

# Teacher Notes for the Southern Cross Introduction to Luke

The small booklet that explores eight scenes from the Gospel of Luke is based upon an exploration of the Spirituality of the texts.

What do we mean by Spirituality?

What is the difference between Human, Christian or Biblical Spirituality?

Patrick J Hartin's work **Exploring the Spirituality of the Gospels** offers Catholic teachers and students a useful framework with which to address the Christian message. He outlines three simple definitions that note the different elements of human, Christian and Biblical Spirituality. Each of these codes builds upon the other and offer us schema for the study of a biblical text and a way to evaluate our own response to God's call. We have used these definitions as a basis for our booklet **The Southern Cross Introduction to Luke**.

## Human Spirituality

The search to integrate life through whatever animates and provides "ultimate" meaning and direction

We can assert that most people have some type of spirituality, something that binds together their lives. The word "religion" literally means that. Their religion that gives meaning and direction to their lives might be their career, their grandchildren, their sporting interests or their hobbies. The driving force is a search for something to give direction to their lives and when they find that goal, activity or phenomenon they generally strive to integrate it into all they do.

So we can begin by noting that people have a basic spirituality.

Building on this basic assertion Hartin notes that Christian Spirituality presents an encounter with God as the key animating event. The definition now clarifies the place of Christ in giving meaning and direction to one's life. The encounter with Christ becomes an event transforming the believer from that moment with a new found power that they integrate into their whole existence.

In these teacher notes we are stressing the importance of Encounter as the basis of a Christian Spirituality.

## The Importance of ENCOUNTER

Class questions:

What is an encounter? What does the dictionary say?

To meet someone, to contact, to converse.

If you are playing in a team- netball, soccer, football, basketball, debating, chess- and a new coach has been appointed who played this sport/game at an elite level what are you thoughts?

What will s/he be like?

What will I learn?

How difficult will this be?

What changes will I make to my practice routines?

Will I be dropped from the team?

An encounter with a new person in my class challenges me somewhat. A new teacher will stress different elements of a lesson.

New people we encounter challenge us in some way.

## Encounter in the Gospels

The encounters we find in the Gospel are more than chance meetings, the people are changed by the event. The change is often unexpected. So a real encounter is when something more than a meeting occurs, a transformation takes place.

## Christian Spirituality

The search to integrate life through the transforming experience of encountering God in Christ. This graced experience animates and gives life meaning and direction.

We notice that in these eight stories from Luke's gospel that God is encountered and the people gain new meaning and direction for their lives. In each of the stories we can explore the following questions.

### Key Questions for the 8 Passages in Luke's Gospel

- Who are the people in the scene? List them all.
- Who encounters God/ Christ in the story?
- Do they accept or reject him?
- What exchange takes place? God never leaves us the same when he is encountered. We are always called to deeper conversion.
- What new meaning is given to people who encounter God/Christ in the story?
- What new direction is embarked upon at the end of the story?
- What does this Gospel story tell me about my search?
- What new direction is this story calling me to this year?
- What new meaning for my life can I find in the Gospel story?

The definition expands again to include Biblical spirituality which adds the element of witness to the Godly encounter. The bible stories offer us the account of individuals and groups who live a transformed life which has direction and meaning based on Gods loving plan.

These definitions offer us a framework to assess the import of some of the key stories found in Luke's Gospel.

In the reading of these stories we will note the specifically Lucan themes that is found in them. We shall also see that these classic texts point us toward a Christian spirituality and encourage us to live our own grace filled life of healing and transformation.

The stories from this Gospel offer a wonderful model for Christian life. They enable the young and old to encounter the message of Christ and offer us an appropriate response.

# Why read Luke's Gospel in Grade 6? Why use it as a basis for a Confirmation Class?

Quite simply, because the reception of the Holy Spirit in the Sacrament of Confirmation means the candidates gain the gifts of the Spirit. How many gifts? Just seven or more? These gifts that are based upon Isaiah Chapter 11 can be combined with the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit found in Galatians Chapter 5.

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| <b>Wisdom</b><br>Isaiah 11:2                        | <b>Understanding</b><br>Isaiah 11:2      |
| <b>Right Judgement</b> (Good Advice)<br>Isaiah 11:2 | <b>Courage</b><br>Isaiah 11:2            |
| <b>Knowledge</b><br>Isaiah 11:2                     | <b>Reverence</b> (Prayer)<br>Isaiah 11:2 |
| <b>Love</b><br>Galatians 5:22 – 23                  | <b>Joy</b><br>Galatians 5:22 – 23        |
| <b>Peace</b><br>Galatians 5:22 – 23                 | <b>Patience</b><br>Galatians 5:22 – 23   |
| <b>Kindness</b><br>Galatians 5:22 – 23              | <b>Gentleness</b><br>Galatians 5:22 – 23 |
| <b>Self Control</b><br>Galatians 5:22 – 23          |  |

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These gifts are found in the stories of Luke's gospel. A good preparation in a confirmation year is to spend time exploring these key Lucan narrative and noting the spiritual development of the characters who encounter Christ. Confirmation is first and foremost an encounter with Christ and the reception of His Holy Spirit.

## Why read the classic passages in Years 9 or 10?

Senior school students are concerned about social justice and are called to make a valuable contribution to the world. Their ethical studies and units on conscience and decision making demand that they make mature judgements about their lives and their world. They are challenged to forge their own spirituality in the light of the Gospels. It is a good time to revisit the key stories of Luke's Gospel to assess their own journey.

Maturity in life has certain demands. We would want Catholic students to have these basic Christian qualities of inquirer, learner, listener, carer for loved ones, link to wider groups national and worldly, disturber of those who trample upon human rights and dignity sign of the future for others.

The 8 Gospel passages in Luke highlight the key elements that our world needs. Far beyond the reaches of the Gospel is the need for humans to:

- Search for God's will
- Search for Belonging
- Search for Compassion
- Search for Forgiveness
- Search for Meaning
- Search for Peace in Life
- Search for the Truth
- Search for Justice

These basic elements form the bedrock of our lives, of our human existence. The reason for exploring these eight scenes in Luke's Gospel in senior classes is to underscore the task of Catholic Education in providing a solid basis for engagement of students in the wider world.

The booklet also explores the Spirituality that is found in the Gospel passages.

# Prayers

## 1. Annunciation

Theme: the Search for God's will

- Who are the people in the scene? The Angel and Mary
  - God as the one who sends Gabriel to Mary
- Who encounters God in the story? Mary
- Do they accept or reject him? She accepts God's invitation to become the Mother of Jesus
- What exchange takes place? Mary is concerned as to how this will come about.
- God never leaves us the same when he is encountered. We are always called to deeper conversion. Mary is moved by this encounter
- What new meaning is given to people who encounter God/Christ in the story? This is a question that cannot be understated: the whole of human history is changed from that moment and the nature of God becomes human. All human life is given new meaning.
- What new direction is embarked upon at the end of the story? Mary heads off to see her cousin Elizabeth who, as stated in the opening line, is in her sixth month of pregnancy with John the Baptist.
- What does The Annunciation tell me about my search for God? Where in my life can I say 'yes' to God? In prayer, worship and care for others?
- What new direction is this story calling me to this year? What plans for the future are clearer now when seen in the light of Mary's response?
- What new meaning for my life can I find in the Gospel story? Mary immediately went to visit her cousin. What task am I called to do today?

### Prayer

Ever loving God, Your angel Gabriel encountered Mary and received her statement, her "Yes" to your will.

May we respond to your call with the same speed and be filled with Joy at doing your will.

Amen

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## 2. The Sinful woman

Theme: The Search for Belonging

### Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ,

You suffered the indignity of being overlooked and disregarded yet you noticed and cared for the despised.  
Forgive us for

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### 3. The Good Samaritan

Theme: The Search for Compassion

#### Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ,

Teach us to be compassionate. You felt pity for those in need: the crowds, the outcast and the broken. Move our hearts to see you in the suffering ones we encounter, may we journey with them to your place of eternal peace.

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### 4. The Prodigal Son

Theme: The Search for Forgiveness and Re-uniting with loved ones

#### Prayer

Ever loving God,

The prodigal son encountered his own sinfulness and returned to find forgiveness and love in the arms of his father. Help us to repent of our failings and always celebrate your love for us we find in Christ Jesus, Your Son.

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### 5. The Disciples who lost hope

Theme: The Search for Meaning

#### Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ,

You encountered the despondent disciples as they trudged away from their friends. Your words and actions renewed their hope and gave new meaning to their lives.

May our search for hope be based upon your words and may our journey always have you as our travelling companion.

Amen

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### 6. The Transformation of Zacchaeus

Theme: The Search for Peace in life

#### Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ,

You called Zacchaeus from the tree and his life was transformed by that encounter. Call us down from our proud stances to speak with you and live a changed life.

Amen

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## 7. The Attempt to trap Jesus

Theme: The Search for the Truth

### Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ,

The authorities tried to trap you with their questions but they failed to realize that you are the way, the truth and the life of the world. Help us to search for your truth in all we do. Guide our teaching and learning by your guiding light, keep us safe on our journey to your kingdom.

Amen

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## 8, Dives and Lazarus

Theme: The Search for Justice

### Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ,

You are the King of Creation and the Judge of the living and the dead.

Teach us to care for the needy in our midst and enable us to see your figure in their lives. Keep us mindful of the call for Justice in our broken world and help us as we strive to break the bonds of sin that bind our world.

Amen

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