

FOR THE LOVE OF GOD + -

INTRODUCTION TO CLASSROOM RESOURCES

INTRODUCTION TO THE DOCUMENTARY

After a decade of doing “public Christianity” - engaging the public with a clear, measured, and respectful picture of the Christian faith - we at the Centre for Public Christianity (CPX) often come across the same kind of objection to our content, regardless of the topic. The objection reads something like this: “Christianity, and religion in general, has caused so much conflict and suffering in the world. Why would I want to have anything to do with that?” People we interact with often mention events such as the Crusades, the Spanish Inquisition, the Troubles in Northern Ireland, the treatment of women, colonialism, slavery, and many other examples - a long list of usually valid criticisms against the church - to conclude, in the words of Christopher Hitchens, that **“Religion poisons everything”**.

In response to these criticisms, in 2018 CPX has released a new documentary, titled *For the Love of God: How the church is better and worse than you ever imagined*. The documentary looks at the history of Christianity in the West, and confronts the worst of what Christians have done: the violence, corruption, hypocrisy and oppression. However, it also traces the origins of Western values that we treasure most - like human rights, charity, humility, and non-violence - back to the influence of Jesus.

We filmed in Europe, the US, Asia, the Middle East, and Australia, and conducted 56 interviews with experts in their fields, to offer a clear-eyed assessment of the good, the bad, the ugly, and the unexpected impact of Christianity on our world. We haven’t drawn conclusions about whether, on balance, Christianity’s influence has been good or bad overall. We only claim that Jesus’ teachings – which included his call for his followers to love their enemies – amounted to a beautiful composition that Christians have sometimes performed well, and sometimes played completely “out of tune”.

DOCUMENTARY FORMATS

For the Love of God has been released in three formats:

1. A 90-minute cinema version, released in Australian cinemas on 9 May 2018
2. Four one-hour episodes on the topics of War + Peace, Rights + Wrongs, Rich + Poor, and Power + Humility, released to buy or rent through the CPX website from 1 July 2018, and available on iTunes, Google Play, and DVD, from November 2018.

3. 34 segments between approximately 5 and 10 minutes, available free on the CPX website from 1 July 2018. Edited versions of these segments make up both the episodes and the cinema version. Segments include:

- Holy War: The Crusades
- MLK: Power and non-violence
- Slavery in “Christian” America
- The leper priest: Father Damien of Molokai
- How missionaries changed the world
- The church under Nazi rule
- Oppressive or liberating? Christianity and women

CLASSROOM RESOURCES

The Classroom Resources are based on the 5-10 minute video segments. In general, each individual segment has a set of accompanying suggested activities, with the exception of the Image of God segments, where there is one set of suggested activities for Parts 1-3, and a separate set for Part 4. Half the resources will be available from 1 July 2018, and the rest will be released over the following couple of months.

The content of these videos and lesson resources would be most suitable for students in Years 10-12, or possibly for extending some students in Years 8 and 9.

a. Relevance to high-school students

For the Love of God, and these accompanying Classroom Resources, will be engaging, relevant and accessible for high-school students, from those who profess a Christian faith to those who are hostile towards it, and everyone in between. In a time when young people increasingly see the Church as hypocritical, heavy-handed, and generally harmful to society, we hope that For the Love of God will help them to see the difference between the failures of the Church in history and the teachings of its founder, Jesus. We also hope that the documentary will help them to see the unique contribution of Christianity to areas such as human rights, non-violence, and charity - important stories that most will be unaware of in our increasingly secular society.

b. Production of resources

Several people have been involved in the process of developing these resources, namely:

- Anne Pickering, Head of Christian Studies, Abbotsleigh - initial planning, developing the structure, writing and editing

- Renee Gowing, Head of Biblical Studies and Studies of Religion, St Catherine's School - writing
- Doug Broadbent, Head of Christian Studies, Shore School - initial planning, developing the structure and writing
- Emily Liddell, Christian Studies Teacher, Abbotsleigh - initial planning and developing the structure
- Anna Grummitt, Youth Editor, CPX - initial planning, writing and editing
- Simon Smart, Executive Director, CPX - initial planning and editing

c. Contexts for use

The resources are particularly designed for use in Christian/Biblical Studies classes in independent schools, but could also be used in other subjects, such as Studies of Religion or History. **Unfortunately, these resources have not yet been approved for use in Special Religious Education (SRE) in public schools, however this is something that we are working on for the future.**

d. Structure of resources

The resources that go alongside each segment are not intended to be a comprehensive lesson plan, rather, a set of suggested activities that you can pick and choose from, or modify, based on the needs of your particular class. They do have a logical progression, but would be too comprehensive for most lessons. We encourage you to use as much or as little of the resources as you would like, and not to feel restricted by them.

Each set of suggested activities has five parts:

- 1. Theme Question/s:** These are one or two introductory questions to get students thinking about the overall theme of the episode the segment is part of (War + Peace, Rights + Wrongs, Rich + Poor, Power + Humility), and of the documentary as a whole. These activities are designed to be done prior to watching the segment(s).
- 2. Engage:** These are questions and activities that will give the students reasons to care about the topic presented in the segment. The aim is to make connections to the world of the students. This might be a connection to prior knowledge and/or an emotional connection. These activities are designed to be done prior to watching the segment(s).
- 3. Understand & Evaluate:** These are questions that are directly based on content and concepts from the video segment(s). There is usually a progression from fairly simple comprehension questions, to more complex questions and activities that require students to evaluate what they have learnt.
- 4. Bible Focus:** This section contains questions and activities based on one or two Bible passages that are relevant to the concepts presented in the segment(s).

5. Apply: These questions allow students to creatively apply the concepts discussed in the lesson to the world today and to their own lives. This section includes questions that should provoke thinking from Christian students and others.

6. Extend: These are optional extension activities designed to be done outside the classroom. They allow students to explore one of the concepts of the lesson in significantly more depth, usually by doing their own research and writing.

As much as possible, we have tried to design questions and activities that develop one or more of the Four Cs of learning:

- **Communication** - through including activities that encourage students to express what they have learnt and what stands out to them (both logically and emotionally). We have chosen not to be too prescriptive in terms of which questions require a written answer, and which can be discussed in groups or as a class, so you are free to decide for your own class.
- **Collaboration** - through including many activities that would work best in pairs or small groups. We have chosen not to be too prescriptive in terms of which questions are to be done individually and which are to be done in pairs or small groups, so you are free to decide for your own class.
- **Creativity** - through including a range of creative and imaginative activities.
- **Critical Thinking** - through including a range of activities that require students to interpret, analyse and evaluate ideas and arguments.

CONTACT

If you have any questions regarding these resources, or feedback after using them, please contact:

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