life of Jesus, a text of scripture, or some inspirational writing and attempts to still the mind from other thoughts in order to be at one with God.

A higher form of meditation is contemplation, where mystics who have become adept at meditative prayer may become so at one with God that they experience prayer in a particularly intense and

prayer
an address to God or to a god in word or thought

meditation
in the Christian sense, a particular kind of prayer in which a person concentrates on an incident in the life of Jesus, a text of scripture, or some inspirational writing

Christian prayer can be classified into different types:

- Prayers of adoration: when the believer contemplates the wonder, greatness, love and wisdom of God.
- Prayers of petition: when the believer asks for God's help.
- Prayers of intercession: when the believer prays for the needs of others, for example the poor or the sick.
- Prayers of thanksgiving: when the believer prays to thank God for a specific event or for God's goodness and care.

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emotional way. Some have described this as being taken over and possessed by Christ. Famous Christian mystics include Miester Eckhart, John of the Cross, Julian of Norwich and Teresa of Avila.

Meditation and some forms of contemplation are available to all Christians who take the time, find a quiet space and practise the skills of meditation. Some Christians have a teacher or guide to assist them in the spiritual journey.

Common Christian Prayers

One of the most common Christian prayers is 'The Lord's Prayer'.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be your name.
Your Kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins,
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours.
Now and for ever. Amen

Rosary

Early Christians used various means of counting their shorter prayers. St Paul of Thebes used pebbles. In Ethiopia, prayer sticks with 41 notches were used as supports for people standing during long services. Elsewhere, pieces of wood were attached to strings and then knotted cords were devised.

Roman Catholic rosary

Christian prayer beads, commonly known as rosary beads, have been used predominately by Roman Catholics as an aid for prayer since the twelfth century. The string of 150 *Pater Noster* (Lord's Prayer) beads became the 'poor man's **breviary**' and for the uneducated person was a way of replicating the **liturgy** of the Divine Office in which 150 Psalms were recited by clerics. As devotion to Mary gained popularity, people began to repeat the angel's greeting, 'Hail! full of grace. The Lord is with you' (Luke 1:28). The words of Elizabeth were soon added, 'Blessed are you among women' (Luke 1:42). Jesus' name does not appear in descriptions of the rosary until the thirteenth century.

FIGURE 11.9
A Roman Catholic rosary

The string of beads (in the shape of a circle or rosary) used for counting allows the believer to concentrate on words of the prayer being said while at the same time thinking of the event in the life of Jesus. There are five sets of ten beads referred to as a 'decade', from the Latin for ten. Each decade is separated by a single bead. For each of the ten beads, the *Hail Mary* is recited and on the single bead the *Lord's Prayer* is said. The rosary assists the believer to meditate on events such as the birth of Jesus, the presentation of the child Jesus in the temple, finding the child Jesus in the temple, the agony in the garden, scourging at the pillar and the crucifixion.

breviary a book of prayers, hymns, Psalms and other scripture texts

liturgy the customary public worship done by a specific religious group, according to their particular traditions

Activity 11.8

Investigating and reasoning

List the mysteries of the rosary. Why might certain mysteries be chosen to reflect concerns at different times?

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Orthodox rosary

Eastern Orthodox traditions, particularly Greek Orthodox, use prayer ropes, which is a knotted rope, made up of 33, 50 or 100 knots. This prayer rope is also known as a *Chotki*. The woollen prayer rope is worn on the left wrist as part of monastic and Episcopal dress. Larger beads separate the knots into groups of 25 or 33. On each bead or knot the following mantra is said, 'Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God have mercy on me, a sinner'.

A modern *Chotki* uses a slightly different mantra, 'Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner'. The *Chotki* has been used as a silent 'breath prayer', with, 'Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the Living God' prayed on inhalation and 'have mercy on me, a sinner' prayed on exhalation.

FIGURE 11.10
Eastern Orthodox prayer ropes

Anglican rosary

Anglican use of the rosary is relatively new and blends the Roman Catholic rosary with the Orthodox prayer rope. The circle of the Anglican rosary symbolises the wheel of time. Prayer, which moves around the wheel of the rosary, represents the Christian's spiritual pilgrimage through time following Christ as Lord.

FIGURE 11.11
An Anglican rosary

The prayer beads are made up of thirty-three beads divided into four groups of seven, called weeks. Between each week is a single bead called a cruciform. The seven weeks represent the seven days of creation, seven seasons of the church's year and are divided by the four large beads, 'cruciform' beads representing the centrality of the cross. The prayer sequence begins with the cross on a pendant, followed by a large bead or invitatory bead – the invitation to praise and **worship**. It is suggested that people pray around the circle of beads three times, which signifies the Trinity. There is no set prayer that accompanies the Anglican Rosary.

worship
acts of religious devotion to God

Places of worship

As well as individual prayer, Christians gather for communal worship or prayer in buildings called churches, chapels or cathedrals. This is an important aspect of Christianity.

The early Christians met in houses to pray and to offer Eucharist. It was not until the third century, with the conversion of the Roman Emperor Constantine to Christianity, that the religion became tolerated. After this time churches were built and the religion became the official religion of the Roman Empire.

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FIGURE 11.12
Albert Street Uniting Cathedral

FIGURE 11.13
Church bells

Many churches are built in the shape of a cross (cruciform) although a few are round in shape. Churches vary from elaborate cathedrals, which hold the *cathedra* or chair of the Bishop, and basilicas to very simple buildings that allow people to meet. A central feature of all Christian churches is the altar, or table, and the lectern, from which the scriptures are proclaimed.

Before people used loud-speaker systems, many churches had a place from which the minister preached known as a pulpit. This raised and highly decorated small platform was positioned at the front or middle of the church so that the priest or minister could be heard by the whole congregation. Another feature of Christian churches is the baptismal font or pool. In some churches, this font is situated near the entrance, while in others it is close to the altar area. In Baptist churches it is a large pool that allows adults to be fully immersed in the water.

Most cathedrals have tall spires and a belltower. In the Middle Ages and beyond, churches were the centre of the village and bells were rung to remind people of prayer times. They functioned somewhat as clocks do today. The Roman Catholic Church, for instance, used one pattern of bell ringing to tell people that it was time for the Angelus, the prayer that commemorated the angel asking Mary to be the mother of Jesus, Mary's response and Jesus becoming flesh. These were rung at 6 am, 12

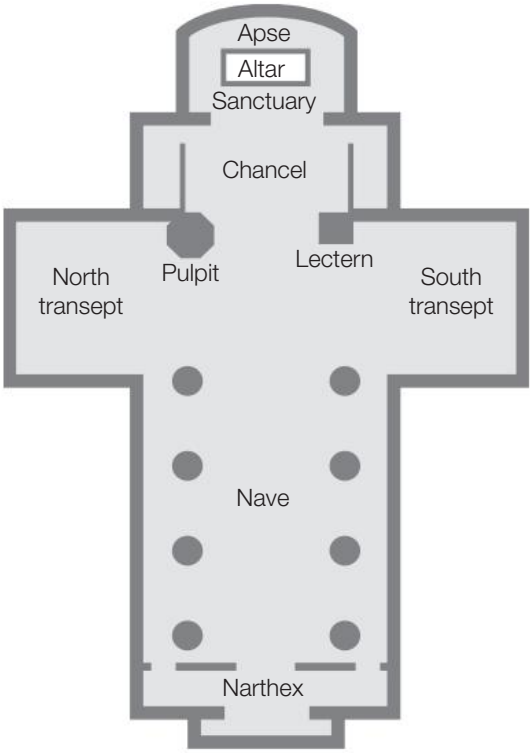

FIGURE 11.14
A floor plan of a cathedral

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noon and 6 pm, using a ring pattern of three tolls repeated three times followed by nine single tolls and concluding with three tolls. An ordinary chiming of the bells reminded people that it was time for Mass. Some churches, in fact, rang a warning bell a half-hour before Mass, a five-minute bell and a bell as Mass began. A slow tolling of bells indicated a funeral. A number of Anglican churches have retained the art of 'change ringing' where people ring sets of bells following a numeric pattern.

Two churches in France stand out for their beauty – the Cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris and Chartres Cathedral, southwest of Paris. Many pilgrims visit these churches and are moved by the way the story of Christ is carved in stone and told in the stained-glass windows. These depictions encourage worshippers to follow the example of such a virtuous person. The rose window in Notre Dame is particularly beautiful and raises the vision of the pilgrim to the heavens.

FIGURE 11.15
Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris

Activity 11.9

Investigating

Visit the homepages of the following churches and cathedrals in order to complete the table on Worksheet 11.9.

1 Notre Dame: www.notredamedeparis.fr/-English-
2 Marienkirche: www.marienkirche-berlin.de/de/english
3 St Michael's: www.coventrycathedral.org.uk
4 La Sagrada Familia: www.sagradafamilia.cat/sf-eng/index.php
5 St Andrew's: www.saintandrews.org.

Activity 11.10

Reasoning

1 Why do you think churches from the Middle Ages to the twentieth century were highly decorated? What function did the stained glass windows and religious imagery serve?
2 Why do you think many Christian Churches are dramatically simpler in scale than these large and ornate churches?
3 Examine the physical layout of two or three local churches. What traditional features are included? What has been added or removed?

Major festivals

By the sixth century, a calendar had evolved that is still followed by most Christians today. Catholics and Orthodox Christians follow the traditional calendar while Protestants celebrate only a few of the traditional feast days. Western Christians follow a Gregorian calendar, the one now in common use in the Western world. Eastern Christians follow a Julian calendar of the Roman Empire where celebrations occur a few weeks after the Gregorian calendar.

The Christian calendar pivots around two major Christian feasts, Easter and the birth of Jesus.

Activity 11.11

Investigating

Gregorian and Julian calendars

Complete the table on Worksheet 11.11 with the dates for the celebration of the Holy Days listed for both the Gregorian and Julian calendars.

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TABLE 11.1
Christian festivals

Liturgical Season	Holy Day	Time of year
Lent	Ash Wednesday	40 days prior to Easter Sunday (omitting Sundays)
	Palm Sunday	Sunday before Easter Sunday
	Holy Thursday	Thursday before Easter Sunday
	Good Friday	Friday before Easter Sunday
Easter	Easter Sunday	Sunday following the first full moon after the March equinox
Easter ends	Pentecost	Seven weeks after Easter Sunday
Advent	First Sunday of Advent	Four Sundays before Christmas day
Christmas begins	Christmas Day	25 December
Christmas ends	Epiphany	6 January

Epiphany, on 6 January, remembers the *magi* who came from the east to see the newborn Christ and it is a celebration of the revealing of Christ's divinity. Traditionally, it also signals the day to remove Christmas decorations and to put away the crib (figures used to represent the birth of Jesus).

Ash Wednesday, in February or March, signals the first day of Lent, which commemorates the 40 days that Jesus spent in the wilderness preparing for his public ministry (see Matthew 4:1–17 and Luke 4:1) and encourages Christians to prepare for Easter. Some Christians receive ash on their forehead as a reminder that life is short and they should turn away from their sin and repent. The day ushers in the period of fasting and prayer, which should characterise Christian behaviour over the next 40 days. Once people only ate one small meal in the evening and did not eat meat. Today observance is not as strict but people are encouraged to fast and to give to charity at this time.

Holy Thursday, also known as Maundy Thursday, commemorates the last meal that Jesus celebrated with his disciples. Sometimes this service includes a symbolic washing of the feet of some of the congregation to commemorate Jesus washing the feet of his disciples recorded in John 13:1–20.

Good Friday marks the death of Jesus on the cross and is called 'good' because, through the death of Jesus, Christians gain forgiveness for their sins. In some traditions it is a day of fasting.

Easter Sunday marks the resurrection of Jesus and Christians celebrate new life on this date. The vigil liturgy is marked by a *Paschal* Fire and the blessing of holy water to be used throughout the coming year. In some traditions, people wishing to join the faith become full members during this celebration.

Ascension Thursday, in May or June, celebrates Jesus' ascension to heaven where, according to scripture, he is seated at the right hand of God.

Pentecost Sunday, also in May or June, commemorates the first Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit is said to have come up on the Apostles. They began preaching to the assembled crowd and so it marks the beginning of the Christian church.

Advent, in November or December, is the beginning of the church's calendar year and introduces a period of fasting and prayer in preparation for Christmas.

Christmas Day is on 25 December and celebrates the birth of Jesus. This is an arbitrary date for the birth of Jesus, chosen in about the fourth century, but it occurs just after the time of the winter solstice in the northern hemisphere.

Pilgrimage

Pilgrimage is a journey undertaken for religious reasons, usually to a place regarded as holy or sacred or to where a holy event is taking place. Through the spiritual experience, pilgrims may learn more about themselves and sometimes they feel closer to God. Pilgrimage may also be a ritual of purification and penitence.

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FIGURE 11.16
Pilgrims on road to Santiago de Compostela in Spain

FIGURE 11.17
World Youth Day in Sydney 2008

Pilgrimage has been a part of Christianity from early times: St Helena, mother of the Emperor Constantine, is said to have undertaken a pilgrimage to the Holy Lands (Israel) within the first century of Christianity. Many of the places in Jerusalem and its surrounding countryside are associated with the life of Jesus and, in particular, the locations of his final week are reported to have been rediscovered by St Helena.

In the Middle Ages, some places in Europe became centres of pilgrimage. One such famous pilgrimage is to Santiago de Compostela in Spain, where pilgrims walk across mountainous country to the tomb of St James.

Rome is also a place of pilgrimage as it contains many sites associated with the early Christian Church, and in particular, the catacombs, where Christians persecuted by the Romans were buried. In some European cities and villages, local shrines commemorating a saint have become places of pilgrimage. In England during the Middle Ages, a pilgrimage to Canterbury was very popular and is commemorated in the *Canterbury Tales* by Chaucer. Other pilgrimages may be occasional occurrences, where people come together at a particular time and for a particular Christian purpose, for example, for World Youth Day.

The history of Christianity

Early Christianity

The Acts of the Apostles record the early years of the followers of Jesus after his death and resurrection. It is said to be written by Luke, who wrote one of the Gospels, and is a continuation of that story. Acts 2:1–4 recounts the first Pentecost, when the disciples began to preach and experience the coming of the Holy Spirit. Peter preached about Jesus of Nazareth and told the assembled people to repent and be baptised for the forgiveness of sins and to receive the Holy Spirit. Many believed him and were baptised.

Thus the church began, in about the year 30 CE. This story illustrates the first Christians' belief that they were inspired by God to continue the message of Jesus. It also illustrates the early progress in their preaching. Many of these Aramaic-speaking Jews continued living the life of a pious Jew. They went to the Temple, kept the food laws and practised circumcision. What distinguished them from other Jews was being baptised in the name of Jesus, learning his teaching from the Apostles and meeting together to break bread and give thanks (Eucharist).

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Gradually they developed a custom of holding things in common and sharing their goods with the poor (Acts 2:31–37; 4:32–35). Over the next 200 years, Christianity began to spread, largely due to the missionary efforts, from Jews to Greeks, or Hellenists as they were known at the time. Arguments developed over different practices, and as 12 Apostles had been appointed to look after the Hebrew community, so too seven men were chosen to take care of the Hellenists. The Hellenists became missionaries throughout the Mediterranean world.

When disputes arose over the conditions for the acceptance of Gentiles (non-Jews) as followers, the First Council was called in Jerusalem in 70 CE. After a vision, Peter agreed that Christians did not have to become Jews before accepting the faith. Other difficulties developed with the meal at the end of the Eucharist, particularly about eating with people who did not keep Jewish dietary laws. Peter was somewhat reluctant to change, but Paul and Barnabas thought they should change. James, the head of the community in Jerusalem, argued against Paul and Barnabas but Peter accepted Paul's position. James insisted that when eating with Jewish Christians, Gentile Christians should abstain from eating blood (Acts 15:29).

In the first missionary journey recorded, Paul, accompanied by Barnabas, preached in synagogues and then other gathering places without imposing Jewish practices on new Christians. Tradition says that Peter and Paul journeyed to Rome and were martyred there. Evidence for this is scant but it appears likely and probably occurred around the time of Nero in 64 CE.

The destruction of the Temple of Jerusalem in 70 CE, while a devastating event for Judaism, also had a marked effect upon Christianity. The Christian community fled from Jerusalem and were under pressure to separate themselves from Judaism. Because of the ease of travel on good Roman roads, the Church expanded West into the Roman Empire, where new philosophical ideas were added and the message of Christianity was expressed in a way that enabled Hellenists and Roman citizens to understand it.

The Roman Empire was organised as a strictly hierarchical structure but the Christian community welcomed everyone as equal in the sight of God, regardless of their wealth or gender. The poor,

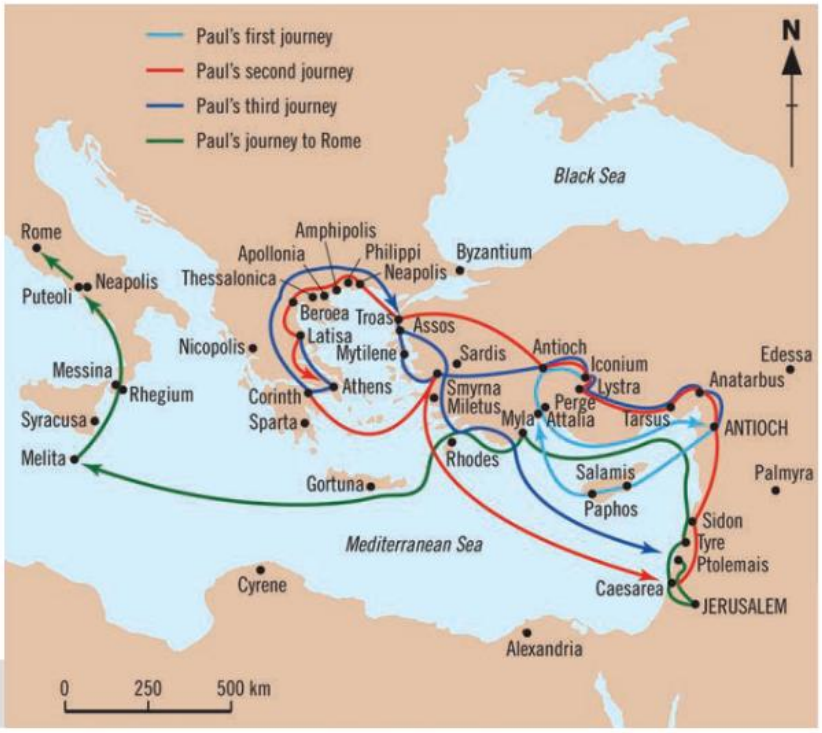

FIGURE 11.18
Paul's journeys

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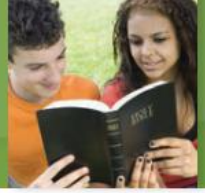

especially slaves and women, were attracted to the new religion. Romans regarded Christians as atheists because they did not take part in worshipping the Emperor. Romans were also curious about Christians gathering together for evening meals and some even accused them of indulging in orgies; others considered them cannibals because of confusion over Eucharist and the body of Christ.

In answer to these, and other accusations, Christians wrote texts explaining their beliefs. In doing so, they defended Christianity to the Gentiles and Jews. Some of these writings survived, such as the 'Apology of Tertullian of Carthage', written about 197 CE. Tertullian links Christian belief with Hebrew scriptures to show that the foundation of Christianity is ancient. He also demonstrates that Christianity is a reasonable religion.

Activity 11.12

Response to stimulus: comprehension and understanding questions

Read extracts from the Tertullian Apology (Chapters 37 and 42) on Worksheet 11.12 and answer the following questions:

1 What does Tertullian say most clearly distinguishes Christians from others around them?
2 Who are 'brethren', according to Tertullian?
3 Why do Christians 'exercise restraint' upon themselves according to this text?
4 Why, according to Tertullian, should Christians not withdraw from society?
5 List the factors in this text that led to Christians being marginalised.

However, the apologists' writings were not convincing, and soon after Christians began to be persecuted. This persecution led to torture and martyrdom for many Christians.

During the second century, there were disagreements in the young church about interpretation and teaching. Christians of Jewish descent were anxious to maintain the laws of Judaism, particularly belief in one God, so they saw Jesus as a teacher marked by God at his baptism. However, they came to be regarded as heretics (someone who rejects or challenges the doctrines of the church) by their fellow Christians.

Another group considered knowledge (gnosis) to be a gift given only to a select few. They may have been Christian heretics, or people who drew on a number of religions including Christianity. Many of these ideas came from deep religious searching, and they won some acceptance because they engaged with deep questions within human beings. Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons, wrote *Against Heresies* in which he pointed out the errors involved in these teachings and pleaded with Christians to refer to the tradition of the Apostles. He also began the habit of listing bishops who had succeeded one another in Rome back to Peter and Paul to establish apostolic succession.

Activity 11.13

Response to stimulus: extract from *Against Heresies* by Irenaeus of Lyons, Book 1, Chapter 27 paragraphs 2–3.

Read the text on Worksheet 11.13 and complete the following:

1 Summarise the errors attributed by Irenaeus to Marcion of Pontus.
2 List the emotive language choices employed by Irenaeus in this text. What does this suggest about his purpose?
3 What is suggested by Irenaeus' final point regarding those who err in their beliefs about Jesus?
4 Irenaeus refers to several sources of authority in this passage. Who are they and why has he done this?

During the first two centuries, many **heresies** emerged as people tried to adequately explain the central concepts of Christianity. **Docetists** believed in the divinity of Christ but said that he only appeared to be human. The **Sabellians** said that Jesus was not of the same substance as the Father; and Arius denied

heresies the rejection of one or more established beliefs of a religious body, or adherence to 'other beliefs'

Docetists those who believe that Jesus' physical body was an illusion, as was his crucifixion

Sabellians those who believe the Heavenly Father, Resurrected Son and Holy Spirit are different modes or aspects of one God, as perceived by the believer, rather than three distinct persons in God

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that Christ was divine. As each heresy was declared, Christians had to seek new ways of responding to these challenges. In the second century, Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch, defended the Incarnation, saying that Jesus was truly human not merely one who had taken on the likeness of humanity. Irenaeus saw humanity as striving towards union with God.

Another early Christian scholar, Origen, preached on the meaning of the Christian scriptures, but was later accused of heresy. Yet it was Origen who used the term 'Trinity' and 'person' in regard to God. Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage, tried to preserve the unity of the Church.

In approximately 312 CE, Constantine became Emperor in the west. He was 'converted' to Christianity before a battle (although he was only baptised on his deathbed). In the *Edict of Milan,* 313 CE, Constantine and Licinius, emperors of the west and east respectively, allowed for religious freedom and particularly for Christians to worship as they chose. Initially, Christianity was made equal to other religions, but gradually Christianity came to be favoured in the Empire.

Because the state considered itself Christian, a new relationship between church and state developed. While the Emperor Constantine supported the church, he also intervened in church affairs. As the heretic arguments grew, Constantine called the first council of bishops, the Council of Nicea. The Council of Nicea was the first ecumenical, or worldwide, council and was held in 325 CE. Its purpose was to settle arguments about the nature of Jesus, such as: 'Was he truly God? Was he truly human?'

Only after Constantine threatened to imprison all bishops unless they agreed upon a statement, did the assembly accept what became known as the *Nicene Creed*. In developing the *Nicene Creed*, the council accepted the original creed by Eusebius, but added the adjective *homoousios* to describe the Son as being of the 'same substance' as the Father. However, many in the East rejected this formula, the exception being Athanasius, the Bishop of Alexandria.

The Emperor retained the title *Pontifex Maximus* or great pontiff, head of traditional religion.

Activity 11.14

Investigating, reasoning and judging: response to stimulus

Read the *Apostles' Creed* and the *Nicene Creed* on Worksheet 11.14.

1. List, in two columns, the articles of belief in the *Apostles' Creed* and then the *Nicene Creed*.
2. Identify differences between the *Apostles' Creed* and the *Nicene Creed*.
3. Write a statement about the nature of the differences in the creeds.
4. Write a structured paragraph of 250 words about the changes that occurred with the formulation of the *Nicene Creed* in 325 CE. Your paragraph should have a topic sentence, evidence sentences and a concluding sentence.
5. Extension activity: complete a similar exercise in three columns including the *Athanasian Creed*.

Later, in 381CE, the Council of Constantinople reaffirmed the *Nicene Creed* but added a clause about the Holy Spirit proceeding from the Father. This formula reflected Eastern theology. The Catholic bishop Augustine argued that the Holy Spirit proceeded from the Father and the Son (double procession) and the 'Filoque' (from the Son) clause was accepted in the West with the support of Charlemagne. However, the Popes did not endorse this clause until the eleventh century.

In 451 CE, the Council of Chalcedon decreed that Jesus was both human and divine. However this decree caused Egypt and Syria to split from the Catholic Church and form the Coptic and Syrian Orthodox Church respectively.

By 1054 CE, differences between the Eastern and Western church had grown significantly and a Great Schism occurred, where the Greek Christian Church split from the church in Rome. The Greek Church was headed by the Patriarch or bishop in Constantinople, while the church in Rome was led by the Pope. The church in Rome came to be called the Catholic, or universal, Church. The Orthodox Church adopted the name of the 'right-thinking' church.

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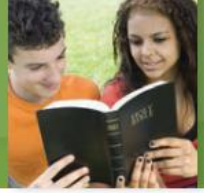

Middle Ages

In 1095 CE, the First Crusade began as an attempt to recapture the Christian holy places in Israel that had been conquered by Muslims. At the Council of Clermont in 1095, Pope Urban II called for a crusade to help Christians in the east and to win back the holy places. The Pope granted **plenary indulgences** to crusaders.

The crusaders captured Jerusalem in 1099 and massacred the inhabitants of the city. In 1187 CE, Jerusalem was captured by the Turks. By 1292, after a number of crusades, most of which were unsuccessful, there were no crusaders left in Palestine.

During the eleventh and twelfth centuries, individuals in the church became increasingly concerned about safeguarding the unity of faith. In 1233 CE, the Inquisition was set up by the Catholic Church to search out heretics, attempt to persuade them to change their views and to punish the recalcitrant. It is difficult for us to understand how, at that time, fear and violence ruled people's lives and the kind of hysteria and suffering of individuals who were accused of heresy. Yet reportedly the purpose of the Inquisition was to save people from suffering eternal torture in hell.

The Renaissance

The Renaissance was a time of improved education, and new thinking, when works from antiquity in literature, arts and science were reintroduced to society. By the end of the fifteenth century, modern nation-states began gradually to emerge from a struggle of princes with the Pope. In addition, many Christians wanted reform in the church. The invention of the printing press revolutionised communication – ideas began to circulate that indicated a need for reform. For instance, in his book *Utopia*, Thomas More included a criticism of the church and society of his day, although he remained steadfastly loyal to the church. Another instance is Erasmus' book, *In Praise of Folly*, in which he criticised much of society, and particularly the world of the church. He wanted to improve theology by making original documents available.

Reformation

In 1517 CE, an event began that was as significant to the church as the Schism of 1054 CE. A German Catholic priest, Martin Luther, nailed a protest about practices in the Church to a church door. This began a widespread movement that split the Western world violently and eventually led to the formation of the Protestant churches, who moved away from the Church of Rome.

FIGURE 11.19
Thomas More

Martin Luther

While the 95 theses he nailed on the door of the church at Wittenberg may have been an invitation to debate, they nevertheless led to bitter arguments. In 1520, Luther was given two months to retract 41 of his propositions and in 1521, he was excommunicated for refusing to do so. He was summoned to the Diet of Worms (an assembly in the town of Worms) and after his appearance there had to go into hiding.

Germany was divided into those for and against Martin Luther. There were different reasons for supporting him. Some nobles saw possibilities to gain church land and some princes sought political power and freedom. However, the vast majority of people supported him because of their convictions. Luther was concerned at the way some peasants were rebelling in his name, and after they burned convents and churches, called on nobles to massacre the rebels. He also broke with Erasmus, who did not like the pessimistic way Luther thought of human beings and freedom.

Luther may well have had no intention of beginning a new church, as he thought that a church that returned to the Gospel would reform itself. In 1529, he published a **Catechism** in which he emphasised that salvation comes from God through faith alone. According to him, good works do not make people good, but people justified by God do good works. Scripture and

plenary indulgences the remission of 'temporal punishments', i.e. time spent in purgatory, still due for sins that had already been forgiven

Catechism a book that outlines the faith in the form of questions and answers

FIGURE 11.20
Martin Luther

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faith would lead to salvation. He reduced the seven sacraments to two: Baptism and Eucharist because of their scriptural basis. He maintained the 'real presence' is contained in the Eucharist and celebrated Eucharist in the vernacular.

predestination the Calvinist doctrine that God decides who will be saved and who will be damned irrespective of a person's exercise of free will

Activity 11.15

Investigating and reasoning

Read the extracts from Luther's 95 theses on Worksheet 11.15.

1 Explain in simple language what each statement, extracted from Luther's work, means.
2 How does each statement relate to the central teaching of Luther that scripture and faith lead to salvation?

Zwingli

Other reformers include Huldrych Zwingli (1484–1531) a disciple of Erasmus, who secularised convents, conducted liturgy in German and destroyed statues. He wanted a church based on the Gospels and free from foreign interference. He used force, particularly against Anabaptists, and disagreed with Luther in that he saw only a symbolic presence of Christ in the Eucharist. He also removed all music from church services.

John Calvin

John Calvin (1509–1564) published the *Institutes of the Christian Religion* in Latin to provide the French with a good understanding of Reformation doctrine. He fled France and worked largely in the city of Geneva, where the work of Zwingli had prepared the way. His doctrine was more systematic than that of Luther but he gave equal emphasis to scripture and faith. While Luther allowed some flexibility in preserving elements of the Mass, Calvin had a more austere approach to worship. He was energised by the idea of the sovereignty of God and was concerned about the effect of original sin. He believed in **predestination**, that God saved those whom he chose.

He defended infant baptism and believed that Christ gave himself to us when we receive the bread and wine in Eucharist. He divided ministry into four areas of pastors, doctors, elders and deacons. He established a model of church life that is governed by twelve elders with the pastor. He allowed usury, lending of money at interest and this, coupled with his belief in predestination, led many to associate his ideas with capitalism.

Activity 11.16

Investigating and reasoning

Calvin wrote the *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (1536) in Latin. The work was later expanded and translated into French in 1541 and was enlarged to four volumes in 1559 and became known as the *theological summa* of Reformed Protestantism.

1 Read the two extracts from the *Institutes of the Christian Religion* on Worksheet 11.16.
2 Explain their main points in simple language.

The central tenets of the Reformation include:

Centrality of the Bible – believers should read the *Bible* regularly.
Return to simple Christianity – Christians should follow the early traditions and avoid later alterations.
Centrality of Jesus – Jesus is the one way to God.
Direct relation to God – eliminate all that is not necessary to this relationship.
Salvation by grace alone – people are saved by the grace and mercy of God not by personal action or the action of others.
Nature and reason are corrupt – no human action can help a person achieve salvation because all are corrupted by Adam's sin.
The grace of God comes only through Jesus Christ – God forgives the sin of those destined for salvation.
Salvation by faith alone – the grace of God is given through faith only.
Certainty of salvation – people cannot reject God's grace once it is given.
Reduction of sacramental system – only Baptism and Eucharist were retained as Sacraments.
Different understanding of the Church – the church is an association of believers and does not mediate between God and humankind.
Virtue the consequence of being saved – if a person leads a good life that is a sign that God has granted salvation.
Elimination of prayers for the dead – a person is either saved or not saved.

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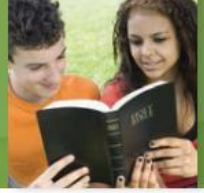


The Diet of Speyer in 1526 allowed German princes freedom to reform in their lands but in 1529, the Diet withdrew this concession. The princes who wished to introduce the Reformation protested at this and this protest gave the name Protestant to the movement. In 1555, the religious peace of Augsburg allowed the princes of Germany to choose their religion and that of all their subjects.

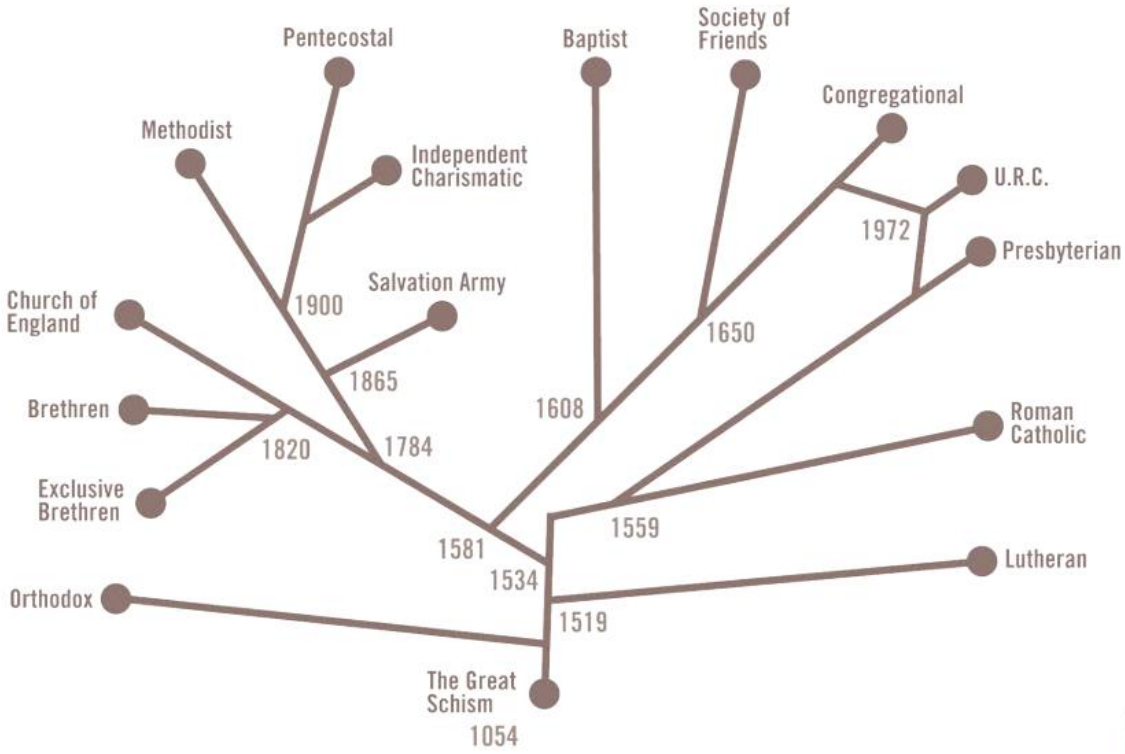
Reformation in England

The Reformation in England came about because King Henry VIII clashed with Pope Leo X over the question of the King's divorce. Henry wanted to annul his marriage to Catherine of Aragon because Catherine had not given him a son and heir. Henry declared himself head of the Church of England (*Act of Supremacy, 1534*) and instituted an entire break with Rome. Persecutions of Catholics followed. He suppressed monasteries and used their wealth, accrued over many years, to support his regime.

King Henry VIII retained the essence of the Catholic faith in the *Six Articles of 1539*. After his death he was first succeeded by his son Edward VI (a minor) during whose reign *The Book of Common Prayer* (1559) was developed. Henry's daughter Mary Tudor, gained the throne in 1553 and restored Catholicism. The real founder of Anglicanism is Elizabeth I who succeeded Mary in 1558 and who promulgated the *Thirty-Nine Articles* (1563) that outlined Anglican belief.

Counter-Reformation

Attempts were also made to reform the Roman Catholic Church from the inside, and this became known as the counter-reformation. Some of the reformers belonged to religious orders and new orders were formed such as the Jesuits, who follow the spiritual exercises of Ignatius of Loyola. The Jesuits attempted to improve understanding by educating people.



▲ This tree shows the dates and breakaway points of Christian denominations. The groups that broke away from Catholicism and the Church of England before 1788 came to be represented in the new colony of New South Wales.

FIGURE 11.21
This diagram shows the various Christian denominations

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Council of Trent

The Council of Trent (1545–1563) was a gathering of bishops to formulate the Roman Catholic Church's response to the Reformation. The Reformation had torn Europe apart through wars and violence, as princes declared themselves for one side or the other. The Catholic Church was defensive and met to consider its position. The council met three times in Trent, Bologna and Trent and the finally concluding in 1563. The council defined dogma (doctrine) concerning the justification and collaboration of God and humanity in salvation, and asked for reforms, particularly for the education of priests, founding seminaries for their training.

Consequently, the Pope published the Roman Catechism, Roman Breviary and the Roman Missal. Gregory XIII reformed the calendar, founded a number of colleges and set up central government for the church. Pope Paul V published the Roman Ritual, which set out rules for celebrating the sacraments. This period in the life of the Roman Catholic Church is also referred to as the Catholic Reformation.

Activity 11.17

Investigating and reasoning: response to stimulus

Extracts from the *Decisions of the Council of Trent*

Read the extracts on Worksheet 11.17 and answer the questions below.

1 In the *Decree Concerning the Canonical Scriptures,* what two sources of Catholic authority are affirmed in this text and why is each granted such affirmation?
2 In the *Decree On Justification*, what do you think 'anathema' means, based on its context here?
3 Write in your own words the meaning of each Canon provided.
4 In *On the Sacraments in General* and *On the Most Holy Sacrament, the Eucharist* what reason does this text provide to justify its assertion that there are seven sacraments? What is the current name for 'Extreme Unction'?
5 In the *Method of Establishing Seminaries for Clerics and of Educating the Same Therein* what reasons are given for ideally training youths in seminaries?
6 In the *Decree on the Reformation of Marriage* what is the status of civil marriages, according to this statement of the Council?
7 Find four extracts from the texts provided that rebut particular Protestant beliefs and explain your choice for each extract.

Mission

The discoveries of the 'New World' in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries led to a new era of evangelisation that was dependent on commercial and national expeditions. From a religion that was predominantly based in Europe, Christianity spread as far as South America and Japan. Jesuit missionaries travelled to Goa in India, Macau in China and Francis Xavier attempted to convert people in Japan. European Catholic missionaries were successful in the Philippines and Guam and French Catholics converted many in South-East Asia and the Pacific. Protestants evangelised in the US, Canada and South Africa.

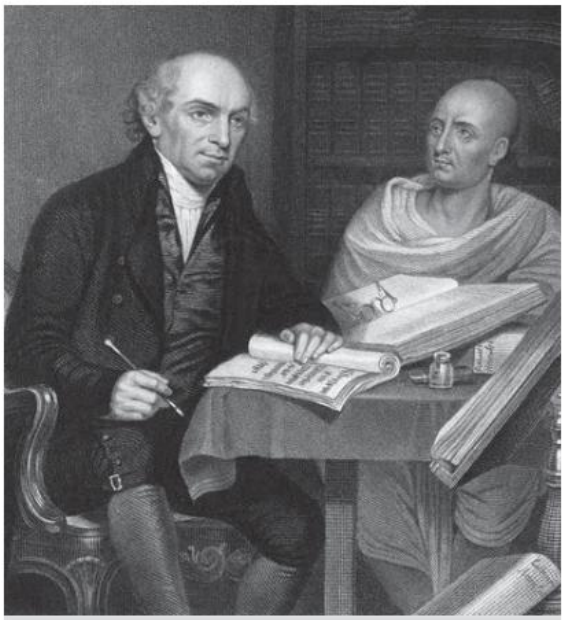

FIGURE 11.22
Reverend W. Carey, a Christian missionary in India

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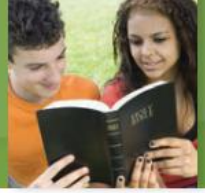

Missionaries were ill prepared to confront new civilisations and cultures. They were often shocked by local practices and in preaching Christianity they were unable to distinguish cultural practice in their own religion from essential beliefs. They tended to destroy native religions and replace them with their enculturated version of Christianity.

Today, most mainstream missionary activity is more conscious of the value of local customs and of not imposing Western values on Indigenous peoples. However, there are still instances where evangelical and fundamentalist Christian minorities are so focused on **mission** that they do not pay adequate attention to language and customs of the people among whom they minister.

The modern period

One of the features of the modern period was the development of ecumenism.

Initially, ecumenism began as small movements within the same denomination of Christianity, as people wanted to retain a degree of unity among members across the world. In 1846, a Universal Evangelical Alliance of different Protestant denominations began and then in 1867, the first Anglican Lambeth Conference gathered. The Lambeth Conference now meets every ten years in Canterbury Cathedral in England. Later the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, the World Baptist Alliance, the World Lutheran Federation and the YMCA and YWCA (Young Men's/Women's Christian Association) formed.

During World War I, a Lutheran Archbishop of Uppsala, Nathan Söderblom, appealed to Christians to pray for world peace. When the war ended he founded the Life and Work Movement also known as Practical Christianity and it met for the first time in 1925 with over 600 delegates from 27 countries. A second meeting was held in Oxford in 1937, at which 124 churches and 44 countries were represented. Later in Edinburgh, people called for a mutual understanding of all believers to be developed, which ultimately resulted in the formation of the World Council of Churches (WCC) in 1948. In 1964, the Roman Catholic Church at the Second Vatican Council released its Decree on Ecumenism, *Unitatis Redintegratio*, which was a monumental step forward for the Catholic faithful.

World Council of Churches

The World Council of Churches (WCC) is an umbrella organisation for Christians and represents 400 million Christians in 330 churches, denominations and fellowships. The WCC provides a space where member churches can reflect, act, worship and work together; challenge and support each other; and share and debate with each other. Although the Roman Catholic Church is not a member, it has sent official observers to general assemblies and cooperates in a number of commissions. Some evangelical churches are also not members. The WCC has three main areas of interest: faith and the witness; justice and service; and communication through the promotion of tolerance and knowledge globally.

As members of WCC fellowship, member churches:

- are called to the goal of visible unity in one faith and one Eucharistic fellowship
- promote their common witness in work for mission and evangelism
- engage in Christian service by serving human need, breaking down barriers between people, seeking justice and peace and upholding the integrity of creation
- foster renewal in unity, worship, mission and service.

Vatican II

The Second Vatican Council was the result of more than twenty years of theological and pastoral research. Pope John XXIII, elected on 28 October 1958, seventy-seven years old and considered a 'caretaker pope' was concerned that the church no longer played a role in many areas of life. On 25 January 1959, he announced a synod for the diocese of Rome; a reforming of Canon law; and a council of the universal church. He asked the church to throw open its windows and to get in touch with the modern world.

During the council, the Catholic Church listened not only to other Christian churches but also to other religions. Many changes occurred as a result, not least of which was developing a more tolerant attitude towards people of other faiths.

mission
a group of persons sent by a church to carry on religious work, especially evangelisation in foreign lands, and often to establish schools, hospitals, etc.

FACT

Ecumenism is a movement that seeks to achieve unity of Christians; from the Greek, *oikumene*, meaning the inhabited world.

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FIGURE 11.23
The Second Vatican Council showing the entrance of John XXIII

such interaction as integral to the Church's life and mission. The WCC has also issued statements regarding other faiths and has participated in gatherings of religious leaders of various traditions. Leadership in inter-faith relations has led to general church members also becoming involved in local and national dialogues and inter-faith relations. Prerequisite for engagement in inter-faith dialogue is a sound and educated understanding of the 'home tradition' and a mutual agreement to accept the very real differences that exit between traditions.

Inter-religious dialogue

inter-religious dialogue cooperative and positive interaction between people of different religious traditions

More recently, Christians have recognised the importance of inter-faith relations and have involved themselves actively in **inter-religious dialogue**. For over forty years, the Catholic Church has developed directives that encourage and assist Christians to engage with people of other faith traditions, declaring

Conclusion

Christianity, the most populous of the world's religions, has influenced much of the foun-dations of the Western world. Roman Catholicism, Orthodoxy and Protestantism profess that there is one God and hold that Jesus Christ is their saviour. As followers of Jesus, Christians engage actively in the service of society and many are involved in social welfare and action programs aimed at assisting the less fortunate and educating people to reach their potential.

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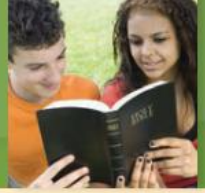

End of chapter activities

Activity 11.18

Framing

1 List ways in which Christianity is evident in Australian culture.
2 Devise a list of 10 questions, the answers to each of which is 'Christianity'.

Activity 11.19

Investigating

1 On a map, locate the key places mentioned in this chapter related to the founding and history of Christianity.
2 Create a list of charities or care services administered by Christian denominations in your local area.
3 Conduct a media search in which you locate articles in a given day's newspaper which mention or refer to Christianity in any way. How many did you find? Is this what you expected? How was Christianity portrayed?
4 Generate a list of 10 Christian religious groups that operate in Australia. What is the particular charism, or spirituality, of each? How do they contribute to Australian society?

Activity 11.20

Framing, investigating and reasoning

1 Interview five friends or family members about their ideas or experiences with Christianity. Categorise their responses in a PMI chart.
2 List the public holidays in three Australian states.
3 What percentage of the state's public holidays are Christian festivals? Name them.
4 What percentage of your state's public holidays are festivals of other religions? Name them.
5 Browse the catalogue of a Christian store, for example www.word.com.au, www.koorong.com.au or www.stpauls.com.au/spbookcentre.
6 Choose one product to analyse and explain how it reflects the teachings of Christianity about God and/or humanity.

Activity 11.21

Reasoning

1 Compare and contrast the structure of the weekly worship rituals of two Christian denominations.
2 The *Bible* contains four Canonical accounts of the life of Jesus. Find out about others. Suggest reasons why these other accounts might have been excluded from the formal Canon of Christianity.

Activity 11.22

Judging

In two columns, list points and evidence to support and refute a statement chosen from the list below. Based on these points and evidence, choose whether you agree or disagree with the statement and write a speech to forcefully express your point of view.

1 'Belief in heaven and hell reinforces ethical behaviour.'
2 'Christianity has had its day.'
3 'Christianity has had a significant influence on Australian society.'

Activity 11.23

Reflecting

1 How have my ideas about Christianity been confirmed and challenged?
2 How might what I have learned during this investigation affect my attitude or behaviour?
3 How could my investigation into Christianity have been enhanced?

CHAPTER REVIEW

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ISLAM: THE FACTS

Number of adherents
- Approximately 1.5 billion (worldwide)
- 340 400 (Australia)

Sacred text
- The *Qur'an*

Place of worship
- Mosque

Symbol
- Star and Crescent

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CHAPTER TWELVE

ISLAM

'Call upon the Lord in humility and in private.'

(Qur'an 7:55)

CHAPTER OBJECTIVES

This chapter discusses:

- The history and development of Islam
- Groups within Islam
- Key teachings of Islam
- Principal practices of Islam
- *Sharia* law
- Prayer in Islam
- The Muslim calendar
- Muslim festivals and celebrations
- *Jihad*
- Cleanliness and purification in Islam
- Women in Islam
- Radical or fundamentalist Islam

KEY terms

Qur'an	Mecca	*jinn*	*Jihad*	*Yaum ul Jum'ah*
Allah	Sunni	*Salat*	*Khums*	*Ka'bah*
Muhammad	Shi'ite	*Sawm*	*Muezzin*	
umma	Sufi	*Hajj*	*rak'at*	
mosque	monism	*wudu*	*Ramadan*	
Medina	*Shahadah*	*zakat*	*sharia* law	

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Introduction

FACT

pbuh is an abbreviated version of 'Peace be upon Him' that Muslims say at any mention of Allah or the Prophet Muhammad.

Central to Islam and all Muslims is the absolute supremacy of God, also called Allah, *pbuh*.

God is believed to be the Creator and Judge, deserving of total submission. In turn, submission will bring salvation to the believer. In many ways, the belief system of Islam offers Muslims certainty. However, it would be wrong to suggest that aspects of the belief system are not open to interpretation and that the global Muslim community is a totally homogeneous entity. While, on the one hand, there is general agreement among Muslims of the oneness of God, the authority of the *Qur'an* and the Prophet Muhammad (*pbuh*), there are different interpretations of some laws including those regarding the role of women.

Qur'an
the central religious text of Islam

One of the challenges involved in studying Islam, and all religious traditions, is that it manifests itself in different ways in different contexts and locations. The challenge is to intelligently describe and analyse how the universalistic principles of Islam have been realised in various social and historical contexts without representing Islam as monolithic or monocultural.

Activity 12.1

Framing

1 What do you know about Islam?
2 What are some distinctive customs of Islam?
3 What enabled a relatively small religion to spread so rapidly?
4 How has Islam changed over time?
5 Who are some key people associated with Islam?
6 Are there Muslim communities in Australia, your state, local area? Where?
7 How is Islam represented in the media?
8 What is a symbol of Islam?
9 Complete the KWHL chart related to Islam on Worksheet 12.1.

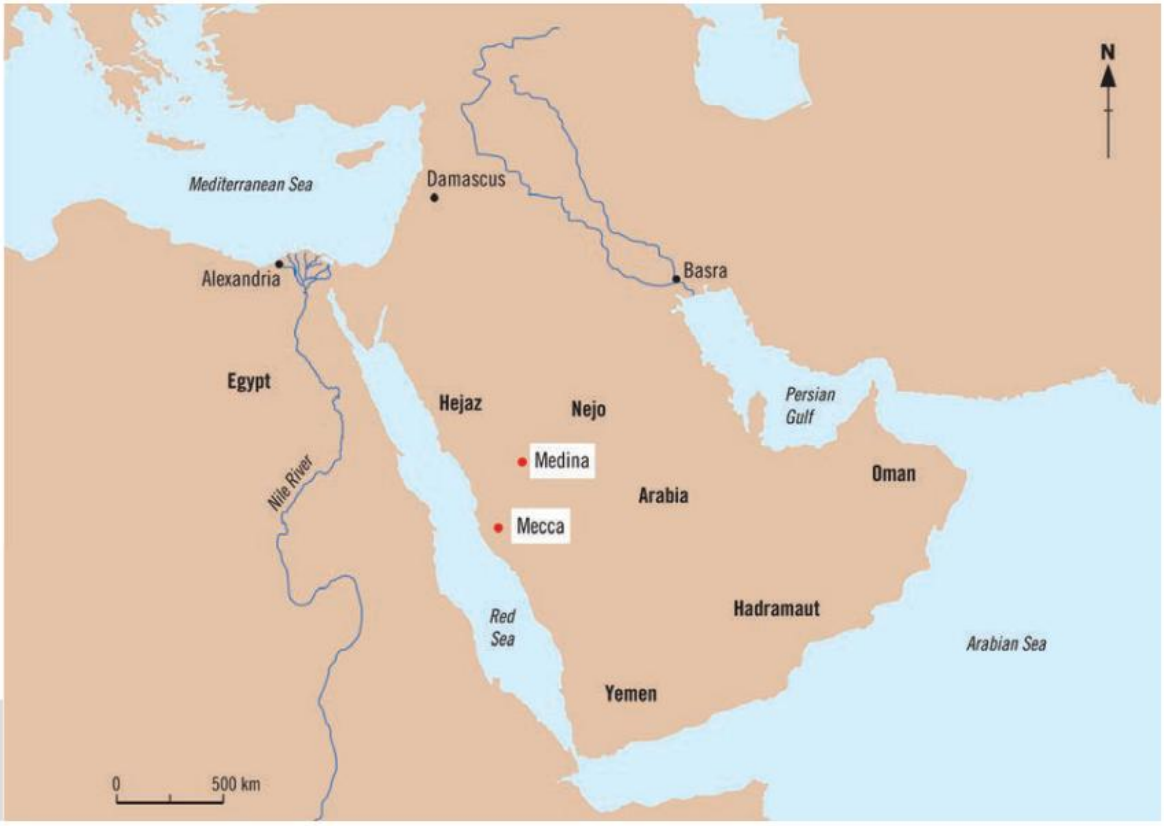

FIGURE 12.1
The Arabian Peninsula showing the cities of Medina and Mecca

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Timeline

CE	
c. 570	Birth of **Muhammad** Conquest of Yemen by the Persians
610	Muhammad's first visions
612–622	First Muslim community in **Mecca**
622	*Hijra*: Muhammad's flight from Mecca to **Medina** [Muslim year 1]
622–632	Muslim community in Medina Muslim raids and battle within Arabia
630	Muslims take Mecca
632	Death of Muhammad, *Caliphate* of Abu Bakr
634	Death of Caliph Abu Bakr, *Caliphate* of Umar b. al-Khattab
644	Death of Caliph Umar, *Caliphate* of Uthman b. al Affan
655–656	Promulgation of *Qur'an*
680	Death of Husayn, grandson of Muhammad
922	Execution of mystic al-Hallaj
1099	Conquest of Jerusalem by crusaders
1187	Saladin defeats crusaders at Hattin
1207–1273	**Sufi** poet Jalal-ud-Din Rumi
1258	Baghdad invaded by Mongols
1291	Muslim expulsion of crusaders from Israel
1299	Osman founds Ottoman Empire
1400s	Islam spreads through Asia
1453	Ottomans capture Constantinople
1492	Expulsion of Muslims from Spain
1582	Mughal expansion into India
1744	Muhammad Abd al Wahhab and Muhammad bin Saud found the kingdom of Saudi Arabia
1804	Shehu Usman Dan Fodio spreads Islam in West Africa
1885–1898	Mahdi establishes Muslim state in Sudan
1918	End of Ottoman Empire
1924	Ottoman *Caliphate* abolished
1947	Independence of Pakistan
1948	Arab-Israeli War
1950s	Muslims settle in Europe
1966	War between Arabs and Israelis
1979	Ayatollah Khomeini leads fundamentalist Islamic revolution in Iran
1996	Taliban regime gains power in Afghanistan

Muhammad
the founder of the religion of Islam, regarded by Muslims as a messenger and prophet of God

Mecca
the holiest city in Islam, located in Saudi Arabia

Medina
the second holiest city in Islam and the burial place of Muhammad

Sufi
a member of a devotional or mystical movement within Islam in which the individual aims to attain spiritual union with God through love

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The history and development of Islam

FIGURE 12.2
The *Ka'bah* as it looks today during *Hajj*

The Arab people before Muhammad worshipped many gods, venerated sacred stones, trees and springs and believed that spirits inhabited the desert. The people of Mecca worshipped a number of deities, one called **Allah** and three goddesses – the Daughters of Allah. An important focus of the worship of the people of Mecca was a structure called the *Kabah* that contains a sacred black stone. This ancient site of worship became the centre of pilgrimage in Islam.

Muhammad

We know very little about the early life of the Prophet Muhammad, but it is believed he was born around 570 CE and died in 632 CE. He belonged to one of the clans of Quraish, a tribe that controlled commerce in Mecca. Muhammad had a difficult early life. His father, Abdullah, died before Muhammad was born and his mother died when he was very young. Before being

Allah
a combination of the word Al, meaning the definite article 'the' and ilah, the arabic word for 'God'; thus Allah means the God

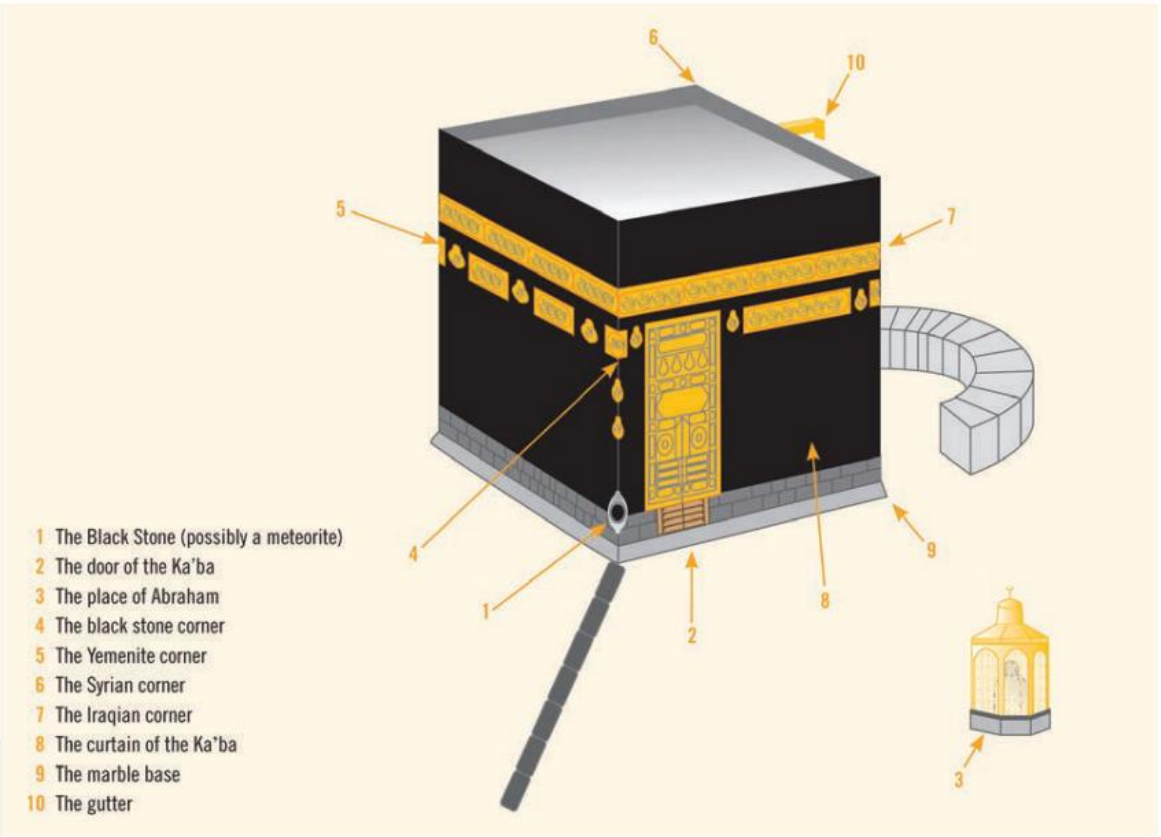

FIGURE 12.3
A diagram of the *Ka'bah* in Mecca

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adopted by an uncle, Abu Talib, he was cared for by his grandfather who made a modest living providing pilgrims with water from a well sacred to Allah. Some scholars think that growing up as an orphan made Muhammad sensitive to the poor and vulnerable. As a young adult, he worked as a caravan driver. In his mid-twenties he married the wealthy widow Khadija, who was probably about forty years of age. Together they had at least six children, but no male child survived into adulthood. After Khadija's death Muhammad remarried a number of times.

Muhammad was a religious person and spent time meditating. When he was about forty, he began to experience religious trances. At times during these trances, he would speak out in verse. While on retreat in a cave in Mount Hira he received his first revelation, which is recorded in the *Qur'an* – a bright presence came to him, held a cloth covered in writing before his eyes and commanded three times that he recite what was written:

> 'Recite in the name of the Lord who created –
> created man from clots of blood
> Recite! Your Lord is the Most Bountiful One,
> who by the pen taught man what he did not know.
> Indeed, man transgresses in thinking himself his own master; for to your Lord all things return …
> **Prostrate** yourself and come nearer.'

At first Muhammad doubted the revelations but Khadija encouraged him to accept the experience as a true communication from God. Muhammad became convinced that the bright presence was the angel Gabriel and he began to share his revelations with his wife, cousin Ali and friend Abu Bakr. These became the first Muslims, people who submit to God (Allah).

Initially Muhammad's message was not well received because it insisted that only one God, Allah, should be worshiped. Muhammad also denounced usury and the failure to keep fair contracts. Business people, particularly those trading images of tribal gods, were threatened by Muhammad's statements. Muhammad was protected by the tribe's obligation to his uncle. When his wife and uncle died, Muhammad was at the mercy of his powerful enemies in Mecca. During this time he experienced himself being carried to Jerusalem and ascending from there into paradise. Throughout this vision, called his Night Journey or Night of Ascent, he was guided by the angel Gabriel. As he ascended to the heavens he encountered angels and great prophets of the past and then finally entered into the presence of God. Muslims disagree whether this event was a personal vision or actual ascension to the heavens.

In 622, he left Mecca for the safety of Yathrib. The migration, called the *Hijra* (flight or migration), is a central event in Islam, as it marks not only the point when Muhammad's message began to be favourably received, but also the start of the Islamic community (***umma***). When tribes in the area began to clash, Muhammad was invited to arbitrate as a neutral outsider. His arbitration was successful and Muhammad became a key player in the politics of the area. He banished or executed his enemies and over time, gained control of the city. Eventually he organised Yathrib around the principles of what he considered a model Islamic society. He set up the first **mosque** (*masjid*) in Yathrib and established many of the rules about worship and social regulation. Yathrib, now called Medina (city of the prophet), along with Mecca and Jerusalem, has become a sacred Islamic site.

Muhammad's goal was to return to Mecca and in 624, Muslim soldiers from Medina triumphed over the citizens of Mecca. Skirmishes followed until 630 when Muhammad took control of Mecca. He destroyed all the images in the ***Ka'bah*** and marketplace and began to impose his religious ideals. When he died in 632 he had control of territory in Arabia and was planning to expand into Syria. His final sermon preached the brotherhood of all believers over and against tribal loyalties.

Muslims do not regard Muhammad as divine, but consider him free of sin and a model for all Muslims. According to Islam, he is the final and decisive Prophet through whom God made his final revelation to humankind; there are no more prophets after him; and there are no more revelations from God after the *Qur'an*.

umma
an Arabic word meaning Community or Nation

mosque
a place of worship for followers of Islam

prostrate
to lie stretched out with face on the ground in adoration or submission

Ka'bah
a cube-shaped building in Mecca, Saudi Arabia; the most sacred site in Islam

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Activity 12.2

Investigating

Annotate the timeline on Worksheet 12.2 by providing facts related to dates and events to increase basic understanding of key events.

Sunni a majority subdivision of Islam that accepts the legitimacy of the first four *Caliphs* and their successors

Shi'ite a minority subdivision ofIslam that claims that the true successors to Muhammad were Ali and his descendants

monism the notion that everything (including religion) is one; that there are no divisions

Groups within Islam

Sunni and Shi'ite

Muhammad appears not to have made any provision for a successor, so after he died a dispute arose that centred on whether a close relative of Muhammad or an early convert to Islam, who had worked with Muhammad, should lead the believers. The latter group, companions of the prophet, was supported by the main community, the **Sunni**, who chose to elect a pious member of Muhammad's tribe, Abu Bakr, as successor or *caliph*. He was followed by three successors and all four were known as the 'the rightly guided *caliphs*'. In Sunni Islam, the ultimate source of authority is the Muslim community. Sunni is the most widespread form of Islam.

A smaller group, the **Shi'ite**, insisted that leadership should run through Muhammad's family and since he had no surviving son, succession moved to Ali, Muhammad's cousin who had married his daughter, Fatima. In Shi'ite Islam, authority resides in the divinely appointed leader, the *Imam*, rather than the community. The Shi'ites also held the view that the *caliphs* would be empowered with the same spirit that had empowered Muhammad and so could speak authoritatively to new situations. In Sunni Islam, the *caliph* had no power to innovate. Shi'ite Islam is the predominant religion in Iran and has major communities in Lebanon and Iraq.

Sunni and Shi'ite Muslims agree on broad principles of Islam but Shi'ite Islam has distinctive practices. One of these, the celebration on the tenth day of Muharram, commemorates the death of Ali's son Husayn, who died in a battle against other Muslims. Husayn's suffering is regarded as redemptive and is often celebrated in dramatic form where participants flagellate themselves with chains and smear themselves with blood to symbolise them sharing Husayn's fate.

FIGURE 12.4
Shi'ite Muslims flagellating themselves

Sufis

Another strand in Islam is Sufism (from the Arabic for wool robe, *suf*, worn by early Sufis). Sufism is a devotional or mystical movement within Islam in which the individual aims to attain spiritual union with God through love, and therefore is often indifferent to political concerns. It holds that an individual, while on Earth, can experience God 'face to face'.

Orthodox Sufism views God and man as separate realities but some Sufis see the individual as only an appearance of God or a reflection of God. Some Sufis say that they are identical with God, a concept called **monism**, which has led to persecution by orthodox Muslims who view such a statement as blasphemy.

The Maulawiya order of Sufis, founded by Jalal-ud Din Rumi (1207–1273), used circular dancing to assist mystical experience. Such dances are known as *whirling dervish* and people still practise them today.

In some Muslim countries, the value of Sufism is disputed: many see it as the highest achievement of Islam, others are opposed to it because it appears to be too liberal.

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FIGURE 12.5
Whirling dervishes

Activity 12.3

Investigating and reasoning

1 Read the following poems by Sufi poets on Worksheet 12.3:
   a 'Suspended Blue Ocean' by Hafiz
   b 'Would You Think it Odd' by Hafiz
   c 'One Whisper of the Beloved' by Rumi.
2 As you read them look for:
   a images of God
   b experiences of God in creation
   c the relationship between the divine and creation, especially humanity.
3 Select phrases and images that describe:
   a the divine
   b creation
   c experiences (joy, love, fun)
   d people.

Activity 12.4

Reasoning

1 How does the poet Hafiz experience God?
2 What does this show of Sufism?
3 How is it different from or similar to other expressions of Islam?
4 What contribution might an exploration of Sufism make to perceptions and understandings of Islam?
5 How might Sufism be seen by some Muslims as too liberal? Provide an example to support your claim.

Activity 12.5

Judging

1 Using the Sufi poems from Worksheet 12.3, write a statement about the images of God in Islam.
2 Complete an 'Actitude analysis' on Sufism using Worksheet 12.5. This strategy combines the words, acts and attitudes and makes connections between attitudes and actions.
3 Analyse a given idea, doctrine or position held by a person or group.
4 Summarise the meaning of idea, doctrine or position.
5 Identify and record the attitudes/values embedded in the idea, doctrine or position.
6 Find examples of actions/practices in the text of the poetry that match the attitudes and values.

Key teachings of Islam

There are five teachings at the core of Islam.

1 one God
2 angels
3 prophets and scriptures
4 resurrection and the last judgement
5 the divine decree of predestination.

One God

Muslims are monotheists, they believe in one God who is eternal, omnipotent and all-knowing, who forgives those who ask and punishes the wicked.

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Shahadah
the first pillar of Islam; the statement of belief that 'there is no God but Allah and Muhammad is his prophet'

jinn
invisible beings in Islam

Devout Muslims proclaim the oneness of God in the *Shahadah*, which is spoken every day in Arabic.

> There is no God but Allah and Muhammad is his prophet.
> *La Ilaha illa Allah; Muhammad rasul Allah.*

This proclamation asserts that all other deities are either myths or figments of the imagination. For Muslims, the belief in one God is not an abstract idea, because Allah, through the angel Gabriel, revealed the *Qur'an* to Muhammad. Allah is above all things and is in control of the Universe. To place any created thing on the same level as God is to commit the sin *shirk*, or blasphemy.

The following extract from the *Qur'an* outlines some 'aspects' of Allah:

> God, there is no God but Him,
> The Living, the Eternal One.
> Neither slumber nor sleep overtakes Him.
> His is what the heaven and the earth contain.
> Who can intercede with Him except by
> His permission?
> He knows what is before and behind men.
> They can grasp only that part of His knowledge
> which He wills.
> His Throne is as vast as the heaven and
> the Earth,
> And the preservation of them both does not
> weary him.
> He is the Exalted, the Immense One.
>
> Qur'an *2:255*

Other characteristics of Allah are expressed in the 99 beautiful names of Allah.

Activity 12.6

Investigating

Use Worksheet 12.6 to identify the 99 names of Allah in transliterated Arabic and English.

Angels

Islam believes in spiritual beings such as angels, who are messengers of God. The angel Gabriel spoke to Muhammad during the revelation of the *Qur'an*. The *Qur'an* also mentions the angel Michael.

Other invisible beings, called ***jinn*** (plural *jinni*), are created by God from fire and eventually die. *Jinni* can be male or female and are either good or evil.

FACT

Jinn is the origin of the word 'genie' in the story of Aladdin.

Prophets and scriptures

Islam sees itself as the first revelation of God to humankind. The *Qur'an* mentions twenty-five people, prophets, to whom God gave the message of the *Qur'an* in earlier times. They include Adam, Noah, Ibriham (Abraham), Yusuf (Joseph), Musa (Moses), Harun (Aaron), Dawud (David), Yahya (John the Baptist) and Isa (Jesus) and all, according to Islam, are Muslim.

God gave each prophet the same message of the *Qur'an*: submission to God; to Moses, he gave the *Torah*; to David, the Psalms; to Jesus, the Gospel; but in each case the scriptures were misinterpreted or corrupted. As a result, none of these texts have authority for Muslims: the *Qur'an* corrects all the distortions and therefore supersedes all earlier texts.

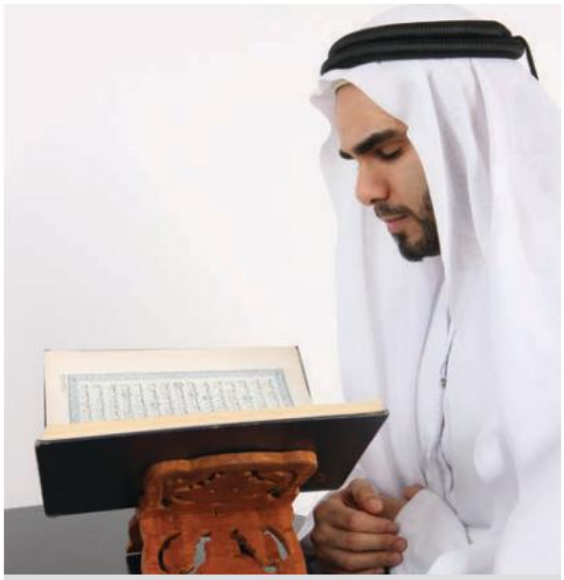

FIGURE 12.6
Reading the *Qur'an*

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Resurrection and the last judgement

Throughout the *Qur'an*, there are constant reminders of the end of time, when all the dead will be raised to life and God will pass an eternal sentence on every human being. Those who believe the revelation, given through Muhammad, and who do good works will be rewarded with heaven; those who do not will be relegated to hell. It is interesting to note that Islam, like earlier forms of Christianity, has a doctrine of purgatory, a place of temporary suffering where those who do not deserve hell will undergo some suffering to prepare them for heaven.

The torments of hell (*Ghenna*) are described in the *Qur'an* but it is not clear whether hell involves eternal punishment or temporary punishment and there is disagreement among Muslim scholars because of the ambiguity of the Qur'anic text.

The divine decree of predestination

All Muslims have free will. Their actions and choices result in punishment or reward. But this does not mean that human actions lie outside the reach of God's help. God predestines some to heaven and some to hell but it does not abolish humankind's responsibility for their own actions.

This doctrine may imply a contradiction but Muslims are content to view it as a mystery and emphasise that what counts in Islam is action.

Principal practices of Islam

The Five Pillars of Islam

All Muslims must accept and practice the Five Pillars, which are an expression of their faith.

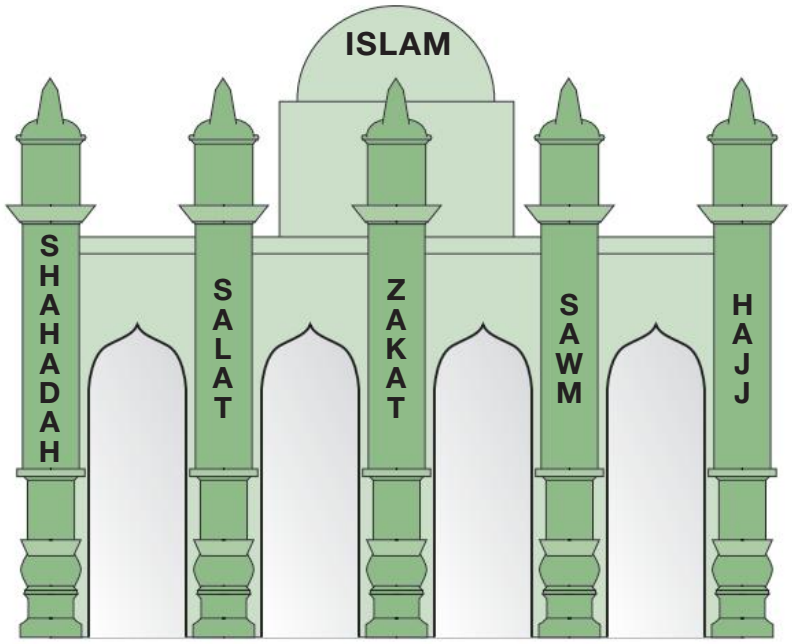

FIGURE 12.7
The Five Pillars of Islam

1 *Shahadah* – Creed

'There is no God but Allah and Muhammad is his messenger'. This single sentence, when recited with belief, makes a person a Muslim. It is also the first sentence whispered into the ear of a newborn child and the last phrase uttered to a dying Muslim. It is a constant reminder to Muslims that they should not allow anything to get in the way of their worship of God.

It is a very simple creed that emphasises the unity of God and rejects the idea that Jesus is divine and emphatically names Muhammad as a prophet and messenger.

2 *Salat* – Prayer

Muslims are required to pray five times a day: before dawn, at midday, mid-afternoon, sunset and night time. Times for prayer were traditionally announced by a ***Muezzin*** (or *Mu'adhdhin*) from the minaret, but today they are broadcast over loudspeakers. The call to prayer, in Arabic, begins with *Allahu akbar* (God is great) and continues with 'I witness that there is no God but Allah; I witness that Muhammad is the messenger of Allah; hasten to prayer'.

Muezzin: a chosen person at the mosque who leads the call to Friday service and the five daily prayers

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Zakat
the Islamic principle of giving a percentage of one's income to charity

Ramadan
the ninth month of the Islamic year, observed as sacred, with fasting practiced daily from dawn to dusk

rak'at
one unit or cycle of Islamic prayer

Sawm
an Arabic word meaning 'fasting'; observed during the Islamic holy month of *Ramadan*

Activity 12.7

Investigating: times of prayer

1 Using the websites below, record the time of daily prayer for: Brisbane, Sydney, Perth, Darwin, Byron Bay and Melbourne.
   a www.pray-in-time.org
   b www.guidedways.com/prayertimes
   c www.islamicfinder.org/world.php
   d www.islamicity.com/PrayerTimes.
2 How do you account for the time differences in various locations?
3 Record your findings in the table on Worksheet 12.7.

The call to prayer differs slightly between the different schools of Islam but it is always in Arabic. The call for Sunni Muslims is shown in the table below.

TABLE 12.1
Sunni call to prayer

Allahu akbar	God is most great
Ashhadu an la ilaha illa allah	I bear witness that there is no god but God
Ashhadu anna muhammadan rasul allah	I bear witness that Muhammad is the messenger of God
Hayya 'ala al-salat	Hurry to prayer
Hayya 'ala al-falah	Hurry to success
Allahuy akbar	God is great
La ilaha illa ahal	There is no god but God

For *Salat al-Fajr*, the early morning prayer, most schools include the line: *Al-salat khayrun min al-naum* – prayer is better than sleep.

Each *salat*, or prayer, is made up of a number of cycles, called ***rak'at***. The *rak'at* begins when the Muslim raises their hand in a gesture of submission, concentration and separation from the world and is accompanied by the words *Allahu akhar* (God is most great).

3 *Zakat* – charity to the poor

Islamic practice requires that believers donate a percentage of their total income and produce to the poor, as a tax on all that a person owns (usually 2.5 per cent). ***Zakat*** comes from an understanding that God is the creator of everything and whatever Muslims appear to own is really only entrusted to them by God. The underlying principle is *Sadaqa*, which means 'bearing one another's burdens'.

Additionally, a good Muslim is expected to act generously and in charity to the poor when called for in everyday life. Hospitality is also a hallmark of Islamic society – a Muslim should share their food and drink when someone visits.

Zakat is calculated annually and it is each Muslim's duty to calculate it justly. The *Qur'an* explains the purpose and benefit of *zakat* (*Qu'ran* 9:60).

4 *Sawm* – fasting during *Ramadan*

Ramadan represents the time when Muhammad received his revelation. Muslims fast during *Ramadan* to commemorate this event. Believers must avoid all food, liquid, tobacco and sex from dawn until dusk. Exceptions are made for travellers, pregnant women and the sick, but they are expected to make up the days of fasting at a later time. Even those Muslims who do not pray regularly will make a special effort to observe the fast during *Ramadan*.

The fast is commanded in the *Qur'an* (2:183–187). Islam teaches that if people can control their instincts during *Ramadan* then they will learn self discipline for the rest of the year. Often in Muslim societies the pattern of the day changes for *Ramadan* and some begin work earlier and rest during the afternoon. Because of the lunar calendar, *Ramadan* falls at a slightly different time each year. When it falls in winter, the days are short and cool so it involves the least discomfort but when it falls in summer, fasting can be a great hardship.

Sawm is not meant to be a negative experience but is instead an experience that Muslims look forward to each year. They see it as a time of spiritual renewal, a time to forgive others and a time not to engage in gossip.

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The fast of *Ramadan* is broken when the next new moon appears and *Eid ul-Fitr* (the festival of fast breaking) is held.

5 *Hajj* – pilgrimage to Mecca

All Muslims, men and women, unless prevented by illness or poverty, are expected to visit Mecca at least once in their lifetime. Pilgrimage to Mecca was practised before Muhammad was born, possibly because people wanted to visit the black meteorite that had fallen in the area. Muhammad continued the pilgrimage including the veneration of the black meteorite, which was thought to be a gift from God. People who have completed the *Hajj* are known as *hajji* (male pilgrims) and *hajjiyah* (females).

FIGURE 12.8
Pilgrims at the *Hajj*

Shi'ite Islam: the Ten Pillars

In Shi'ite Islam there are ten pillars that rest on the five foundations of Islam. The final two pillars focus on the attitude of the believer toward the family of Muhammad (*Ahl al-Bayt*, comprising Muhammad, Fatima and the twelve *Imams*).

The Ten Pillars of Shi'ite Islam

Salat: five daily ritual prayers
Sawm: fasting during *Ramadan*
Hajj: pilgrimage to Mecca
Zakat: payment to the poor and needy
Khums: 20 per cent (or one fifth) surplus wealth to be administered by scholars for the welfare of the community (*Qur'an* 8:41)
Jihad: struggle and striving in the way of God (*Qur'an* 2:190)
Amr bil Maruf: commanding the good (*Qur'an* 3:104)
Nahy anil Munkar: forbidding evil (*Qur'an* 3:104)
Tawalla: love and respect *Ahl al-Bayt*
Tabarra: turn away from those who are unjust to the *Ahl al-Bayt*
Through the *Shahadah*, Muslims re-examine their lives to ensure that they are always obedient to God.

Salat
five daily ritual prayers in Islam

Hajj
a pilgrimage to Mecca; an obligation that must be carried out at least once by every able-bodied Muslim in their lifetime

Khums
an Arabic word meaning 'one fifth'; meaning that one fifth surplus wealth must be administered by scholars for the welfare of the community

Jihad
an Arabic word for 'struggle'; meaning 'striving in the way of God'

Activity 12.8

Response to stimulus: Malcolm X

Malcolm X (1925–1965) was an African American Muslim and human rights activist in America in the 1950s and 1960s. Read the extract from *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*, on Worksheet 12.8, describing Malcolm X's pilgrimage to Mecca and answer the questions that accompany it.

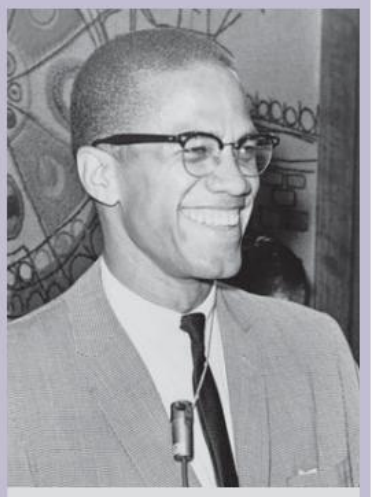

FIGURE 12.9
Malcolm X

Activity 12.9

Investigating

Hajj

Using information from the following websites, complete the Y-chart on Worksheet 12.9 related to *Hajj*.

1 www.ummah.net/hajj
2 www.hajinformation.com
3 www.islamweb.net
4 www.islamonline.net.

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Activity 12.10

Investigating and reasoning

1 Using information gathered from the websites listed in Activity 12.9, create the following:
   a A travel brochure/itinerary for *Hajj* pilgrims.
   b An annotated map of each sacred site, describing rituals performed at each location.
2 Complete a Venn diagram comparing the requirements and expectations for men and women participating in the *Hajj*.
3 How might male and female participation in the Hajj maintain or suspend the gender divide commonly associated with Muslim societies?

Sharia law

sharia law meaning 'the path', a legal framework that includes faith and the Muslim way of life

The *Qur'an*, the source of Islamic law, reveals the will of God to all Muslims. Islamic law is called ***sharia* law**. *Sharia* includes all laws, religious and secular, personal and communal, and covers offences ranging from the seriously immoral to matters of etiquette and personal hygiene. Muslims believe *sharia* is divine and, therefore, cannot be questioned, but because it concerns matters of everyday life, it is also a matter of human interpretation.

There are four legal schools that have gained orthodox status in Sunni Islam and each is considered as offering valid interpretations of the *sharia*. The four schools do not compete with each other but act as valid interpretations within specific geographical areas. The most serious challenge to this type of tolerance comes from the Wahhabi movement, which dismisses as heresy all interpretations except its own.

Prayer in Islam

Ritual prayer is one of the most visible expressions of Islam. Islam means submission and Muslims demonstrate their submission to Allah by making at least two full prostrations (touching their foreheads to the ground) while praying. Prayer in Islam is carefully choreographed as each body movement is specified. The times of prayer are also set.

A Muslim may pray anywhere: at home, work, or in the street, except for noon on Friday when Muslims gather at the mosque for communal prayer. Community prayer is also important at the conclusion

FACT

Wahhabi Islam is a conservative Islamic movement that is predominant in Saudi Arabia and follows the Hanbali school of law.

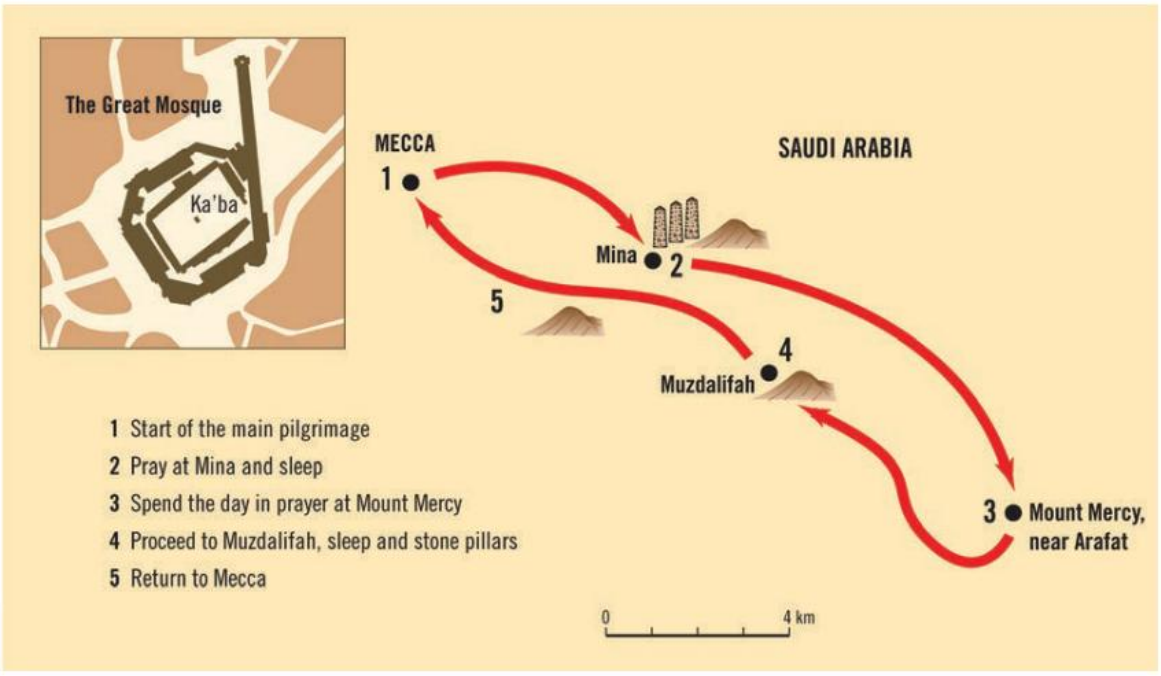

FIGURE 12.10
A map of *Hajj* locations

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of *Ramadan* and at the end of the pilgrimage to Mecca (*Hajj*) or at times of disaster.

Each prayer begins with a public call, even if the believer is alone. Prayer is so important that one Islamic legal handbook has 12 chapters devoted to prayer. It includes the times of prayer, the call to prayer, the description of the actions required in prayer, leading prayer, prostrating during *Qur'an* recitation, prayer while travelling, Friday communal prayer, the fear prayer, prayer on the two festivals, prayer at the lunar eclipse and prayer for rain. Prayer is a physical symbol of a Muslim's absolute submission to Allah and there is no room for innovation.

The *Qur'an*, which means 'recitation' in Arabic, is a like a liturgical document for Muslims and all Muslims must recite at least part of the *Qur'an*, in Arabic, during their prayer. Many Muslims have memorised the first chapter of the *Qur'an*, which, when translated, says:

> In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate.
> Praise belongs to God, Lord of the worlds,
> the Merciful, the Compassionate,
> Master of the day of faith.
> It is you that we serve and to you we pray for aid.
> Guide us in the straight path
> the path of those for whom you have made the ways smooth,
> not of those against whom you are angry,
> nor of those who are astray.
>
> *Qur'an 1:1–9*

This passage exemplifies the focus of Muslim prayer because it not only invokes God's name and his characteristic mercy and compassion but it also describes God as both the Creator and the Judge of creation. It then proclaims the rightful position of Muslims as utterly dependent on God for help and protection from hell.

It is interesting to note that the *Qur'an* does not specify the number of daily prayers nor the movements required for prayer. To eliminate confusion about the correct time for prayer and differences in ritual movements, Ibn Abi Zayd al-Qayrawani (died 996) provided one of the four accepted interpretations for prayer time.

Muslim prayer movements

Niyyat – hands raised to the ears, palms outward, thumbs at earlobes.

Qiyam 1 – hands folded, right over left, over the lower chest, recite the first chapter of the *Qur'an*.

Ruku – hands on knees, bowing from the waist.

Qiyam 2 – hands by the side, standing upright.

Sajda – on hands and knees with head to the ground.

Qu'ud – rise to a kneeling position.

Sajda – on hands and knees with head to the ground.

Tashahhud 1 – in a kneeling position, turn to the left and to the right, while a sacred benediction is said (a blessing upon all present, even if alone).

Tashahhud 2 – in a kneeling position, turn to the left and to the right, while a sacred benediction is said (a blessing upon all present, even if alone).

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As for the *subh* or morning prayer … it is the prayer of dawn. The time at which it may be first performed is at the breaking of the dawn on the horizon with light at the easternmost point …The end of the prayer time is when the clear yellow of the tip of the sun is seen by those who are completing their prayer.

The time for midday prayer, *zuhr*, begins when the sun has reached the centre of the sky and shadows just start to lengthen. … The end of midday prayer is when the length of shadow equals the height of things beyond the normal midday shadow.

The beginning of the *asr*, or afternoon prayer, is the end of the *zuhr* prayer; the end of the afternoon prayer is when the length of shadows is twice the height of things beyond the normal midday shadow.

The time of the evening prayer, *maghrib* … is from the setting of the sun … It is required that this prayer not be delayed, as there is only one time for it which may not be deferred.

The time of the evening prayer – also called *atama*, but the preferred name is *isha'* – is at the disappearance of twilight, that is the redness remaining in the west from the last rays of the sun … but do not wait for all light to disappear from the west.

Ibn Ai Zayd al-Qayranyani (died 996)

FACT

AH is an abbreviation from the Latin term anno Hegirae, which means the year of the *hijra*. AH is the calendar designation for Muslims

Ritual prayer is the same every day, except for Friday when Muslims gather in mosques (from the Arabic word *masjid*, the place of prostration) for midday prayer. The Friday prayer includes a sermon by the prayer leader as well as the normal midday prayer.

FIGURE 12.11
Muslim prayer beads

Muslim mystics invoke a special from of prayer, *dhikr*, involving repetition of a phrase or word. *Dhikr* means repetition and remembrance and many mystics repeat the 99 names for Allah or 'there is no god but God' (*lka ilaha illa Allah*) and in doing so remember God's goodness and mercy according to the command of the *Qur'an*. Often Muslims carry prayer beads with 33 or 99 beads for counting.

Prayer in Islam has two main components. The first requires the Muslim to submit to God and the actions of the prayer movements are a symbol of this submission. The second component, communal prayer, represents the submission of the individual to the community, as submission to God, and God's interaction with that community.

The Muslim calendar

The Muslim calendar, *Hijra*, begins from 622 CE, the date of the Prophet's *hijra*, or migration to Medina and is a lunar-based calendar.

Each Muslim month begins with a full moon and lasts until the next full moon. The sighting of the crescent moon is essential, as it is the only sure sign that the new month has begun. The average lunar month is 29 days, 12 hours and 44 minutes. The odd forty-four minutes of the lunar month give some Muslim years 355 days rather than 354 days. Over a period of thirty years there will be eleven leap years. An ordinary Muslim year has 354 days and therefore is eleven days shorter than the solar year. There are several ways of converting the Gregorian calendar to the Muslim calendar. One of the simplest is: CE = (32 ÷ 33) x AH + 622. For example, 1979 CE equals 1400 AH and 2009 CE is the Muslim year 1431 AH.

Activity 12.11

Reasoning

Calculate the Muslim year for the following years:

1 1987
2 2010
3 2019.

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The Islamic calendar provided lists the names of the months of the Muslim year and the festivals that occur in each month. The festivals vary in importance in different countries, apart from the two *Eids* that all Muslims celebrate.

Activity 12.12

Investigating

Calendar dates of major Muslim festivals

Complete the calendar chart on Worksheet 12.12 for a two-year period.

TABLE 12.2
Islamic months and festivals

Month	Festival
Muharram	1st – the Day of *Hirja* (New Year) 10th – commemoration of the Battle of Kabalah
Safar	
Rabi-ul-Awwal	12th – *Maulid-ul-Bani* (Birthday of the Prophet)
Rabi-ul-Akhir	
Jamada-al-Awwal	
Jamada-al-Akhir	
Rajab	27th – *Isra wal Miraj* (ascent of Muhammad to heaven)
Sha'ban	
Ramadan	The month of fasting 27th – *Lailat ul-Qadr* (God's message to Muhammad)
Shawwal	1st – *Eid ul-Fitr* (feast of Breaking the Fast)
Dhul-Qada	
Dhul-Hijjah	8th–10th – *Hajj* pilgrimage to Mecca 10th – *Eid ul-Adha* (feast of the Sacrifice)

Muslim celebrations and festivals

Muslim festivals are an expression of community and family life and provide an opportunity to feel a sense of connection. There are only two major religious festivals in Islam: *Eid ul-Fitr* and *Eid ul-Adha.*

Basically, Muslim festivals can be divided into three groups:

1. *Yuam ul Jum'ah* (the Day of Assembly), practised every Friday. It is obligatory for every adult male Muslim to attend the mosque for congregational prayers and a sermon. This obligation is *Fard*: ordered by the *Qur'an*.
2. The two *Eid* festivals, which are *Sunnah*, meaning ordered by the Prophet.
3. The other festivals are related to historical events and are neither *Sunnah* nor *Fard*.

Yaum ul Jum'ah – Friday prayer

Friday, the sixth day of the week and the Day of Assembly, is a day of obligatory congregational prayer for all Muslim males. To prepare for prayer, Muslims bathe, wear clean clothes and avoid eating food that may have a strong smell such as onion or garlic. If possible, they should shave (but not their beards), cut their nails and wear perfume. The *Hadith* says:

> If a person takes a bath on Friday, washes himself thoroughly, oils his hair, uses such perfume as is available, sets forth for the mosque, does not intrude between two persons, offers the prescribed prayer and listens in silence to the imam, his sins, committed since the previous Friday, are forgiven.

Yaum ul Jum'ah
a congregational prayer held every Friday

Jum'ah prayers usually take place in the mosque, but people can gather anywhere. When the congregation gathers, they move forward to close any gaps in the row so that there is no space for the devil.

The prayers are led by the *imam* and are preceded by the sermon (*khutba*).The *khutba* is usually said in two parts, with a short interval. The sermon informs Muslims of their duties and responsibilities and reminds them to keep up with current affairs especially those that affect the Muslim world. The sermon is usually in Arabic but can be delivered in the vernacular. It begins with praising God and blessings to Muhammad and ends with a prayer for the welfare of all Muslims.

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FIGURE 12.12
Muslims at prayer

Al Hijrah and *Ashura*

Al Hijrah, New Year's Day, is celebrated on the first day of *Muharram*. The New Year festival of *Muharram* runs until the tenth day of *Muharram*, when the celebration of *Ashurah* is held. Many Muslims fast on the ninth and tenth of *Muharram* because Muhammad said that it was a blessing to do so.

New Year commemorates the migration of Muhammad from Mecca to Medina, and is significant because it marks the beginning of the spread of Islam. *Al Hijrah* is celebrated by telling stories of the life of Muhammad and by reciting extra night-time prayers.

Ashurah

During the first ten days of *Muharram*, Shi'ite Muslims remember the death of Husayn and Hasan, the grandchildren of Muhammad. In countries such as Iran and Syria, Shi'ite Muslims wear mourning for at least the first ten days of *Muharram* and everyone dresses in black. They also eat special foods that are not prepared throughout the rest of the year.

For Sunni Muslims, the tenth day of *Muharram* is a time to celebrate several major events in Muslim history, such as the creation of the seven heavens, the land and the sea; the birth of Adam; the safe landing of Nuh (Noah); the birth of Ibrahim (Abraham) and the day on which he was to sacrifice Ismail; the day Ayyub (Job) was freed from his suffering; the Exodus of Jews from Egypt; the day Isa (Jesus) was born and the day on which Doomsday will arrive.

Maulid ul Nabi

Maulid ul Nabi, the Birthday of the Prophet Muhammad, occurs on the twelfth day of *Rabi-ul-Awwal*, the third month of the year. This day also happens to be the same day that Muhammad died. The birth of Muhammad was not observed in the early years of Islam but was introduced by the Abbasids of Baghdad and popularised by the Sufis during the tenth century. It spread across Islam, but Wahhabi Muslims oppose the innovation.

Muslims celebrate this event by telling and listening to stories of the Prophet, his childhood and the way he dealt with hardship and persecution. It is celebrated in a variety of different ways: Sufi Muslims hold marches on this day; in India, people gather in town squares to listen to readings from the *Qur'an*; and in Pakistan it is a public holiday.

Lailat ul-Isra wal Mir'raj

Lailat ul Isra wal Mir'raj, on the twenty-seventh day of *Rajab*, is the night of Muhammad's night journey and ascension vision. According to the *Hadith*, the Prophet Muhammad flew from Ka'bah in Mecca to the old temple in al Quds (Jerusalem). He was then taken to the seven heavens, saw paradise and hell before being taken into the presence of God. It was at this time that God told him the directions for all Muslims to follow: pray five times a day and perform ritual washing before prayer.

Muslims usually spend the night reading the *Qur'an* and listening to stories about the flight and the ascent as well as praying.

Lailat ul Qdar

Lailat ul Qdar, the Night of Power, is when the angel Gabriel first appeared to Muhammad. This occurs

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during *Ramadan* and, because the actual date is not known, it is usually celebrated on twenty-seventh day of the month. Many Muslims stay awake during the night in order to receive the blessings of a thousand months of prayer, because the Prophet Muhammad said:

> When the Night of Power comes, Gabriel descends with a company of angels who grant blessings to everyone who is standing or sitting and remembering the Most Gracious and Glorious God.

Following the example of Muhammad, some Muslims make a retreat (*I'tikaf*) during the last ten days of *Ramadan*. Often they go to the mosque with the bare necessities and pray there without distractions for the 10 days.

Eid ul-Fitr

The festival of *Eid ul-Fitr,* or Breaking of the Fast, is the first day of the month of *Shawwal*. During this time Muslims celebrate the fact that God revealed the *Qur'an* to Muhammad and that he gave him the strength to keep the fast.

Eid ul-Adha

The *Hajj* lasts for thirteen days and the climax is reached on ninth day, when the pilgrims go to Mount Arafat and ask for forgiveness. The festival of Sacrifice, *Eid ul-Adha*, takes place on the tenth day and is shared by Muslims all over the world. It is also known as *Eid ul-Kabeer* (the Great Festival), *Eid ul-Nahr* (the Festival of Immolation) and *Qurbani Eid* (the Festival of Offering). The festival celebrates the anniversary of the day on which the revelation of the *Qur'an* was declared complete.

The night before *Eid* is spent in prayer and all Muslims who can afford it slaughter an animal, usually a sheep or goat. The meat of the animal is divided into three: one portion for the family, one for the relatives and the other for the poor. Celebrations last until the pilgrims on the *Hajj* return home.

Jihad

Often translated in English as 'holy war', *Jihad* has a much broader meaning in Islam and encompasses the idea of 'struggle' and 'exertion'. It signifies the daily effort every Muslim exerts to be a good Muslim as well as to advance the cause of Islam. Muhammad spoke of a twofold *Jihad*: the first, an internal war within the individual's heart and the second, an external fight against the enemies of Islam. The *Hadith* states: 'The most excellent *Jihad* is the uttering of truth in the presence of an unjust ruler'.

While Islam prohibits wars fought solely for territorial gain, it nevertheless allows war for the purpose of extending the domain of Islam and for self-defence: 'Fight in the way of Allah against those who fight against you, but begin not hostilities. Lo! Allah loveth not aggressors' (*Qur'an* 2:190).

The inner struggle, or 'greater *Jihad*', must occupy every Muslim at all times. The 'lesser *Jihad*' concerns the legitimate use of force against those who would 'do evil upon the earth' (*Qur'an* 2:190–193). Women and children, the elderly or sick are not to be attacked and the basic means of survival must not be taken from the enemy.

Cleanliness and purification in Islam

In order to take part in ritual prayer and many other observances, Muslims must be ritually clean. Ablution (or washing) has a special place in Islam, and in legal books is situated before prayer. The idea of washing before prayer is not about cleanliness. Rather it is about commencing prayer in the right state of mind. Pure water is required for washing and in countries where water is scarce, allowances are made for symbolic washing with pure sand or pebbles.

The *Qur'an* says little about ritual ablution and does not refer to the technical term ***wudu.*** Some schools of Islam recommend that a visit to the toilet is

wudu
Muslim ritual washing

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FIGURE 12.13
Muslim men taking part in ritual washing before praying in Turkey

made before *wudu* so that there is no build of up waste and no one is distracted during prayers. If someone has had contact with a dead body then a *ghusl*, or a full shower, is required. Both people require *ghusl* after sexual activity and women must perform *ghusl* after childbirth or at the completion of menstruation. In preparation for *Jum'ah* prayers, Muslims shower and put on clean clothes and perfume.

For Muslims, the left hand is always regarded as unclean and is never used to greet people, give gifts or to touch another; rather it is used for toilet activities. Likewise, the left foot is considered to be unfavourable and is not used to make the first step into the mosque or on a journey.

Circumcision is considered a form of purification and is obligatory for all Muslim boys, but the age at which it is administered varies from region to region from infancy to the age of 10 or 11. Circumcision is not mentioned in the *Qur'an* but is recommended in the *Hadith*.

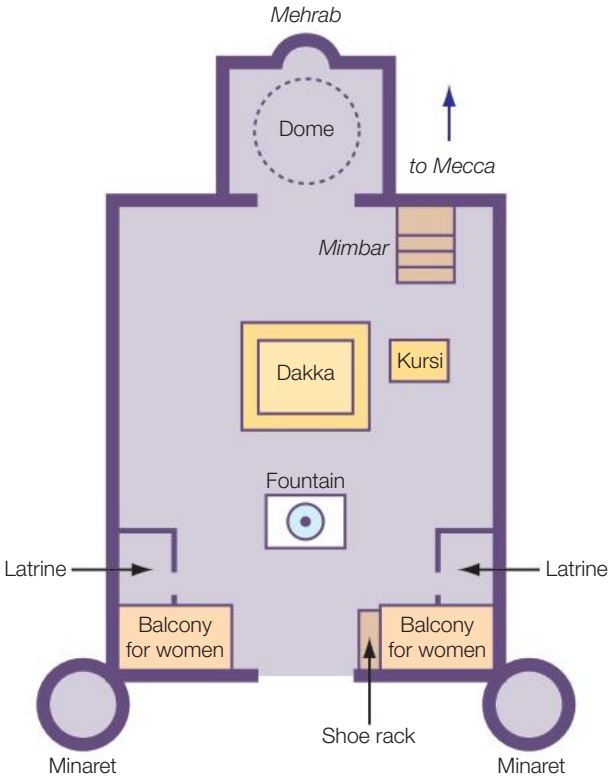

FIGURE 12.14
Floor plan of a typical mosque

Mosque

The mosque, *masjid*, place of prostration, can be any building or room where Islamic prayer is offered. Mosque designs can range from quite simple buildings to grand expressions of complex architecture. A mosque is usually rectangular with one wall, the *qibla*, which contains a niche (*mihrab)* facing the direction of the *Kabbah* in Mecca, thus indicating the direction to be faced for prayer. Every mosque has one formal entry to the compound where shoes are to be removed and left outside. Because purification is required before prayer, there are facilities for *wudu*, washing hands, face, neck and feet. Inside there is a high pulpit (*minbar*), with three or five steps, but as an act of humility, the speaker does not stand on the very top. The worshippers prostrate themselves in rows, facing the *mihrab*. The floor is normally carpeted and there are no statues of visual representations on the walls. The ceilings and walls are sometimes decorated with tiles of calligraphy.

At the mosque, Muslim women are separated from men either by a curtain or a specifically gated area.

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Other areas of the building are often used for classrooms and libraries. Outside the mosque there is usually a minaret, a tall tower from which people are called to prayer. In grand mosques there may be more than one minaret: the Blue Mosque in Turkey has six minarets.

Women in Islam

Examining the role of women in Islam is difficult because there are so many different perspectives involved. Films such as *Not Without My Daughter* have informed the way in which Western people see the treatment of women in Islam. These movies imply that all women in Islam are treated in a similar way and can be said to present a one-dimensional portrayal of Islam.

Commentators often discuss the custom of Muslim women wearing the veil. Historians have argued that Muslim women only gradually wore veils after the death of Muhammad and that originally, only wealthy women veiled. The practice was related to elevated social status. Many Western thinkers, in particular feminists (Muslim and non-Muslim), see the wearing of a veil as demeaning to Muslim women. The perspective of some Muslim women is that it is an expression of religious identity and modesty. There is a wide range of views from those who believe that covering the face as well as the head is a religious obligation for all women, to those who believe such covering is un-Islamic. The differences exist mainly through different interpretations of Islamic texts such as the *Qur'an* and the *Sunnah,* which are somewhat unclear.

Zakaria Basher, a Muslim scholar, says traditionalists who believe that women should cover their heads and face, base their reasons on *Sura* (a chapter of the *Qur'an*) 33:59 and *Sura* 24:31.

> O Prophet! Say to your wives and your daughters and the women of the believers to draw their cloaks close around them (when they go abroad). That will be better, so that they may be recognised and not annoyed. Allah is Forgiving, Merciful.
>
> *Sura 33:59*

FIGURE 12.15
The women's area of the mosque

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FIGURE 12.16
The Blue Mosque, Turkey

> And tell the believing women to lower their gaze and be modest and to display of their adornment only that which is apparent and to draw their veils over their bosoms and not to reveal their adornment save to their own husbands or fathers or husbands' fathers, or their sons or their husbands' sons , or their brothers, or their brothers' sons or sisters' sons, or their women, or their slaves, or male attendants who lack vigour, or children who know naught of women's nakedness. And let them not stamp their feet so as to reveal what they hide of their adornment. And turn unto Allah together, O believers, in order that ye may succeed.
>
> *Sura 24:31*

Moderate Muslims believe that *Sura* 33:59 does not explicitly prescribe that women should cover their faces and that *Sura* 24:31 only refers to the covering of the breasts (in pre-Islamic times women used to leave their breasts uncovered).

Liberas argue against the veiling of women, basing their position on a translation of *hijab* as 'curtain' in *Sura* 33:53.

> O ye who believe! Enter not the dwellings of the Prophet for a meal without waiting for the proper time … And when ye ask of them (the wives of the Prophet) anything, ask it of them from behind a curtain. That is purer for your hearts and for their hearts. And it is not for you to cause annoyance to the messenger of Allah, nor that ye should ever marry his wives after him. Lo! That in Allah's sight would be an enormity.
>
> *Sura 33:53*

They suggest that the verse was not meant to segregate women from men or hide women under veils but was rather a social response to intrusions from guests. There is no unified position related to veiling because of the multiple interpretations of texts and different cultural expectations.

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The central issue for both men and women is what Islamic scholars call the *arawh*: those parts of the body that should be covered in public. For men, this requires covering from the navel to below the knees, although in the Maliki School knees can be uncovered. Men are forbidden to wear silk and gold or silver ornaments. Women too must dress modestly, although they can wear fine clothes and even jewellery to attract their husband (but only for their husband, not for others). The dress code applies only after puberty.

Activity 12.13

Response to stimulus material

Read the extracts taken from the book *My Journey Behind the Veil: Conversations with Muslim Women* by Kay Rasool available on Worksheet 12.13. Complete the questions below:

1 According to the extract, what is the difference between *hijab*, *chadar* and a *burqa*?
2 In your own words, list two positive and two negative interpretations of wearing veils that cover the face. Provide quotes to support your response.
3 Explain, in one or two sentences, at least two values that may motivate young women who veil in Australia today.
4 Find one piece of evidence in the extracts to support the position of veiling and one piece of evidence that indicates that veiling is not necessary.

Radical or fundamentalist Islam

Since the Enlightenment, Western society moved rapidly forward through industrialisation. During this same period, the Islamic world did not change. Throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, many Muslim lands were colonised by the West. While colonisation brought modern medicine, communication and economic organisation it altered their place in civilisation.

Some Muslims argue that Islam should change to embrace modernity, including capitalism, democracy and recognition of human rights, while others believe that the decline of the Muslim world results from a failure to implement Qur'anic law – if Qur'anic law was followed, then the Muslim world would return to its former position of power.

Wahhabism, founded by Muhammad al-Wahhab in Saudi Arabia, rejects contemporary developments and promotes a return to the rules of early Islam. Followers of Wahhabism are hostile to everything that they consider idolatry (*shirk*) and this has led to attacks on Sufism and Shi'ism because both of these groups venerate saints. Wahhabism demands simplicity, therefore highly ornamented architecture is also frowned upon and sometimes even destroyed. Muslims who follow this form of Islam are known as *salaf* and the movement is called *salafiyya*. In order to restore Islam, they believe that they should fight

FIGURE 12.17 The Muslim practice of wearing a veil varies according to cultural expectation and preference

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against Western colonial powers, including the State of Israel and they also fight 'secularised' Muslim rulers who reject the *salafiyya*. This movement is one of a number referred to as Radical, or Fundamentalist, Islam.

Fundamentalism is not solely a Muslim phenomenon. In every faith within the modern period, fundamentalism has emerged in some form or other. Fundamentalists share a general disappointment and disillusionment with modernity. In this way, Muslim fundamentalists look back to a 'golden age' and often express their discontent by over-stressing the elements in Islam that militate against modernity and rail against secularism and democracy.

Although one of the hallmarks of modern culture has been the emancipation of women, Muslim fundamentalists tend to emphasise conventional gender roles, the veiling of women and restricting women to the home environment. They often oppose other Muslims who take a more positive view of modernity and frequently withdraw from mainstream culture to create an enclave of pure faith. Sometimes they even conduct aggressive campaigns designed to bring the mainstream back to the 'right path'. Extreme versions of these campaigns may even lead to acts of terrorism.

Conclusion

Islam is a faith, a way of life and a social movement that provides guidelines and a community in which to remain faithful. Although there are many strands within Islam, what is common is the belief in one God, submission to the will of Allah and belief in the revelation of God to the Prophet Muhammad as recorded in the *Qur'an*. All Muslims believe that the revelation is final and fixed, although they may disagree over some interpretations of secondary literature, such as the *Hadith*. Muslim life is regulated by prayer five times a day and recitation of the *Qur'an*.

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End of chapter activities

Activity 12.14

Framing

Generate an alphabet list of terms associated with Islam.

Activity 12.15

Framing, investigating and reasoning

Snowball activity

1 On a piece of paper, complete this statement (or a similar statement, as directed by your teacher): Islam is represented in the media as …
2 Scrunch your paper into a ball and throw it randomly across the room.
3 Collect a paper ball that lands near you, unfold it and share its contents with the class.
4 Collate classmates' responses.
5 Draw general conclusions about representations of Islam.

Activity 12.16

Investigating

Write a postcard from Mecca in 570 CE, describing the city, its culture and religion.

Activity 12.17

Investigating and reasoning

Refer to the list of the 99 Names of Allah provided on Worksheet 12.6.

1 Identify six that appeal to you. Why do you find them appealing?
2 List three pairs of titles that seem to be opposites – what does this suggest about Allah?
3 What effect do you think the 99 Names of Allah are intended to have?

Activity 12.18

Investigating and reasoning

1 Complete a Venn diagram on Worksheet 12.18 showing unique and common attributes of Sunni and Shi'ite Islam.
2 What are some of the factors that encourage misinterpretations of *Jihad* by some Muslim groups?

Activity 12.19

Investigating, reasoning and judging

1 How are Muslims in different countries affected by the relationship between Islam and the state in their country? (e.g. Pakistan, Iran, India, Afghanistan, Indonesia, Australia, France)
2 How does the spiritual experience of Sufism compare with mystical experiences in another religion you have studied?
3 How might the ritual dimension of Islam affect a Muslim's everyday life?
4 How might the ability to understand one's sacred text in its original language make a difference to the follower's attitude to the religion?

Activity 12.20

Reasoning and judging

1 Create a list of 10 facts that you believe every Australian should know about Islam.
2 Propose a scheme for educating Australians about Islam.

Activity 12.21

Reflecting

1 What have I learned about Islam that has been surprising?
2 What have I learned about religion generally through this study of Islam?
3 To what extent have my previous ideas about Islam been challenged or changed?
4 To what extent has this study of Islam changed my attitude or behaviour? How?

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CHAPTER THIRTEEN

THE NATURE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF RELIGION

'True religion is real living; living with all one's soul, with all one's goodness and righteousness.'

Albert Einstein

CHAPTER OBJECTIVES

This chapter discusses:

- Defining religion
- Constructing definitions
- Approaches to studying religion
- Insiders and outsiders
- Religion and culture
- Religious pluralism

KEY terms

religion	functional approach	classification-based approaches	typological approach
supernatural approach	sociological approaches		phenomenology
practical dimension	historical approaches	dimensional approaches	

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Introduction

religion a personal or institutionalised set of attitudes, beliefs and practices that may include a system of prayers and religious laws

Religion was one of the first communal activities that people engaged in. Few societies have existed in which religion has not played a role.

Since the Enlightenment, however, many have regarded religion as a private matter. While everyday people continued their usual religious practices and beliefs, Enlightenment philosophers argued that the study of religion should be left to interested individuals and should not shape entire communities. Despite dire predictions to the contrary, religion has continued to exist. In the latter half of the twentieth century, religion has enjoyed a certain resurgence.

Due to globalisation, adherents of the various world religions are now more likely to encounter each other than ever before. As we live in increasingly multicultural neighbourhoods, some knowledge of the major world religions is important to operate effectively in today's world, locally and globally.

etymology history of the development of language

Some people find that studying religion enables them to have a broader perspective on the world and human experience. For some believers, studying religions other than their own assists them to understand their own tradition better.

Activity 13.1

Framing

1 What is religion?
2 How do people define religion?
3 How do people study religion?
4 What effect does religion have on culture?
5 What effect does culture have on religion?

There are many ways to study religion and in this chapter, we will examine some of these methods while identifying some significant elements that characterise religions. When we study religion, we are informed by the experience of our lives and the influences of our families, society and the media.

For many, their study of religion in general is also informed by their own religion. They might presume, for example, that all religions have sacred texts or acknowledge a divine being or provide rules for living, because their religion does. Other religions may only contain some of these characteristics. Zen Buddhism, for example, does not worship a divine being and many Indigenous religions do not have written sacred texts, yet they are all religions. It is important to ask what elements are necessary to form a religious tradition.

Defining religion

Religion has been described and defined in many ways. One single definition may prove to be inadequate. It may not account for the complexities of numerous contexts or the ways in which the religion is lived, has developed, changed and adapted over time.

One place to start can be with the **etymology** of the word 'religion'.

The word 'religion' is thought to come from the Latin word *religio: re* meaning 'again' and *lig-* meaning 'join or connect'. If this is correct, then the meaning of the word religion might suggest joining the human world with the world of the sacred.

In classical Latin the term *religio* meant 'awe or respect for the gods' and was concerned with the proper performance of rituals for the gods. Another interpretation comes from the Latin word *relegere* to 're-read' or to understand, in the sense of a line of tradition. *Religio* is also linked to the word *religare* 'to bind fast' referring to something that binds people either to each other, or to the community, or to a higher being. The word 'religion', as it is understood in Western culture, usually implies some system of belief that involves a god or gods, prayer, ritual, sacred texts and a moral code for living.

Traditionally, religion has strong links to community and suggested participation in a religious community. In some ways, it may be quite different from certain modern Western interpretations that view religion as something private and personal. Interestingly, not all religions have a word for 'religion'. For example, Hinduism has no Hindi or Tamil word for religion.

The study of religion helps us to understand culture, history, politics and social interactions between people. There have been many instances

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throughout history where a knowledge of religion has benefited understanding and cooperation between people of different religious traditions.

Religions are not static and unchanging. They evolve over time and respond to historical events, changing technology and shifting cultural values. Indeed, some adjust the way they speak of their belief systems and many have made great use of modern technology in making their religion known.

Activity 13.2

Investigating and reasoning

Examine the statements about religion on Worksheet 13.2 and answer these questions:

1 What elements are they focusing on?
2 What do they have in common?
3 What is unique about particular descriptions?
4 Write your own statement about religion.

FIGURE 13.1
Religion within a modern context

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Constructing definitions

Ramsey and Ledbetter (2001) provide three different approaches to constructing definitions about religion. They classify the three approaches as supernatural, dimensional and functional.

supernatural approach defines religion as having a god or a superhuman, controlling power

secular humanism a humanist philosophy concerned with reason, ethics and justice as the basis of moral decision making

practical dimensions one of the dimensions of a religion, based on the religion's practices, such as belief, obedience and worship

dimensional approaches defines religion by looking at the different dimensions that make up a religion

functional approach a definition of religion based on the role religion plays in different circumstances

A **supernatural approach** defines religion as having a god or a superhuman controlling power. This type of definition is one of the most common definitions of religion used in dictionaries – 'human recognition of a superhuman controlling power and especially of a personal God or gods entitled to obedience and worship'. The advantage of including a superhuman element in the description is that it narrows the definition to things related to gods or spiritual beings and excludes secular alternatives such as **secular humanism**.

A problem with this definition of religion, which only has a supernatural approach, is that not all religious traditions acknowledge a supernatural power as central to the tradition. For example, particular forms of Theravada Buddhism and Confucianism discount the importance of worshipping a God or gods. While belief in God is important in many religions, it would be inappropriate to assume that God or gods are central to all.

Other definitions characterise religions' **practical dimensions** such as belief, obedience and worship. A dimensional definition of religion suggests that all of these facets can be found in all religions, but this may not necessarily be the case. While the **dimensional approaches** to describing religion are helpful, they also have disadvantages. If religion is viewed through a single dimension, we are unable to see how closely interrelated dimensions are. It is also important to remember that all religions do not view all of the categories or dimensions of religion as equal. Buddhists, for example, are more concerned about right practice and action than sacred texts.

The **functional approach** describes the role religion plays in different circumstances and cultures. Marx's description of religion as 'the opiate of the people' is an example of a functional approach. When Sigmund Freud described religion as 'the benevolent rule of a divine Providence [which] allays our fear of the dangers of life' he was describing how he saw religion functioning in society.

FIGURE 13.2
Karl Marx's tomb in Highgate Cemetery, London

Activity 13.3

Investigating and reasoning

1. Using the table on Worksheet 13.3, classify the definitions of religion as supernatural, dimensional or functional. Provide a reason for your choice.
2. Locate your own example of a definition for each of the classifications.
3. Construct a definition of religion that encompasses all three approaches or descriptions of religion.

When examining definitions of religion, it is useful to try to indentify the complexities involved and to acknowledge what influences we, as investigators, bring to the table. It might be useful to ask:

- Does the definition confine religion to what your tradition understands religion to be?
- Is the definition biased either positively or negatively towards religion?
- Is the definition biased towards a particular religious tradition?

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- Does the definition include emerging forms of religion?
- Is the definition related only to religious practice or belief?
- Is the definition related to the personal experience of the writer?

How we approach the study of religion will be affected by the definition of religion we choose to work with. Definitions of religion need to be broad and flexible enough to encompass all aspects of religion.

Approaches to studying religion

One of the most important decisions you will make when studying religion is deciding which approach you will take to begin your investigation. In fact, you may decide to use a number of approaches. Some useful approaches include: sociological, historical, classification-based, feminist, anthropological or worldviews.

Sociological approaches

Sociology is the study of human society. It is interested in the motivations, structures and patterns that underpin people's lives. In many parts of the world, such as the Middle East, it is impossible to understand society without examining religion. Sociology of religion pays particular attention to the role religion plays in society, at both the individual and group level. At a macro or large-scale level, sociologists of religion ask questions like:

- How many people attend religious services?
- In what ways have beliefs changed over time?
- What role does religion play in today's society?

By asking such questions, they try to analyse the significance of religion in society.

Emile Durkheim (1858–1917), a famous proponent of this type of sociology of religion, believed that religion was a positive force in society and that it played an important role in the functioning of society. Through his work with Australian Aboriginal people, he concluded that religion played a crucial role in emphasising social solidarity and cohesion.

Durkheim believed that religion was a collective endeavour, because when a group assembled for worship they were expressing the beliefs and values of the group as a whole. When ethnic identity is also linked to religious beliefs it strengthens community cohesion. In this way, religion provides communal identity, while strengthening an individual's sense of identity.

A Jewish boy affirms his place in the community when he celebrates his *Bar Mitzvah* at thirteen years old and a Muslim woman's sense of gender identity is often informed by her religion. Our collective identities permeate our sense of self. Such a collective identity plays a particular role when individuals are under stress. This is evident in situations of religious conflict such as those experienced in India and Pakistan, Northern Ireland or the Middle East.

Another approach taken by sociologists of religion is the micro (or interpretative) approach. This focuses more on the individual's role. Central to this approach is the need to understand the motivations of the believer by asking:

- Why do you attend religious services?
- What did participating in the ceremony mean to you?

The micro approach to the sociology of religion was pioneered by Max Weber (1881–1961) who examined how religions determined an individual's attitude to life and work. He argued that it was the Protestant work ethic derived from John Calvin (1509–1564) that led to the success of capitalism in the West.

The work of both Durkheim and Weber helped to establish the sociology of religion. Since the 1960s, this sociological approach has become a popular method of investigating religion as it exists in society.

sociological approaches studying religion using the perspective of the study of human societies

Historical approaches

Historians of religion try to understand the development and transformation of religion as part of the historical process. Through their investigations, they identify how religion is not only shaped by historical forces but also how religion shapes history itself.

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historical approaches studying the development and transformation of religion as part of the historical process

Historical approaches usually begin with the life of the religion's founder and work their way through the development of the religion in chronological order. Such an approach might focus on people within the particular tradition, building up a series of details about dates and events. The emphasis would be on a knowledge of facts and significant people. It might examine the impact of the religion on society and consider some questions in the development of its history. However, in an historical approach there is little room for comparisons between religions, with each studied in isolation.

Classification-based approaches

Three orientations

classification-based approaches studying religion by classifying different aspects and orientations

Some scholars of religion suggest that most of the world's religions can be studied using a **classification-based approach**. They classify religion according to three basic orientations:

1 Religions with a *sacramental orientation* emphasise the importance of rituals and ceremonies as the path to salvation. In some religions, such as tribal religions, Tibetan Buddhism, Vedic Hinduism and many forms of Christianity, rituals play a very important role.
2 Religions with a *prophetic orientation* such as Judaism and Islam believe that contact with the sacred is ensured by proper belief and by adhering to moral rules.
3 Religions with a *mystical orientation* see believers as being on a search for union with a reality greater than themselves, which could be God. The mystical orientation is a prominent aspect of Hinduism and some schools of Buddhism. It also appears in some forms in Christianity and Judaism.

The three orientations may be simultaneously present in one religion. It is also likely that one orientation will have prominence over the others. To say, for instance, that Catholic and Orthodox Christianity fall into the sacramental orientation ignores the fact that they can be located in the prophetic and mystical orientations and have elements of their traditions that are outside all three. While the three-orientations approach has some helpful elements, the need to categorise the religion ignores the fluidity and interaction between believers and the religious system.

Seven dimensions

Ninian Smart (1927–2001), an anthropologist who spent many years working at the University of Lancaster in England, rejected the idea that a common core linked all religions. He nevertheless decided that there were certain characteristics, albeit expressed very differently, that all or most religions possessed. He developed a series of seven categories, or dimensions, as he called them, which can be used to describe formal characteristics, common to all religions.

1 *Ritual and practical dimension*, which refers to worship practices and prayer forms within a tradition.
2 *Experiential and emotional dimension*, which refers to experiences of a special kind that profoundly influenced the founders and reformers of religious traditions and may influence the experiences of members.
3 *Mythological or narrative dimension*, which refers to significant stories describing the relationship between the transcendent and the human or worldly realm.
4 *Doctrinal or philosophical dimension*, which refers to the doctrines and teachings that adherents are expected to believe.
5 *Ethical and legal dimension*, which refers to key values espoused by believers, codified into laws and ethics which indicate expected behaviour of adherents.
6 *Social and institutional dimension*, which refers to ways religious traditions are institutionalised and how they operate.
7 *Material dimension*, which refers to buildings for worship and religious purposes, works of art and other related creations as well as religious artefacts and sacred places.

While these categories are useful, they are also limited. They only examine a certain number of aspects of a religion and fail to acknowledge the inter-relationship between dimensions. When overused as a tool of classification, the descriptive element dominates and limits understanding, while ignoring much of the lived experience of adherents.

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Eight types

Another approach, developed by Australian scholars Basil Moore and Norman Habel, is called the **typological approach**. It uses eight components or categories and while many people may think it bears a remarkable similarity to Smart's dimensions, its purpose is different in that it encourages people to begin the investigation of the various types of religion from within the home or a known tradition. The eight components are:

1. *Religious beliefs*, which refers to a traditional profession or statement about the realities of the sacred cosmos, its structure and interplay between the **mundane** and the other-than-mundane forces in the cosmos.
2. *Religious experience*, which refers to structured ways in which believers enter into relations with an other-than-mundane reality within the context of a particular religious tradition.
3. *Sacred stories*, which refer to traditional narratives told in a religious context and purporting to reveal a sacred reality, moment or truth through the components, structure and telling of the stories.
4. *Sacred text*, which refers to authorised scripts, documents or books claiming to derive their basic authority from a supernatural source and mediating and communicating truth necessary to life or salvation.
5. *Sacred ritual*, which refers to traditional and ordered sequences of communal actions in which a sacred purpose is thought to be achieved by means of an interplay between the sacred and the mundane worlds.
6. *Social structure*, which refers to institutionalised visible forms that express and maintain the life of the religious community.
7. *Ethics*, which refers to concerns of religious justification of social behavior within the context of a particular religious tradition.
8. *Religious symbols*, which refers to traditional marks, objects, gestures, words, characters or events that purport to mediate and communicate some sacred reality that the symbol, at a purely natural level, does not possess.

While a classification-based approach is useful as an introduction, it does not enable or assist a deep investigation of religious phenomena or the lived reality of traditions. Categorising helps some people to detail elements of religion. For others, whose thinking extends beyond categories, it can be a frustrating exercise that does not take us beyond a surface level analysis. Once we categorise, we limit consideration to a single aspect of a particular religion and may miss its richer significance. Categorisation is not a useful tool for making comparisons across religions. The intent in one religion may not be the same as that in another. The conclusions this mode of analysis draws may be superficial or even incorrect.

In addition, categorising on its own does not assist in developing analysis skills. Simply synthesising information has little to contribute to investigations such as looking at religion–state relationships. Religions are complex, lived realties and confining them to categories restricts the possibilities of investigation, limits involvement in the learning process and often fails to do justice to the lived experience of the religious tradition.

typological approach
an approach to the study of religion using eight categories or classifications begins by studying a familiar or home tradition

mundane
of this world; routine and commonplace

Feminist approaches

Feminists study religion through the lens of gender. They apply critical analysis to transform theoretical approaches to all aspects of religion. Feminism draws on a range of insights from sociology, theology and philosophy to critique patriarchal (male dominated) frameworks and the traditionally androcentric focus of religion.

Feminist analysis addresses unjust exclusions and omissions that have privileged males as the centre of society. In particular, they focus upon texts related to women and incorporate the neglected experience of women into other texts.

Phenomenological approaches

Phenomenology has a range of meanings. The most common, as it relates to the study of religion, is a school of thought concerned with examining religion from the perspective of its adherents, rather than imposing judgement from the outside.

phenomenology
a philosophy concerned with the study of phenomena or the way things appear to us in experience or consciousness

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Georg Hegel (1770–1831), a German philosopher, influenced the development of phenomenology when he put forward the thesis that 'essence' could be understood through investigating appearances.

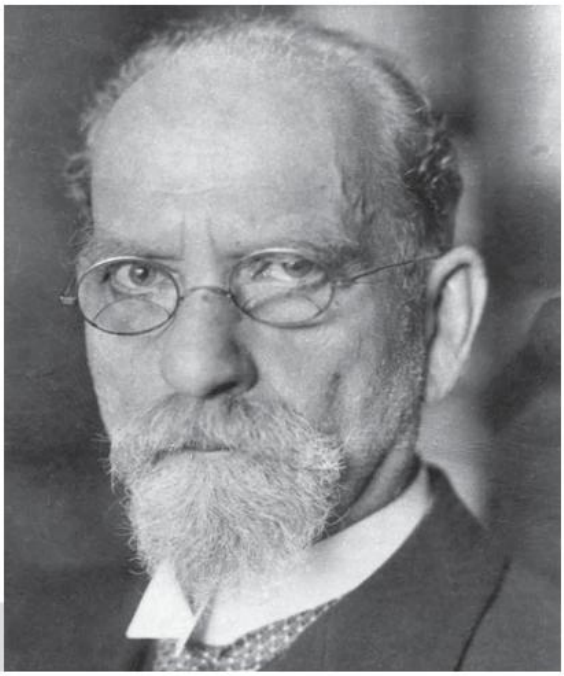

FIGURE 13.3
Edmund Husserl

Edmund Husserl (1859–1938), known as the 'father of phenomenology', decided that two concepts underpinned phenomenology: *epoché* and eidetic vision. *Epoché* requires a person to 'bracket-out' all of their opinions and beliefs, so that they can view the phenomena 'objectively', that is, in an unbiased manner. Eidetic vision refers to the attempt to see common forms, types or categories across and within religions.

Husserl's style of phenomenology allows the student of religion to engage in a comparative enquiry. Phenomenological investigation of religion is interested in what is 'there' in the religion rather than the student's 'interpretation'. Rather than looking at Judaism, Hinduism or Christianity through the lens of their existing beliefs and values, students are required to empathetically stand in the shoes of the Jew, the Hindu or the Christian.

While the approach may appear to be useful on the surface, it has been heavily criticised because of its overly descriptive focus and the tendency to make generalisations regarding all adherents within a tradition.

Phenomenology has also been criticised because of its use of Christian terms for its categories and for the theory of religion that it brings to the analysis. In other words, it does not acknowledge the Christian bias within the approach, which may have been derived from the influence of Western culture in general. As such, it may not be fully sensitive to analysing other religions such as Islam or Buddhism.

The most severe criticism of phenomenology has come from feminists, and others, who state that a person can never bracket out, even temporarily, their current knowledge and emotions when investigating an issue. Our experiences, prejudices and assumptions make us who we are and we bring these with us to any investigation. The best we can do is to acknowledge our prejudices and biases and then investigate the issues, taking note of and challenging these assumptions.

Worldview approach

Another way of examining religion is through worldviews. Each religion defines the nature of the universe, sacred reality, time, sacred texts and humanity differently. If we examine these different concepts we may find another way to study the world's religions.

Nature of the universe

Some religions identify a Creator who started the world and who continues to guide the universe on a daily basis. Other religions view the universe with no beginning or end. For those who believe that the world had a Creator, the centre of sacredness is the Creator, not the universe itself. For those who believe that the universe is eternal then the universe itself is perfect and requires no change.

Sacred reality

Some religions speak of the sacred as being transcendent and existing in a world outside of the human world. Other religions speak of sacred reality existing within human beings and nature. Different views of the sacred shape people's understanding of God or gods as being personal or distant.

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Time

Religions such as Judaism, Christianity and Islam see time as linear, beginning with creation and moving forward. But in Buddhism, time is seen as cyclical – the universe moves through changes that are repeated over time. What a person does in the present may be more important than focusing on the future.

Sacred texts

For many religions the sacred is found in the written and spoken word and in reading, writing and listening to those words. In Judaism, Christianity, Islam and Hinduism, the written word is important. In Zen Buddhism, however, silence is considered more important than words.

Humanity

In religions such as Judaism, Christianity and Islam, human beings are a unique part of creation. Within a cosmic plan, a struggle between good and evil is acknowledged. Human actions are important and are usually guided by a moral code of behavior. In other traditions, human life is only a small part of the universe and therefore actions are not guided by an internalised moral code but by tradition and a sense of mutual obligation.

Multi-disciplinary approach

One of the interesting things about religion is that it can be studied from the point of view of several disciplines. The following are some of the disciplines that have been used in cross-disciplinary approaches to study religion.

The arts

Traditionally, religions communicate through their scripture and theological writings, their institutions, movements, and ethical practices. However, they also communicate through their rites, poetry, architecture, music, paintings and sculptures. The arts arise from a complex structure of beliefs and rituals, moral and social codes, magic or science, myth or history.

The arts can reveal the centre of a faith tradition and an embodiment of religious practice and they can also serve as texts. They can be seen as important to the history of religion, and as a way to reflect on the ideas and values that make up that tradition. The arts also provide unique way to gain insight into the nature and function of religion in ways that may not otherwise be available.

In a concrete way, the arts provide a vivid and accurate sense of religion as it is lived, imagined and felt by its adherents. The arts play a constructive role in society, as expressions of ultimate questions and at times, have the potential to serve a sacramental function – to make visible what is invisible.

They have the power to engage our feelings and intellect in ways that prompt us to ask questions and to reflect on how such experiences influence our worldview. The arts may even provide insights into human nature that we might never have developed without their help.

Anthropology

Anthropological approaches to studying religion pay special attention to how people interact religiously. The anthropology of religion follows similar patterns to that of the discipline in general, concerned with folk or Indigenous religions. Contemporary approaches are interested in how religion influences and is influenced by its adherents.

Philosophy

Philosophers of religion examine truth claims, particularly those concerning the existence of God, morality, evil and the afterlife. They base their examination on reason rather than faith and pay particular attention to the meaning and intention of religious language.

Theology

Theology, from the Greek word *theologia,* means 'an account of the gods' and was used by the early Christian church to describe humanity's relationship with God. Before the founding of universities, theology was taught in the monasteries of Europe. Theology was an integral part of monastic life, which included prayer, worship and study. Theological discussion also took place in cities among ordinary craftsmen and merchants. When the first universities were established in the thirteenth

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century, theology was a key part of the academic program.

The theological, or confessional, approach considers questions and issues concerning the divine and humankind's relationship with the divine. Learning about a particular religion in some depth may enhance the life of a believer. Theology may also provide students with a language and worldview from which to study world religions but, because it is confined to knowledge of one tradition, it is not adequate to the broader task of analysing all religions. However, in inter-religious dialogue it is important to have a deep knowledge of one's own tradition in order to be an intelligent conversation partner.

Archeology

Archeology means the study of origins, and examines earlier civilisations – uncovering religious artefacts and ruins of ancient places of worship. Much can be learned from archeological discoveries and analysis, particularly with regard to ancient texts, beliefs and practices that have influenced world religions today.

FIGURE 13.4
An archaeological dig in the city of Jerusalem

Activity 13.4

Investigating, reasoning and judging

Jig-saw

1 Divide the class into groups. Each expert group is to complete a Strengths and Weakness chart, a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities or Threats) analysis, or a PMI (Plus, Minus or Interesting) chart for one of the approaches available for studying religion.
2 When each individual group has completed their particular chart, form a mixed group. The new groups consist of one student from each of the previous expert groups. Within the new groups, students share their information so that the complete picture is developed.

Think, Pair, Share

1 List the advantages of a multi-disciplinary approach.

Insiders and outsiders

Studying religion from an insider or outsider approach can yield very different results. The outsider, or observer, approach is secular and scientific and values an objective stance. Studying religion from outside a system is known as the *etic* perspective. In the *etic* perspective, the observer attempts to take the descriptive information they have gathered and to organise it into a systematic explanation of the religion. Here, the aim is not to get inside the experience and meaning of religious phenomena but to build upon the benefits of critical distance.

The insider, or participant, approach requires the student to reflect on their own experience of religion from an educational point of view. This insider's view is known as the *emic* perspective. The *emic* perspective produces, as faithfully as possible, the informant's own descriptions. While there has been much debate about the advantages and disadvantages of the insider or outsider perspective, all scholars of religion agree that each religious tradition must be examined on its own merits.

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Activity 13.5

Reasoning and judging

1 What is the difference between an account of a religion by an insider and by an outsider?
2 In what circumstances might an insider or outsider approach be beneficial?

Religion and culture

The word 'culture' is used in many ways. Originally it referred to agriculture or the cultivation of crops, but by the sixteenth century, its meaning had extended to include the 'cultivation of the human mind'. 'Being cultured' meant that people not only behaved well, but were knowledgeable and interested in the arts and society.

Religious beliefs and practices are enacted within a cultural context and, in many ways, religion relies on culture to transmit it. All religion and talk about religion is culturally conditioned. We often hear people draw such distinctions as 'Irish Catholics', 'Tibetan Buddhists' and 'Indonesian Muslims' – distinctions that embody cultural as well as religious differences. As religions have developed and spread across cultures, they acquired local variations that, while not impinging on the essence of the religion, gave them a slightly different flavour. Japanese and Chinese Buddhists, for example, celebrate *Wesak* differently; Italian and Irish Catholics venerate different saints. As cultures modernise and adapt, religions also tend to reflect such changes.

In the 1940s, religious anthropologists introduced the notion of the Great Tradition and the Little Tradition. These terms explained the difference between beliefs and religious practice as expressed in religious texts and the actual expression of beliefs and practices of people in diverse communities and cultures.

This type of terminology may be problematic because it has a tendency to separate the expression of religion into either **orthodoxy** or **heterodoxy**. A more appropriate way of describing the cultural differences may be achieved by considering orthodoxy and orthopraxy (the practice of rituals) so that we do not privilege the powerful and marginalise the less powerful within a religious tradition.

Some scholars have suggested that to acknowledge the variety of cultural expression within religions, we might not use Christianity, Hinduism or Judaism but rather a plural and non-capitalised form of the title such as christianities, hinduisms and judaisms. This would more clearly indicate the diverse cultural expressions of each religion. However, adherents of

FIGURE 13.5
Indonesian Muslims

FIGURE 13.6
Tibetan Buddhists

orthodoxy
adhering to the accepted or traditional and established faith, especially in religion

heterodoxy
departure from accepted beliefs or standards

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religions regard themselves as part of the one religious community of Christianity, or Hinduism, or Islam and not as separate or different from the whole.

Activity 13.6

Investigating

Identify examples of cultural diversity within a religious tradition.

Religious pluralism

There has always been religious pluralism and today there is an increased awareness of pluralism. Since the late twentieth century, pluralism has increased due to migration, globalisation and ease of international travel. Even local landscapes have changed, as there are now a variety of religious places of worship that are visible in many neighbourhoods. While religions aim to retain the distinctiveness of each tradition, they are also challenged to engage inter-religiously with other traditions.

FIGURE 13.7
Religious pluralism can help to build relationships with others

Engaging with pluralism requires more than tolerance – pluralism requires deepening our knowledge and learning from difference. According to Diana Eck:

> '… pluralism can only generate a strong social fabric through the interweaving of commitments. If people perceive pluralism as entailing the relinquishing of their particular religious commitments they are not interested … The pluralist … stands in a particular community and is willing to be committed to the struggles of that community even as restless critic.
>
> *Eck, 1993, p.195*

By acknowledging and respecting difference, religious pluralism challenges people to find ways to be distinctively themselves, while building relationships with others.

Conclusion

While the tools and approaches discussed in this chapter are useful in analysing religion, the best way to understand religion is to apply these ideas to a religious tradition or to a variety of religious traditions. Through in-depth investigation, students gain insight into how religion contributes to the lives of people and society and culture as a whole.

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End of chapter activities

Activity 13.7

Framing

1 List as many religious institutions (e.g. community service, mosque, church, temple, school) operating in your local area as possible. What is the nature and function of each institution? Why do people access them?
2 Write 10 questions, the answer to each of which could be 'religion'.
3 Consequences wheel: If religion were banned, then …

Activity 13.8

Investigating and reasoning

1 Ask five different people what they think the purpose of religion is and record their answers.
2 Categorise the answers into a PMI chart.
3 Categorise the answers as to whether they suggest the person is a theist or atheist.
4 Gather data (5Ws +H) on any religious ritual celebrated in your area. Choose two contrasting approaches from this chapter to apply to your chosen ritual. What might theorists coming from backgrounds in each of these two approaches say to one another about this ritual? Use the table on Worksheet 13.9 to organise your findings.
5 Locate five news or commentary articles related to religion. Has the writer of each article taken a particular approach (as described in this chapter) to religion generally or to a particular religion? Provide evidence to support your response.
6 Search the telephone book or a street directory for evidence of different religions functioning in your area (perhaps use your response to the first framing question as a starting point). Why is this not sufficient evidence to hypothesise about religious pluralism in your area?

Activity 13.9

Investigating, reasoning and judging

1 Choose two religions.
2 Explain how the sacred texts of these two religions position the reader to view other religions.
3 Explain how the ethical codes of these two religions demand that followers treat adherents of other religions. Is this conducive to religious pluralism?

Activity 13.10

Reasoning and judging

Write one or both sides of the argument that might emerge in the following debate: 'True religious pluralism is an unachievable dream'.

Activity 13.11

Judging

1 Nietzsche recognised the crisis posed by the declining influence of the idea of God in Western civilisation when he wrote, 'God is dead' in 1882. However, over a century later, we still speak of 'living religions'. Do you believe that religion or God has enough significance in the West? Why? Write an editorial in which you present and defend your view.
2 To what extent do secular institutions fulfil people's need for religion in modern Australia?

Activity 13.12

Reflecting

1 To what extent is talk about religion objective?
2 What have I learnt about and from religion?
3 What new vocabulary dealing with religion have I learnt?

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Glossary

A

active state religions: the state supports a religion while maintaining a level of independence from it

Adhan: the Muslim call to prayer

afterlife: an existence after death

Allah: a combination of the word Al, meaning 'the' and ilah, the arabic word for 'God'; thus Allah means 'the God'

anatta: a central concept of Buddhism; translated as 'the absence of self or soul'

androcentric: male centred

anicca: a central concept of Buddhism; translated as 'impermanence'

animism: a belief that that spirits inhabit nature and have influence over people and natural events

anti-sacerdotal: hostile to priests or the priesthood

anti-Semitism: a term used to describe prejudice against, or hostility towards, people of Jewish lineage

aqiqah: to cut or break

Aryans: early Indo-Europeans who migrated to the Indian subcontinent

Ashramas: four stages of life in Hinduism, laid out in classical Sanskrit texts

Atman: a divine spirit that all people share

avatar: the descent of a deity to the earth in an incarnate form or some manifest shape; the incarnation of a god

B

Bhagavad Gita: 'The Lord's Song', one of the most popular texts in Hinduism, which describes a conversation between Arjuna and his charioteer, who is later revealed as Krishna

Bhakti: a special form of worship and deep, personal devotion to God that expresses love to one's god; from Sanskrit origin, meaning devotion

bier: a stand on which a corpse or coffin is placed

bimah: a raised platform in a Jewish synagogue from which the *Torah* is read

bodhisattva: enlightened being

Brahma: the Hindu god of creation

Brahman: *Brahman* is the unchanging, infinite, immanent, and transcendent reality which is the Divine Ground of all matter, energy, time, space, being, and everything beyond this Universe

breviary: a book of prayers, hymns, Psalms and other scripture texts

bush ministries: ministries formed to provide pastoral care in sparsely settled or remote areas in the early twentieth century

C

Canon: 'list' or 'measuring rod'; Canon of scripture is the title given to the official list of writings that constitute the sacred texts of a tradition

Catechism: a book that outlines a faith in the form of questions and answers

civil religion: a term used to describe events that link religion to national identity

classification-based approaches: studying religion by classifying different aspects and orientations

codes of ethics: a statement of the ethical principles, values and behaviours expected of members of an organisation or profession

common good: a term describing a specific 'good' that is shared and beneficial for all members of a given community

communitas: intense community spirit and solidarity

Concordat: an agreement between the Vatican state and a government of a certain country on religious matters

consequentialism: a term referring to moral theories that stress that only the consequences of a particular action form the basis for any valid moral judgement

Conservative Judaism: a modern stream of Judaism that arose out of intellectual currents in Germany in the mid-nineteenth century and took institutional form in the United States in the early 1900s

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cosmological model: a mathematical description, which tries to explain the origins and dynamics of the Universe
covenants: formal, solemn and binding agreements
creation: the act of making, inventing or producing
creed: a statement of religious belief
cults: social groups devoted to beliefs or practices considered to be outside the mainstream
culture: the customary beliefs, social forms and material traits of a racial, religious or social group
custom: any agreed, stipulated or generally accepted standards, norms, social norms or criterion

D

Decalogue: the Ten Commandments
deicide: the killing of a god, goddess, or similar deity
descriptive ethics: the study of people's beliefs about morality; an empirical investigation of people's moral beliefs
dimensional approaches: defines religion by looking at the different dimensions that make up a religion
discourse analysis: a general term for a number of approaches to analysing written, spoken or signed language use
discrimination: prejudiced outlook, action or treatment of, or against, a person or group based on class or category rather than individual merit
Divali: a celebration symbolising loyalty and protection, which takes place on the full moon in the month of *Shravana*
diversity: differences in racial or ethnic classifications, age, gender, religion, philosophy, place of origin, cultural values as well as other identifying features
Docetists: those who believe that Jesus' physical body was an illusion, as was his crucifixion
The Dreaming: a term used to describe a time of ancestral creation and the origins of all things for Indigenous Australians
Druze: a religious community found primarily in Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Israel and in the Palestinian territories whose traditional religion is said to have begun as an offshoot of Islam
dukkha: a central concept of Buddhism; the basic element of the human condition, translated as 'suffering', 'desire' or 'anguish'
duty-based ethics: a branch of ethics concerned with what people do, not with the consequences of their actions

E

Eightfold Path: one of the principal teachings of the Buddha, who described it as the way leading to the end of suffering and the achievement of self-awakening
encyclical: a letter written by the people and 'circulated' throughout the whole Church
Enlightenment: a phase in Western philosophy and cultural life during which reason was promoted as the primary source and legitimacy for authority
enlightenment: gaining insight or wisdom which informs or instructs the individual
Epistles: letters in the New Testament written by the Apostles to Christians
ethics: the major branch of philosophy, encompassing proper conduct and good living
ethics of care: a more practical branch of ethical theory that stresses importance of relationships and an appreciation of practical needs
ethnographer: a person who studies and systematically records elements of human cultures
etrog: a citrus fruit; 'fruit of the godly trees' (Leviticus 23:40) carried in procession in the Synagogue with *lulav* during the festival of *Sukkat* (Feast of Tabernacles)
etymology: history of the development of language

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exegesis: critical explanation or analysis, especially of a text

F

Five Pillars of Islam: the term given to the five duties incumbent on every Muslim

form criticism: a type of biblical criticism that studies the pattern of biblical texts and classifies them according to literary forms and genres

Four Noble Truths: fundamental Buddhist teachings relating to the nature, origin and cessation of suffering, and the path leading to this cessation

functional approach: a definition of religion based on the role religion plays in different circumstances

fundamentalism: a belief in, and strict adherence to, a set of religious principles; often a reaction to perceived compromises with modern social and political life

G

G-d: When Moses demanded to know the name of G-d, G-d said to Moses 'Ehyeh-asher-ehyeh' [I am who I am, YHWH] (Exodis 3:14). Traditionally, rather than uttering the sacred name YHWH, Jews say Adonai, Lord. This respect or prohibition is expressed in English as G-d

Ganesha: a popular Hindu god revered as the Lord of Obstacles

genealogies: history of the descent of a person, family, or group

glossolalia: speaking in tongues

Godhead: the unknowable aspect of God, deity or divinity

Gospels: the story of Jesus' life and teachings, especially as in the first four books of the New Testament

grace: the self communication or presence of God

H

Hajj: a pilgrimage to Mecca; an obligation that must be carried out at least once by every able-bodied Muslim in their lifetime

Hanukkah: an eight-day Jewish holiday commemorating the re-dedication of the Temple in Jerusalem in the second century BCE, also known as the Festival of Lights

Havdalah: a Jewish religious ceremony that marks the symbolic end of Shabbat and holidays, and ushers in the new week

hedonism: a philosophy that regards pleasure to be of ultimate significance and the most important pursuit in life

heresies: the rejection of one or more established beliefs of a religious body, or adherence to 'other beliefs'

hermeneutics: a method or principle of interpretation

heterodoxy: departure from accepted beliefs or standards

historical approaches: studying the development and transformation of religion as part of the historical process

Holi: a joyful celebration for Hindus that celebrates the coming of spring and family, happiness and friendship

human rights: basic rights regarded as belonging fundamentally to all humans, such as civil and political rights, right to life and liberty, freedom of expression, equality before the law, the right to participate in culture, the right to food, the right to work, and the right to education

I

iconostasis: a wall of icons and religious paintings, separating the nave from the sanctuary in a church

idolatry: worship of any cult image, idea or object, as opposed to the worship of a monotheistic God

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imponderable: unable to be weighed up or evaluated with exactness

integrity: a concept that comprises perceived consistency of actions, values, methods, measures and principles

inter-religious dialogue: cooperative and positive interaction between people of different religious traditions

J

Janmashtami: a Hindu festival celebrating the birth of Krishna, an avatar of Vishnu

Jihad: an Arabic word for 'struggle'; meaning 'striving in the way of God'

jinn: invisible beings in Islam

justice: the concept of moral rightness based on ethics, rationality, law, natural law, fairness and equity

K

Ka'bah: a cube-shaped building in Mecca, Saudi Arabia; the most sacred site in Islam

Kaddish: a Jewish prayer recited in the ritual of the synagogue and by mourners at public services after the death of a relative

karma: the effects of one's actions in life, good or bad; the natural consequences of actions

Kathina: a special wooden frame used for sewing clothes

khandhas: five aggregates (or groups) that categorise all individual experience

Khums: 20 per cent surplus wealth to be administered by scholars for the welfare of the community

Kiddush: a prayer of sanctification or blessing recited over wine at *Shabbat* and festival meals

L

Lakshmi: the Hindu goddess of beauty, prosperity and goodness

Land Rights: Indigenous Australians' access to, and ownership of, land possessed before the arrival of Europeans

law: a framework of rules of conduct or action prescribed or formally recognised as binding or enforced by a controlling authority

lay people: non-ordained members of a religion

liminal: phase of transition from one stage to another

liminality: a subjective, conscious state of being on the 'threshold' of or between two different existential planes

liturgy: the official public worship of the Church

lores: traditional knowledge or beliefs

M

Maha Shrivratri: a Hindu religious festival for devotees of Shiva

Mahayana Buddhism: one of the two main schools of Buddhism and a term for classification of Buddhist philosophies and practice

mandalas: a diagram used in Buddhism and Hinduisim, usally concentric in design and used during meditation and ritual

mandir: Hindu temple or house of worship

mantra: a sacred verse chanted repeatedly as part of worship or meditation

Mariological: devotion to Mary, the mother of Jesus

maya: the Hindu belief that the everyday world is an illusion and that the distinction between the self and the Universe is a false dichotomy

Mecca: the holiest city in Islam, located in Saudi Arabia

Medina: the second holiest city in Islam, and the burial place of Muhammad

meditation: silent prayer that may focus on a word, person or sacred text

menorah: a branched candelabra, used in Jewish services

Messiah: from the Greek meaning anointed one

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mikveh: ritual bath
minyan: quorum of ten adult Jewish men
mission: a group of persons sent by a church to carry on religious work, especially evangelisation in foreign lands, and often to establish schools, hospitals, and so on
mitzvot: commandment
mohel: a person trained in Jewish circumcision
moksha: means 'freedom' and, according to the *Upanishads*, is the ultimate goal of human life
monism: the physical belief that there is ultimately only one reality and that all forms of plurality or individuality are an illusion; the notion that everything (including religion) is one; that there are no divisions
monotheism: a belief in only one god
morality: a code of conduct, which is held to be authoritative in matters of right and wrong
mortality: the quality or state of being mortal (i.e. subject to death)
mosque: a place of worship for followers of Islam
mudra: a symbolic or ritual gesture in Hinduism
Muezzin: The one who calls the faithful to daily prayer in Islam
Muhammad: the founder of the religion of Islam and who is regarded by Muslims as a messenger and prophet of God
multivocal: meaning different things to different people (e.g. symbols)
mundane: of this world; routine and commonplace
mysterium tremendum et fascinans: mystery that causes trembling and fascination (from Latin)
mythopoeic: related to the creation of myths

N

nation state: an independent state inhabited predominantly by a people sharing a common culture, history, religion and language
nationalism: a term referring to an ideology, sentiment, form of culture, or social movement that focuses on the nation
Navaratri: a Hindu festival of worship and dance that honours the feminine form of Brahman
normative ethics: the study of ethical theories that prescribe how people ought to act

O

Orthodox Church: The body of modern churches that is derived from the church of the Byzantine Empire, adheres to the Byzantine rite, and acknowledges the honorary primacy of the Patriarch of Constantinople.
Orthodox Judaism: the most traditionally observant stream of Judaism
orthodoxy: adhering to the accepted or traditional and established faith, especially in religion

P

Pali: historical middle Indo-Aryan language used in the sacred texts of Buddhism
patrilineal: involving the inheritance of names, titles, property or religion through the male line
Pesach: a holy day and festival commemorating the time when G-d delivered the Jewish people from slavery in Egypt
phenomenology: a philosophy concerned with the study of phenomena or the way things appear to us in experience or consciousness
plenary indulgences: the remission of 'temporal punishments', i.e. time spent in purgatory, still due for sins that had already been forgiven
pluralism: the acceptance or acknowledgement of different religions
polytheism: a belief in many (poly) gods (theos)
post-liminal: relating to the new status or state of life
practical dimensions: one of the dimensions of a religion, based on the religion's practices, such as belief, obedience and worship
prashad: offerings to the deities that are later shared with and consumed by believers

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prayer: an address to God or a god in word or thought

predestination: the Calvinist doctrine that God decides who will be saved and who will be damned irrespective of a person's exercise of free will

pre-liminal: related to separating from the previous life

primordial deity: ancient god or goddess

proselytise: the practice of converting or attempting to convert people to another religion

prostrate: to lie stretched out with face on the ground in adoration or submission

Protestant Reformation: a Christian reform movement that lead eventually to the formation of the Protestant churches that moved away from the Catholic Church in Rome

Protestants: churches that split from the Catholic Church during the sixteenth-century Reformation

puja: religious ritual that Hindus perform on a variety of occasions to pray or show respect to gods

Purim: a Jewish holiday that commemorates the deliverance of the Jewish people of the ancient Persian Empire as recorded in the Book of Esther

pyre: a structure, usually made of wood, for burning a body as part of a funeral rite

Q

quantum theory: the theoretical basis of modern physics that explains the nature and behaviour of matter and energy on an atomic and subatomic level

Quelle: a German word for 'source', probably referring to a collection of the sayings of Jesus

Qur'an: the central religious text of Islam

R

rak'at: one unit or cycle of Islamic prayer

Raksha Bandan: a celebration symbolising loyalty and protection that takes place on the full moon in the month of *Shravana*

Ramadan: the ninth month of the Islamic year observed as sacred with fasting practiced daily from dawn to dusk

reader response criticism: an approach that emphasises the reader's role in creating meaning

Reform Judaism: adapts its beliefs and practices to the norms of modern society – also referred to as Progressive or Liberal Judaism

religion: a personal or institutionalised set of attitudes, beliefs, and practices, which may include a system of prayers and religious laws

religious freedom: a principle that supports the freedom of an individual or community, in public or private, to manifest religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance

religious states: states or countries in which religion controls the government

responsibility: the quality or state of being responsible; moral, legal, or mental accountability

resurrection: a central doctrine of Christianity in which Jesus is raised from the dead

rites of passage: rituals or ceremonies that mark a change in a person's social or religious status

Roman Catholic Church: the world's largest Christian church, representing over half of all Christians and one-sixth of the world's population

Rosh Hashanah: Jewish New Year – literally 'head of the year'.

S

Sabbatarian laws: laws that strictly enforce the observance of the Sabbath

sacrament: visible signs of God's invisible presence

Salat: five daily ritual prayers in Islam

salvation: saving the soul or preservation from loss or disaster

Sandek: honoured family friend

Sangha: Buddhist monastic community

Sanskrit: historical Indo-Aryan language used in sacred texts of Buddhism

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Sawm: an Arabic word meaning 'fasting'; observed during the Islamic holy month of *Ramadan*

schism: a split or a division, usually in an organisation or a movement

science: knowledge, or a system of knowledge, covering general truths or the operation of general laws, especially obtained and tested through scientific methods

sectarianism: a narrow-minded adherence to a particular sect or denomination

secular humanism: a humanist philosophy concerned with reason, ethics and justice as the basis of moral decision making

secularisation: the process by which a society or country moves from close identification with religious institutions to a more separated relationship

self-immolation: suicide by fire

sentient: conscious, aware

Shabbat: the weekly Sabbath or day of rest in Judaism, starting at sundown on Friday and ending at sundown on Saturday

Shahadah: the first pillar of Islam; the statement of belief that, 'there is no God but Allah and Muhammad is his prophet'

Shalivahana calendar: Hindu calendar used widely in southern India, established at the time of King Shalivahan's accession to the throne in 78 CE

Sharia: Islamic law

Shi'ite: a minority subdivision of Islam that claims that the true successors to Muhammad were Ali and his descendants

Shiva: the Hindu god of destruction and transformation

Shoah: term meaning great whirlwind. *Shoah* is a word used by Jews, in preference to Holocaust, which means a burnt offering to God offered in the temple and therefore something sacred

shofar: a horn used for Jewish religious purposes

Simchat Torah: 'Rejoicing the Law'

Sleep of Vishnu: a feast celebrating the original cosmic sleep

sociological approaches: studying religion using the perspective of the study of human societies

sodalities: the name for lay church movements or organisations in the Roman Catholic Church

source criticism: a type of biblical criticism that looks for evidence of written sources

spiritual quest: a personal journey that seeks answers to ultimate questions

stupas: bell-shaped constructions that store relics of the dead

suffering: to undergo or experience severe pain or distress

Sufi: a devotional or mystical movement within Islam in which the individual aims to attain spiritual union with God through love

sukkah: a three-sided dwelling with a roof made of leaves

Sunni: a majority subdivision of Islam that accepts the legitimacy of the first four *caliphs* and their successors

supernatural approach: defines religion as having a god or a superhuman, controlling power

synchronic approaches: a linguistic approach that views linguistic phenomena only, at one point in time, usually the present

synod: an official assembly of the church at the international, national, regional or diocesan level

T

tallit: Jewish prayer shawl

tefillin: a pair of black leather boxes containing scrolls of parchment inscribed with verses; the hand-*tefillin* is wrapped around the arm, hand and fingers and the head-*tefillin* is placed on the forehead

Ten Precepts: fundamental Buddhist values related to ethical and moral teaching

theistic: belief in the existence of a god or gods

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Theravada Buddhism: the oldest surviving Buddhist school

tilak: a painted mark on the forehead or other parts of the body that can signify various things such as sect membership, marriage or the third eye

Tipitaka: the sacred writings that contain the teaching of the Buddha; also known as the Pali Canon; literally 'three baskets'

tolerance: a term used in social, cultural and religious contexts to describe attitudes that are respectful of practices or groups

Torah: the first five books of the Jewish Scriptures (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuternomy)

totemic identity: a feature of Indigenous Australian spiritualities, which orients the person to a particular totem (e.g. snake, crocodile)

Trinity: the concept in Chrsitianity that staes that there are three persons in one God (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit)

typological approach: an approach to the study of religion using eight categories or classifications and begins by studying a familiar or home tradition

tzitzit: are fringes or tassels hanging from the four corners of prayer shawls

U

umma: an Arabic word meaning community or nation

untouchables: people outside the caste system, outcasts

Upanishads: Collections of Hindu philosophical writing that are attached to the Vedas but move beyond their emphasis on ritual by seeking the meaning of human existence

utilitarianism: the idea that the moral worth of an action is determined solely by its overall contribution to the happiness of society as a whole

V

value judgement: a judgement that assigns a value, as to an object or action; a subjective evaluation.

values: relative and subjective ethical assumptions and measures

Vatican Council: formal meeting of the Roman Catholic Church hierarchy to address matters of faith, liturgy and doctrine

Vedas: a large body of texts originating in ancient India. They form the oldest layer of Sanskrit literature and the oldest sacred texts of Hinduism

vernacular: a language or dialect native to a region or country rather than a literary, cultured, or foreign language

Vikram calendar: Hindu calendar used widely in northern India, established by King Vikramaditya in 56 BCE

virtue ethics: a branch of ethics that is person rather than action based; exploring the virtue or moral character of the person carrying out an action, rather than the ethical duties, rules or consequences of particular actions

Vishnu: the Hindu god of preservation

W

White Australia policy: Australian government policy that intentionally restricted non-white immigration to Australia from 1901 to 1973

Wisdom Literature: a genre of literature that offers insights into how to live a virtuous life

World Council of Churches: an international Christian ecumenical organisation

worship: acts of religious devotion to a god or gods

wudu: Muslim ritual washing

Y

yamulkah: thin, slightly rounded skullcap worn by Jewish males during prayer

Yaum ul Jum'ah: a congregational prayer that Muslims hold every Friday

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yoga: refers to traditional physical and mental disciplines in Hinduism; it is a way for Hindus to perfect their union with the divine

Yom HaShoah: a day of commemoration for the approximately six million Jews who perished in the *Shoah*, known also as Holocaust Remembrance Day in English

Yom Kippur: the most solemn and important of the Jewish holy days – also known in English as the Day of Atonement

Z

Zakat: the Islamic principle of giving a percentage of one's income to charity

Zionism: the international Jewish political movement that originally supported the re-establishment of a homeland for Jews in Palestine

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Glossary

A

active state religions: the state supports a religion while maintaining a level of independence from it

Adhan: the Muslim call to prayer

afterlife: an existence after death

Allah: a combination of the word Al, meaning 'the' and ilah, the arabic word for 'God'; thus Allah means 'the God'

anatta: a central concept of Buddhism; translated as 'the absence of self or soul'

androcentric: male centred

anicca: a central concept of Buddhism; translated as 'impermanence'

animism: a belief that that spirits inhabit nature and have influence over people and natural events

anti-sacerdotal: hostile to priests or the priesthood

anti-Semitism: a term used to describe prejudice against, or hostility towards, people of Jewish lineage

aqiqah: to cut or break

Aryans: early Indo-Europeans who migrated to the Indian subcontinent

Ashramas: four stages of life in Hinduism, laid out in classical Sanskrit texts

Atman: a divine spirit that all people share

avatar: the descent of a deity to the earth in an incarnate form or some manifest shape; the incarnation of a god

B

Bhagavad Gita: 'The Lord's Song', one of the most popular texts in Hinduism, which describes a conversation between Arjuna and his charioteer, who is later revealed as Krishna

Bhakti: a special form of worship and deep, personal devotion to God that expresses love to one's god; from Sanskrit origin, meaning devotion

bier: a stand on which a corpse or coffin is placed

bimah: a raised platform in a Jewish synagogue from which the *Torah* is read

bodhisattva: enlightened being

Brahma: the Hindu god of creation

Brahman: *Brahman* is the unchanging, infinite, immanent, and transcendent reality which is the Divine Ground of all matter, energy, time, space, being, and everything beyond this Universe

breviary: a book of prayers, hymns, Psalms and other scripture texts

bush ministries: ministries formed to provide pastoral care in sparsely settled or remote areas in the early twentieth century

C

Canon: 'list' or 'measuring rod'; Canon of scripture is the title given to the official list of writings that constitute the sacred texts of a tradition

Catechism: a book that outlines a faith in the form of questions and answers

civil religion: a term used to describe events that link religion to national identity

classification-based approaches: studying religion by classifying different aspects and orientations

codes of ethics: a statement of the ethical principles, values and behaviours expected of members of an organisation or profession

common good: a term describing a specific 'good' that is shared and beneficial for all members of a given community

communitas: intense community spirit and solidarity

Concordat: an agreement between the Vatican state and a government of a certain country on religious matters

consequentialism: a term referring to moral theories that stress that only the consequences of a particular action form the basis for any valid moral judgement

Conservative Judaism: a modern stream of Judaism that arose out of intellectual currents in Germany in the mid-nineteenth century and took institutional form in the United States in the early 1900s

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cosmological model: a mathematical description, which tries to explain the origins and dynamics of the Universe
covenants: formal, solemn and binding agreements
creation: the act of making, inventing or producing
creed: a statement of religious belief
cults: social groups devoted to beliefs or practices considered to be outside the mainstream
culture: the customary beliefs, social forms and material traits of a racial, religious or social group
custom: any agreed, stipulated or generally accepted standards, norms, social norms or criterion

D

Decalogue: the Ten Commandments
deicide: the killing of a god, goddess, or similar deity
descriptive ethics: the study of people's beliefs about morality; an empirical investigation of people's moral beliefs
dimensional approaches: defines religion by looking at the different dimensions that make up a religion
discourse analysis: a general term for a number of approaches to analysing written, spoken or signed language use
discrimination: prejudiced outlook, action or treatment of, or against, a person or group based on class or category rather than individual merit
Divali: a celebration symbolising loyalty and protection, which takes place on the full moon in the month of *Shravana*
diversity: differences in racial or ethnic classifications, age, gender, religion, philosophy, place of origin, cultural values as well as other identifying features
Docetists: those who believe that Jesus' physical body was an illusion, as was his crucifixion
The Dreaming: a term used to describe a time of ancestral creation and the origins of all things for Indigenous Australians
Druze: a religious community found primarily in Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Israel and in the Palestinian territories whose traditional religion is said to have begun as an offshoot of Islam
dukkha: a central concept of Buddhism; the basic element of the human condition, translated as 'suffering', 'desire' or 'anguish'
duty-based ethics: a branch of ethics concerned with what people do, not with the consequences of their actions

E

Eightfold Path: one of the principal teachings of the Buddha, who described it as the way leading to the end of suffering and the achievement of self-awakening
encyclical: a letter written by the people and 'circulated' throughout the whole Church
Enlightenment: a phase in Western philosophy and cultural life during which reason was promoted as the primary source and legitimacy for authority
enlightenment: gaining insight or wisdom which informs or instructs the individual
Epistles: letters in the New Testament written by the Apostles to Christians
ethics: the major branch of philosophy, encompassing proper conduct and good living
ethics of care: a more practical branch of ethical theory that stresses importance of relationships and an appreciation of practical needs
ethnographer: a person who studies and systematically records elements of human cultures
etrog: a citrus fruit; 'fruit of the godly trees' (Leviticus 23:40) carried in procession in the Synagogue with *lulav* during the festival of *Sukkat* (Feast of Tabernacles)
etymology: history of the development of language

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exegesis: critical explanation or analysis, especially of a text

F

Five Pillars of Islam: the term given to the five duties incumbent on every Muslim

form criticism: a type of biblical criticism that studies the pattern of biblical texts and classifies them according to literary forms and genres

Four Noble Truths: fundamental Buddhist teachings relating to the nature, origin and cessation of suffering, and the path leading to this cessation

functional approach: a definition of religion based on the role religion plays in different circumstances

fundamentalism: a belief in, and strict adherence to, a set of religious principles; often a reaction to perceived compromises with modern social and political life

G

G-d: When Moses demanded to know the name of G-d, G-d said to Moses 'Ehyeh-asher-ehyeh' [I am who I am, YHWH] (Exodis 3:14). Traditionally, rather than uttering the sacred name YHWH, Jews say Adonai, Lord. This respect or prohibition is expressed in English as G-d

Ganesha: a popular Hindu god revered as the Lord of Obstacles

genealogies: history of the descent of a person, family, or group

glossolalia: speaking in tongues

Godhead: the unknowable aspect of God, deity or divinity

Gospels: the story of Jesus' life and teachings, especially as in the first four books of the New Testament

grace: the self communication or presence of God

H

Hajj: a pilgrimage to Mecca; an obligation that must be carried out at least once by every able-bodied Muslim in their lifetime

Hanukkah: an eight-day Jewish holiday commemorating the re-dedication of the Temple in Jerusalem in the second century BCE, also known as the Festival of Lights

Havdalah: a Jewish religious ceremony that marks the symbolic end of Shabbat and holidays, and ushers in the new week

hedonism: a philosophy that regards pleasure to be of ultimate significance and the most important pursuit in life

heresies: the rejection of one or more established beliefs of a religious body, or adherence to 'other beliefs'

hermeneutics: a method or principle of interpretation

heterodoxy: departure from accepted beliefs or standards

historical approaches: studying the development and transformation of religion as part of the historical process

Holi: a joyful celebration for Hindus that celebrates the coming of spring and family, happiness and friendship

human rights: basic rights regarded as belonging fundamentally to all humans, such as civil and political rights, right to life and liberty, freedom of expression, equality before the law, the right to participate in culture, the right to food, the right to work, and the right to education

I

iconostasis: a wall of icons and religious paintings, separating the nave from the sanctuary in a church

idolatry: worship of any cult image, idea or object, as opposed to the worship of a monotheistic God

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imponderable: unable to be weighed up or evaluated with exactness

integrity: a concept that comprises perceived consistency of actions, values, methods, measures and principles

inter-religious dialogue: cooperative and positive interaction between people of different religious traditions

J

Janmashtami: a Hindu festival celebrating the birth of Krishna, an avatar of Vishnu

Jihad: an Arabic word for 'struggle'; meaning 'striving in the way of God'

jinn: invisible beings in Islam

justice: the concept of moral rightness based on ethics, rationality, law, natural law, fairness and equity

K

Ka'bah: a cube-shaped building in Mecca, Saudi Arabia; the most sacred site in Islam

Kaddish: a Jewish prayer recited in the ritual of the synagogue and by mourners at public services after the death of a relative

karma: the effects of one's actions in life, good or bad; the natural consequences of actions

Kathina: a special wooden frame used for sewing clothes

khandhas: five aggregates (or groups) that categorise all individual experience

Khums: 20 per cent surplus wealth to be administered by scholars for the welfare of the community

Kiddush: a prayer of sanctification or blessing recited over wine at *Shabbat* and festival meals

L

Lakshmi: the Hindu goddess of beauty, prosperity and goodness

Land Rights: Indigenous Australians' access to, and ownership of, land possessed before the arrival of Europeans

law: a framework of rules of conduct or action prescribed or formally recognised as binding or enforced by a controlling authority

lay people: non-ordained members of a religion

liminal: phase of transition from one stage to another

liminality: a subjective, conscious state of being on the 'threshold' of or between two different existential planes

liturgy: the official public worship of the Church

lores: traditional knowledge or beliefs

M

Maha Shrivratri: a Hindu religious festival for devotees of Shiva

Mahayana Buddhism: one of the two main schools of Buddhism and a term for classification of Buddhist philosophies and practice

mandalas: a diagram used in Buddhism and Hinduisim, usally concentric in design and used during meditation and ritual

mandir: Hindu temple or house of worship

mantra: a sacred verse chanted repeatedly as part of worship or meditation

Mariological: devotion to Mary, the mother of Jesus

maya: the Hindu belief that the everyday world is an illusion and that the distinction between the self and the Universe is a false dichotomy

Mecca: the holiest city in Islam, located in Saudi Arabia

Medina: the second holiest city in Islam, and the burial place of Muhammad

meditation: silent prayer that may focus on a word, person or sacred text

menorah: a branched candelabra, used in Jewish services

Messiah: from the Greek meaning anointed one

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mikveh: ritual bath
minyan: quorum of ten adult Jewish men
mission: a group of persons sent by a church to carry on religious work, especially evangelisation in foreign lands, and often to establish schools, hospitals, and so on
mitzvot: commandment
mohel: a person trained in Jewish circumcision
moksha: means 'freedom' and, according to the *Upanishads*, is the ultimate goal of human life
monism: the physical belief that there is ultimately only one reality and that all forms of plurality or individuality are an illusion; the notion that everything (including religion) is one; that there are no divisions
monotheism: a belief in only one god
morality: a code of conduct, which is held to be authoritative in matters of right and wrong
mortality: the quality or state of being mortal (i.e. subject to death)
mosque: a place of worship for followers of Islam
mudra: a symbolic or ritual gesture in Hinduism
Muezzin: The one who calls the faithful to daily prayer in Islam
Muhammad: the founder of the religion of Islam and who is regarded by Muslims as a messenger and prophet of God
multivocal: meaning different things to different people (e.g. symbols)
mundane: of this world; routine and commonplace
mysterium tremendum et fascinans: mystery that causes trembling and fascination (from Latin)
mythopoeic: related to the creation of myths

N

nation state: an independent state inhabited predominantly by a people sharing a common culture, history, religion and language
nationalism: a term referring to an ideology, sentiment, form of culture, or social movement that focuses on the nation
Navaratri: a Hindu festival of worship and dance that honours the feminine form of Brahman
normative ethics: the study of ethical theories that prescribe how people ought to act

O

Orthodox Church: The body of modern churches that is derived from the church of the Byzantine Empire, adheres to the Byzantine rite, and acknowledges the honorary primacy of the Patriarch of Constantinople.
Orthodox Judaism: the most traditionally observant stream of Judaism
orthodoxy: adhering to the accepted or traditional and established faith, especially in religion

P

Pali: historical middle Indo-Aryan language used in the sacred texts of Buddhism
patrilineal: involving the inheritance of names, titles, property or religion through the male line
Pesach: a holy day and festival commemorating the time when G-d delivered the Jewish people from slavery in Egypt
phenomenology: a philosophy concerned with the study of phenomena or the way things appear to us in experience or consciousness
plenary indulgences: the remission of 'temporal punishments', i.e. time spent in purgatory, still due for sins that had already been forgiven
pluralism: the acceptance or acknowledgement of different religions
polytheism: a belief in many (poly) gods (theos)
post-liminal: relating to the new status or state of life
practical dimensions: one of the dimensions of a religion, based on the religion's practices, such as belief, obedience and worship
prashad: offerings to the deities that are later shared with and consumed by believers

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prayer: an address to God or a god in word or thought

predestination: the Calvinist doctrine that God decides who will be saved and who will be damned irrespective of a person's exercise of free will

pre-liminal: related to separating from the previous life

primordial deity: ancient god or goddess

proselytise: the practice of converting or attempting to convert people to another religion

prostrate: to lie stretched out with face on the ground in adoration or submission

Protestant Reformation: a Christian reform movement that lead eventually to the formation of the Protestant churches that moved away from the Catholic Church in Rome

Protestants: churches that split from the Catholic Church during the sixteenth-century Reformation

puja: religious ritual that Hindus perform on a variety of occasions to pray or show respect to gods

Purim: a Jewish holiday that commemorates the deliverance of the Jewish people of the ancient Persian Empire as recorded in the Book of Esther

pyre: a structure, usually made of wood, for burning a body as part of a funeral rite

Q

quantum theory: the theoretical basis of modern physics that explains the nature and behaviour of matter and energy on an atomic and subatomic level

Quelle: a German word for 'source', probably referring to a collection of the sayings of Jesus

Qur'an: the central religious text of Islam

R

rak'at: one unit or cycle of Islamic prayer

Raksha Bandan: a celebration symbolising loyalty and protection that takes place on the full moon in the month of *Shravana*

Ramadan: the ninth month of the Islamic year observed as sacred with fasting practiced daily from dawn to dusk

reader response criticism: an approach that emphasises the reader's role in creating meaning

Reform Judaism: adapts its beliefs and practices to the norms of modern society – also referred to as Progressive or Liberal Judaism

religion: a personal or institutionalised set of attitudes, beliefs, and practices, which may include a system of prayers and religious laws

religious freedom: a principle that supports the freedom of an individual or community, in public or private, to manifest religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance

religious states: states or countries in which religion controls the government

responsibility: the quality or state of being responsible; moral, legal, or mental accountability

resurrection: a central doctrine of Christianity in which Jesus is raised from the dead

rites of passage: rituals or ceremonies that mark a change in a person's social or religious status

Roman Catholic Church: the world's largest Christian church, representing over half of all Christians and one-sixth of the world's population

Rosh Hashanah: Jewish New Year – literally 'head of the year'.

S

Sabbatarian laws: laws that strictly enforce the observance of the Sabbath

sacrament: visible signs of God's invisible presence

Salat: five daily ritual prayers in Islam

salvation: saving the soul or preservation from loss or disaster

Sandek: honoured family friend

Sangha: Buddhist monastic community

Sanskrit: historical Indo-Aryan language used in sacred texts of Buddhism

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Sawm: an Arabic word meaning 'fasting'; observed during the Islamic holy month of *Ramadan*

schism: a split or a division, usually in an organisation or a movement

science: knowledge, or a system of knowledge, covering general truths or the operation of general laws, especially obtained and tested through scientific methods

sectarianism: a narrow-minded adherence to a particular sect or denomination

secular humanism: a humanist philosophy concerned with reason, ethics and justice as the basis of moral decision making

secularisation: the process by which a society or country moves from close identification with religious institutions to a more separated relationship

self-immolation: suicide by fire

sentient: conscious, aware

Shabbat: the weekly Sabbath or day of rest in Judaism, starting at sundown on Friday and ending at sundown on Saturday

Shahadah: the first pillar of Islam; the statement of belief that, 'there is no God but Allah and Muhammad is his prophet'

Shalivahana calendar: Hindu calendar used widely in southern India, established at the time of King Shalivahan's accession to the throne in 78 CE

Sharia: Islamic law

Shi'ite: a minority subdivision of Islam that claims that the true successors to Muhammad were Ali and his descendants

Shiva: the Hindu god of destruction and transformation

Shoah: term meaning great whirlwind. *Shoah* is a word used by Jews, in preference to Holocaust, which means a burnt offering to God offered in the temple and therefore something sacred

shofar: a horn used for Jewish religious purposes

Simchat Torah: 'Rejoicing the Law'

Sleep of Vishnu: a feast celebrating the original cosmic sleep

sociological approaches: studying religion using the perspective of the study of human societies

sodalities: the name for lay church movements or organisations in the Roman Catholic Church

source criticism: a type of biblical criticism that looks for evidence of written sources

spiritual quest: a personal journey that seeks answers to ultimate questions

stupas: bell-shaped constructions that store relics of the dead

suffering: to undergo or experience severe pain or distress

Sufi: a devotional or mystical movement within Islam in which the individual aims to attain spiritual union with God through love

sukkah: a three-sided dwelling with a roof made of leaves

Sunni: a majority subdivision of Islam that accepts the legitimacy of the first four *caliphs* and their successors

supernatural approach: defines religion as having a god or a superhuman, controlling power

synchronic approaches: a linguistic approach that views linguistic phenomena only, at one point in time, usually the present

synod: an official assembly of the church at the international, national, regional or diocesan level

T

tallit: Jewish prayer shawl

tefillin: a pair of black leather boxes containing scrolls of parchment inscribed with verses; the hand-*tefillin* is wrapped around the arm, hand and fingers and the head-*tefillin* is placed on the forehead

Ten Precepts: fundamental Buddhist values related to ethical and moral teaching

theistic: belief in the existence of a god or gods

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Theravada Buddhism: the oldest surviving Buddhist school

tilak: a painted mark on the forehead or other parts of the body that can signify various things such as sect membership, marriage or the third eye

Tipitaka: the sacred writings that contain the teaching of the Buddha; also known as the Pali Canon; literally 'three baskets'

tolerance: a term used in social, cultural and religious contexts to describe attitudes that are respectful of practices or groups

Torah: the first five books of the Jewish Scriptures (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuternomy)

totemic identity: a feature of Indigenous Australian spiritualities, which orients the person to a particular totem (e.g. snake, crocodile)

Trinity: the concept in Chrsitianity that staes that there are three persons in one God (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit)

typological approach: an approach to the study of religion using eight categories or classifications and begins by studying a familiar or home tradition

tzitzit: are fringes or tassels hanging from the four corners of prayer shawls

U

umma: an Arabic word meaning community or nation

untouchables: people outside the caste system, outcasts

Upanishads: Collections of Hindu philosophical writing that are attached to the Vedas but move beyond their emphasis on ritual by seeking the meaning of human existence

utilitarianism: the idea that the moral worth of an action is determined solely by its overall contribution to the happiness of society as a whole

V

value judgement: a judgement that assigns a value, as to an object or action; a subjective evaluation.

values: relative and subjective ethical assumptions and measures

Vatican Council: formal meeting of the Roman Catholic Church hierarchy to address matters of faith, liturgy and doctrine

Vedas: a large body of texts originating in ancient India. They form the oldest layer of Sanskrit literature and the oldest sacred texts of Hinduism

vernacular: a language or dialect native to a region or country rather than a literary, cultured, or foreign language

Vikram calendar: Hindu calendar used widely in northern India, established by King Vikramaditya in 56 BCE

virtue ethics: a branch of ethics that is person rather than action based; exploring the virtue or moral character of the person carrying out an action, rather than the ethical duties, rules or consequences of particular actions

Vishnu: the Hindu god of preservation

W

White Australia policy: Australian government policy that intentionally restricted non-white immigration to Australia from 1901 to 1973

Wisdom Literature: a genre of literature that offers insights into how to live a virtuous life

World Council of Churches: an international Christian ecumenical organisation

worship: acts of religious devotion to a god or gods

wudu: Muslim ritual washing

Y

yamulkah: thin, slightly rounded skullcap worn by Jewish males during prayer

Yaum ul Jum'ah: a congregational prayer that Muslims hold every Friday

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yoga: refers to traditional physical and mental disciplines in Hinduism; it is a way for Hindus to perfect their union with the divine

Yom HaShoah: a day of commemoration for the approximately six million Jews who perished in the *Shoah*, known also as Holocaust Remembrance Day in English

Yom Kippur: the most solemn and important of the Jewish holy days – also known in English as the Day of Atonement

Z

Zakat: the Islamic principle of giving a percentage of one's income to charity

Zionism: the international Jewish political movement that originally supported the re-establishment of a homeland for Jews in Palestine

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