

ARCHBISHOP'S PENTECOST LETTER TO YOUTH 2014

Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne



Using the *Archbishop's Pentecost Letter to Youth* in your School

Every year, Archbishop Denis Hart writes a letter to young people which is released on Pentecost Sunday. The *Pentecost Letter* is a response to the Archbishop's annual conversation with student leaders, and reflects on the hopes, concerns and questions expressed by young people at this gathering.

This year's *Pentecost letter to Youth* is an invitation into the joy of a life of faith inspired by the witness of Pope Francis. The theme is drawn from Pope Francis' Twitter feed from February 7:

'What zest life acquires when we allow ourselves to be filled by the love of God!'

Schools are invited to share the following resources with students:

- 1. The Archbishop's Pentecost Letter:** This is the 8-page coloured booklet that Melbourne secondary schools should have received in the post by 4 June. A print-friendly version can be downloaded from www.cam.org.au/YouthLetter or contact the Archdiocesan Office for Youth to order hard copy booklets on 03 9415 9867.
- 2. The Archbishop's Pentecost videos:** A series of four short video featuring young people discussing the themes of the *Pentecost Letter* is available at www.cam.org.au/YouthLetter

This resource kit for schools includes suggestions for using the *Pentecost Letter* and videos as part of your school curriculum or faith program. A resource kit for schools and parishes is also available at www.cam.org.au/YouthLetter.



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REFLECT

The following reflection questions are linked to the *Coming to Know, Worship and Love* Curriculum Framework and the VCE *Religion and Society* and *Text and Traditions* unit outlines.

UNIT	CONTEXT FROM THE CURRICULUM DOCUMENTATION	SUGGESTIONS FOR REFLECTION
Year 7 Unit 4b: The Liturgical Year	The fifty days from Easter to Pentecost, the Easter season, are one great feast of joy. The Ascension is celebrated on the seventh Sunday. The season culminates in Pentecost, the celebration of the coming of the Holy Spirit.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why would Archbishop Hart choose to write a letter to young people on Pentecost? • How does the Church express its joy and zest for life throughout the liturgical seasons?
Year 8 Unit 2a: Participating in the Life of the Church	The Church's mission is one of evangelisation, following Jesus' command to the apostles (Mt 28:19). Members of the Church are called not just to profess and communicate their faith, but to put it into practice. The mission of the Church is the mission of each individual and each community. Members of the Church live out their mission in the witnessing to the values presented by Jesus in the Gospel; by sharing their talents in the service of others as well as sharing in the life of worship in the local parish.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you think Archbishop Hart and Pope Francis are telling us about the mission of the Church? • What does the letter suggest about the nature of evangelisation? • In Scripture we are told about how the gifts of the Holy Spirit were evident in the early Church. How do you see Archbishop Hart, Alana, Candice and James experiencing the gift of joy today? • How do you experience the gift of joy? • How do we experience joy through service to others?
Year 8 Unit 2b: Beliefs of Early Christian Communities	The Church, whose foundations had been laid by Christ, came alive on Pentecost. The Acts of the Apostles traces the spiritual birth of the Christian community to a religious event shared by the assembled disciples and Mary. This common experience of being filled with the Holy Spirit ensured that the first followers of Christ would become confident witnesses of the Resurrection.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is Archbishop Hart encouraging us to do this Pentecost? • Pope Francis tweeted: 'What zest life acquires when we allow ourselves to be filled by the love of God!' Do you think this 'zest' for life is what the early Christian communities experienced?
Year 8 Unit 3a: Goodness in our world	In the Catholic view of life, the world is a good place in which to live. Created and sustained by God, it shares and points to God's presence. There are many things in life that are good. Students should explore and celebrate good things they have experienced: the beauty of nature, the love of a parent, being healthy, their favourite foods, play and sport, artistic expression, talking to lonely students, helping elderly neighbours, the joy of living close to God.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is Archbishop Hart telling us about the joy of living close to God? • Where do Alana, Candice and James see goodness and joy in the world? • How have Alana, Candice and James been challenged or held back from experiencing true goodness and joy? • Where do you experience joy?

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<p>Year 8 Unit 5a: Jesus, a model for living</p>	<p>Jesus expressed the guiding principle of his ministry as love of God, love of self and love of others. Jesus understood that to be fully human entails knowing and responding to the love of God, loving and respecting oneself as made in the image of God, and showing this love and respect towards others who are also loved by God. Many people were so impressed by Jesus' personality that they sought his friendship and support. His followers were so impressed by the reality of his extraordinary love that they strove to make it part of their own lives.</p> <p>By his compassion and sympathy, Jesus inspired people with confidence and restored their self-respect and dignity.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Archbishop Hart suggests that the world is excited by the example of Pope Francis because he is exhibiting the love and mercy of Jesus. How have you seen Pope Francis witnessing to the love of Jesus? • Why do you think that living 'filled with the love of God' brings Pope Francis and Archbishop Hart so much zest for life? • Why do you think Alana, Candice and James are striving to know and respond to the love of God in their lives? • Who else do you think exhibits the zest of living 'filled by the love of God'?
<p>Year 8 Unit 5b: Living the Christian Life</p>	<p>With the guidance of the Holy Spirit, Christians have a capacity to influence and change the lives of others through the example of their own lives. By loving others as Jesus loved them and actively responding to their needs, Christians are living the challenge of Christianity.</p> <p>Many individuals and groups choose to put the teachings of Jesus to work in their own lives, by carrying out a wide range of ministries. Through their actions they give witness to the Christian faith expressed in love of neighbour.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After reading Archbishop Hart's letter, what do you think characterises the Christian life? • Who are some examples of people living 'filled by the love of God'?
<p>Year 9 Unit 2a: Key Church Teachings</p>	<p>The Holy Spirit acts as a guide as we make decisions and choices. The Holy Spirit is the source of inspiration within human beings to find their full humanity.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • St Paul says that the fruits of the Holy Spirit are love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Is this what Archbishop Hart is talking about when he invites young people to discover the zest life can have when the love of God flows through you?
<p>Year 9 Unit 2b: The Catholic Church in Australia</p>	<p>The high visibility of Catholic culture in the middle years of the twentieth century is less defined as Australia begins the 21st century. While the technological age stimulates our need for information, materialism and poverty are overarching trends which divide Australians. There are, however, many signs of hope.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What signs of hope do Pope Francis, Archbishop Hart, Alana, Candice and James see? • How do you see the Catholic Church in Australia as being filled with zest?

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<p>Year 9 Unit 3a: Redemption and Hope</p>	<p>The lure of power, status, wealth and materialism which has been perpetuated through the use of image, has to some extent transformed society into a consumer-oriented culture. At the same time, the positive contribution of the image culture cannot be overlooked. Significant and stimulating experiences have been mediated through the use of image.</p> <p>As students search for a set of values as a guide to living, they are presented with contrasting images promoted by society and the Gospel. Society's images contribute, in part, to a rather selfish individualism and materialistic attitude to life, which can be contrasted to the selfless and compassionate attitude of Jesus in the Gospel.</p> <p>The attainment of happiness as outlined by Jesus in the Beatitudes can be contrasted with society's reassurance that happiness is acquired through the pursuit of materialism.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Archbishop Hart has used the image of surfing to try to explain the exuberance of living in the love of God; what experiences or images would you use? • In Archbishop Hart's letter and the video clip the difference between pleasure and joy is discussed; what do you think the difference is? • What do you think the Beatitudes say about living a life of zest and joy?
<p>Year 9 Unit 5a: The Ten Commandments and the Beatitudes</p>	<p>Christian morality is given its fullest expression in the Beatitudes. They go beyond a set of guidelines and positively advocate attitudes and actions which are to be embraced. They offer inspiration and encouragement to those who follow the example of Jesus' lifestyle.</p> <p>Located in the Gospel of Matthew within the Sermon on the Mount, the Beatitudes (5:3-11) are central to Jesus' teaching on the kingdom of God.</p> <p>The word Beatitude means blessing. Jesus' purpose in stating the Beatitudes was to convey to his audience the blessings that are bestowed on those who genuinely live out the kingdom's ideals. They identify the reasons for and sources of blessedness.</p> <p>The Beatitudes are addressed to those who realize their dependence on God; those who are gentle, compassionate and hunger and thirst for justice; those who are merciful, honest and humble; those who are peacemakers and suffer persecution for others.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How would you express Archbishop Hart's message to us as a Beatitude? • How would you consider the Beatitudes a guide for a life full of zest?

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Year 10 Unit 2a: The Church in History	<p>The foundations of Christian evangelisation/ mission.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you think Archbishop Hart is telling us about evangelisation and mission? • Would you consider Alana, Candice or James as modern-day evangelisers / missionaries? Why?
Year 10 Unit 3a: Major Christian Denominations	<p>It is intended that students will be able to recommend those qualities which exemplify the Christian lifestyle.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • According to Archbishop Hart's letter, what are the key qualities of living the Christian lifestyle? • What qualities do Alana, Candice and James embrace as Christians?
Year 10 Unit 4a: The Eucharist	<p>Catholics believe that the celebration of the Eucharist is not complete unless it is lived out in their lives. Leaving the church, Catholics take Jesus with them into their daily lives. Thus their lives become an extension of sharing in the Eucharist. The Scriptures give directions on this.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What Scripture does Archbishop Hart include in his letter that points to how Catholics can live out the celebrations of the Eucharist in their daily lives?
Year 10 Unit 5a: Personal Moral Responsibility	<p>People do not always succeed in acting in accordance with the kind of person they want to become. They "miss the mark".</p> <p>God's grace is more powerful than sin: 'however much sin increased, grace was always greater' (Romans 5:20). The New Testament is the revelation in Jesus Christ of God's mercy to sinners.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alana, Candice and James spoke of some of the challenges that hold them back from true joy; what are some of these challenges in your own life?
Year 10 Unit 5b: Working for Justice in Australia	<p>The Church's mission is for the redemption of humanity and its liberation from every oppressive situation. Through the centuries Christians have made continuing efforts to live up to this call. Over the last century the Church has developed its social teaching. Among other things it has emphasised the dignity of the human person, the common good, human rights and the preferential option for the poor.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can we be joyful and filled with zest for life when there is oppression in the world? • How can we bring the zest of living in God's love to others?

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<p>VCE Religion and society</p>	<p>This study proposes that religions can be understood in a general way as meaning systems that have eight interrelated aspects, one of which is religious experience and spirituality (characteristic ways of thinking and behaving in the light of beliefs).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From reading Archbishop Hart's letter, what do you think are some of the characteristics of his system of belief? • After reading Archbishop Hart's letter, which values do you think he considers fundamental to living a life full of zest? • How has their system of belief influenced Alana's, Candice's or James' behaviour? • Do you think 'joy' or 'zest' for life can be considered a key characteristic of someone's spirituality? Why? • In what ways has being Catholic assisted Alana, Candice or James to develop their personal meaning or identity? • How do you see other religious communities expressing their joy and zest for life? Are there any similarities? • How have Alana's, Candice's or James' religious beliefs impacted their interpretation of significant life experiences?
<p>VCE Text and traditions</p>	<p>This study equips student to come to a deeper understanding of the relationship between religious traditions and the written texts which grow and shape the traditions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Archbishop Hart draws on several different quotes from Scripture to discuss living a life full of zest and joy; what other examples from Scripture do you think also discuss this theme? • In what ways has Scripture influenced Alana's, Candice's and James' understanding of what it means to live life filled with the love of God? • Archbishop Hart particularly references the Gospel and letters of John in this letter. What else does the Gospel of John tell us about pleasure and / or joy?

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EXPLORE

The *Pentecost letter* uses the images of surfing and flavour to convey zest. Use the following ideas in your classroom to introduce a reflection on the *Pentecost Letter*:

- Play surfing images as students gather.
- Invite students who are involved in surfing or a similar activity (sports, arts, volunteering) to give a small reflection about their experience of finding joy.
- Compare flavoured and unflavoured foods (e.g. buttered and plain popcorn) in a blind taste test.
- Play the classic 'Please, sir' scene from a movie adaptation of *Oliver Twist*.

PRAY

- *Lectio Divina* is a style of prayer based on the Scriptures. In *Lectio Divina* students are invited to:

Read – Read a few verses or a chapter from scripture.

Meditate – Sit with the words, and re-read the text paying attention to words or phrases which stand out.

Pray – Pray silently or out loud.

Contemplate – Listen to how the Lord may be responding to their prayer, in silence or through the Scriptures.

Act – Choose a resolution to focus their actions and choices through the coming days based on what has emerged through their prayer and contemplation.

Lectio Divina may be done in small groups where students can share how the text is speaking to them. In a large group, a leader can guide students through each step, enabling individuals to have personal prayer time.

The *Pentecost Letter* draws upon scripture from St John. The following scriptural passages from the Gospel of John or Letters of St John are suggested for a *Lectio Divina* reflecting upon the themes of the *Pentecost Letter*:

John 10:1-10 – Jesus the Good Shepherd

John 15:1-11 – Jesus the true vine

1 John 4:7-21 – God is love

- Include an intention drawn from the *Pentecost Letter* in your next school liturgy:

For young people in our school and the Archdiocese of Melbourne, that they may be open to receiving the joy found in a life of faith.

For our school community, that we may always witness to the joy of God's love.

- Many of the Psalms express the joy of faith. Invite students to pray the following:

Psalm 8 – Divine majesty and human dignity

Psalm 63 – Comfort and assurance in God's presence

Psalm 77 – God's mighty deeds recalled

Psalm 84 – The joy of worship in the temple

Psalm 98 – Praise the judge of the world

- The song in the Pentecost DVD resources is called 'Rising', by Australian Catholic worship artist, Stephen Kirk. You might want to accompany your prayer or reflection with this song or another song from the album. Listen at www.stephenkirk.com.au.



Another appropriate song is 'Happiness' by Roby Curtis, a Brisbane based Catholic musician who was recently featured on Triple J's *Unearthed*. Listen at www.triplejunearted.com/artist/roby-curtis.

Further Reading

- *Evangelii Gaudium*, by Pope Francis, is an apostolic exhortation on the joy of the Gospel.
- References to joy in the Catechism include:
Joy as the fruit of the Spirit: 736, 1832
Sources of joy: 30, 301, 1829



Watch the video and read Archbishop Hart's letter at:
www.cam.org.au/YouthLetter