

University of Swaziland



Faculty of Education

(DEPARTMENT OF CURRICULUM AND TEACHING)

MAIN EXAMINATION PAPER – DECEMBER 2017

TITLE OF PAPER: CURRICULUM STUDIES IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

COURSE CODE : CTE521/IDE-EDC275

STUDENTS : PGCE (F/T & IDE)/ & B.ED 2 (IDE)

TIME : THREE (3) HOURS

INSTRUCTIONS :

- 1. There are two sections and a total of six questions in this question paper**
- 2. Answer both questions in section A and choose and answer any two questions from section B**
- 3. Marks are indicated against each question**

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THE INVIGILATOR**

SECTION A – COMPULSORY QUESTIONS

Answer both questions in this section

QUESTION 1

- a) What do you understand by Blooms (1956) taxonomy? (7)
- b) **Choose a topic** in the Religious Education Junior Certificate syllabus and write one behavioural objective from each of Bloom's cognitive domain levels. (18) **[25]**

QUESTION 2

Using some of the objectives in number 5 (ii) above, prepare a 35 minutes lesson plan for a class of your choice in the J.C. level. **[25]**

SECTION B – GENERAL QUESTIONS

Answer any TWO questions in this section

QUESTION 3

The Group-Work method is a very important method in the teaching and learning of the SGCSE Religious Education syllabus. Discuss:

- i) The advantages of this teaching method in and beyond the classroom (10)
- ii) Its disadvantages and how they could be overcome. (15) **[25]**

QUESTION 4

- a) Explain the main features of Piaget's Concrete Operational stage. (15)
- b) What makes children at this stage more likely to understand and appreciate what they read in religions' holy books like the Christian Bible? (10) **[25]**

QUESTION 5

The lecture method has been widely criticised for promoting teacher-centredness and therefore has no place in teaching the IGCSE Religious Education syllabus. Do you agree with this claim? Motivate your answer with clear examples from the Religious Education classroom. [25]

QUESTION 6

Discuss the three processes that a Religious Education teacher can use to teach Morality. [25]

END OF EXAMINATION PAPER

Unit 1

The miracles of Jesus Christ

Objectives

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- state why Jesus performed miracles
- explain the importance of the miracles
- examine the elements of Jesus's miracles
- describe the four types of miracles
- give an account of the miracles of Jesus.

Introduction

In the previous chapter, you learnt about the annunciation of the births of John and Jesus, their births, the presentation of Jesus in the temple and his visit to the temple at the age of 12. You also learnt about Jesus's preparation for his three-year ministry, which included his baptism, temptations, and his rejection by his own people. All of these events led up to the ministry of Jesus. Jesus taught through miracles and parables, as well as sermons. In this unit, we will look at his miracles.

What is a miracle?

A miracle is an event that cannot be explained by science, and so is generally explained as an intervention of by a divine being. Miracles are welcome events: they may involve healing a sick person, for example, if the person could not be cured through conventional medicine.

Although Jesus became known for working miracles, the Gospels reveal that:

- Jesus was often reluctant to perform miracles (John 1:1–12).
- He frequently instructed those he had healed not to tell anyone what he had done (Matthew 9:27–31).
- He refused to use his miraculous powers to win over powerful people (Luke 23:8–9).
- He refused to use his power to win over people who were unwilling to listen to his message (Matthew 13:54–58).
- Jesus also refused to do miracles for people who came only to see miracles. They did not love Jesus. There were also some people who only desired material benefits.

Why Jesus worked miracles

Jesus worked miracles for a number of reasons:

- **As a response to people's faith:** The Gospels record seven miracles that mention the importance of the people having faith in Jesus. Some people truly believed his message and Jesus worked miracles to strengthen their faith. By doing this, Jesus offered people real faith and an appreciation of God.
- **As signs of God's love:** Compassion and love moved Jesus to work miracles. For example, this is seen through the raising the widow's son (Luke 7:11–15). Through his actions Jesus showed that God cared for every human being, no matter what their race and religion was.

- **As signs of God's power:** Jesus performed miracles to show the people that the kingdom of God had already begun in him, and to prove that God supported him. There were a number of different types of miracles that showed God's power:
 - **The healing miracles** showed that Jesus had power to conquer suffering (Luke 5:12–14).
 - **The nature miracles** showed that God's power can do things that are unexpected and impossible for humans. Examples can be seen in the feeding of the 5 000 (Luke 9:10–17) and stilling the storm (Luke 8:22–25).
 - **Exorcisms** showed that the kingdom of God can overcome every form of evil affecting people's life.
 - **The restoration of life miracles** showed that God's power is stronger than death and that nothing can stand in the way of God's love (Luke 7:11–17).

The importance of the miracles

The miracles present evidence of the power that Jesus had over sin, suffering and death. Jesus's teaching about the kingdom of God would have been less believable to the Jewish audience if he had not used miracles to prove what he was saying.

A good example of this is the healing of the paralysed man (Luke 5:17–26). Jesus saw the paralysed man and told him that he forgave his sins. When the Pharisees said that only God could forgive sins, he asked them whether it was easier to forgive sins than it was to heal the man so that he could walk. With that, he healed the paralysed man, who was able to walk away.

Jewish people at that time considered physical suffering as a punishment from God for sins they had committed. The people would only believe that the man's sins had been forgiven if he was cured of his illness. The Pharisees accused Jesus of blasphemy because he claimed to have the power to forgive sins. When Jesus cured the man, it showed that he had authority to forgive sins and the power to heal, which came from God.

Activity 1 (Work as a class)

Have a class debate about whether you need miracles to have faith in God.

Types of miracles

There were four different types of miracle:

- Nature miracles
- Restoration of life miracles
- Healing miracles
- Exorcisms

The nature miracles

Jesus performed miracles that showed his power over the natural world. These are known as nature miracles. There are four nature miracles in the Gospels:

- Walking on the water
- The stilling of the storm
- The feeding of the 5 000
- The withering of the fig tree.

Luke only records two of the nature miracles; we will discuss these two miracles.

The stilling of the storm (Luke 8:22–25)

One day Jesus went across to the other side of a lake in a boat with his disciples. As they sailed Jesus fell asleep. A great storm came down. When the disciples realised that they were in danger, they woke Jesus saying 'Master, Master we are perishing.' Jesus **rebuked** the wind and waves. They quieted immediately and there was calm. He then asked the disciples about their lack of faith.

Why is this miracle significant?

- Jesus is calm and confident in contrast the disciples, who are panicking.
- This miracle is also an allegory. The ship represents the church and the storm represents the violence of the persecution. The early church was danger of being 'drowned' by the sea of the opposition to it.
- The miracle gave comfort to the early church. It may have seemed God was sleeping during times of persecution. During terrible times of suffering when the great waves of persecution might drown them, the miracle reminded the early Christians that Jesus would not desert them. It reassured them that he would wake and answer their prayers. However, they had to be brave and keep their faith in him.

New words

| | |
|-----------|---|
| allegory: | a story with a hidden meaning |
| rebuke: | to express disapproval or criticism to someone or something |

Activity 2 (Work on your own)

Answer the following questions in your exercise book.

1. Explain the different symbols used in the miracle of the stilling of the storm.
2. Why do you think Luke used symbols in this story?
3. What does the story of this miracle tell us about Jesus's power over life's challenges?

The feeding of the 5 000 (Luke 9:10–17)

Jesus took the disciples to Bethsaida, where a crowd found them. Jesus received the crowd kindly. He spoke to them about the kingdom of God and cured those who were sick. Toward evening the miracle of the feeding of the 5 000 took place. Five loaves and two fishes were used to feed the people. Jesus looked up to heaven, blessed the food and gave it to the disciples to distribute. There was so much food that 12 baskets were filled with the fragments of leftovers.

This is the only miracles recorded by all four Gospels. This was mainly because it fitted in with the Eucharist, which is the repetition of Jesus's Last Supper with the disciples before the crucifixion. All Christian communities celebrated the Eucharist.

Why is this miracle significant?

- The reaction of the disciples was natural and practical. They asked Jesus to send them away so they could get food for themselves. Jesus thought it unfair to have the people listen to him and then desert them in their hour of need.

- Jesus's mission was concerned with the whole man, physical and spiritual.
- The miracle also shows how the disciples were not able to deal with the situation, whereas Jesus was able to help the crowd. They could only help people with Jesus.
- Jesus demonstrated God's love for people in looking after their earthly needs. Jesus's followers regarded this as a sign that he would take care of their spiritual needs, as he had ministered to their physical needs.
- There is a similarity to the Old Testament story of Moses (Exodus 16). When Moses was in the desert with the children of Israel, God provided them with manna when they were hungry.

Restoration of life miracles

By restoring people to life Jesus showed that the power of God was stronger than death. He also showed that nothing could stand in the way of God. There are three occasions in the Gospels where Jesus brought dead people back to life: Jairus's daughter, the widow's son (which is only found in Luke) and Lazarus. These accounts emphasise Jesus's message that God can do the impossible. God can bring back what seems to have been lost forever.

The raising of Jairus's daughter (Luke 8:40–56)

Jairus, a leader in the synagogue, asked Jesus to come to his house and heal his daughter who was dying. As Jesus went to help Jairus, he was delayed by a woman who touched his cloak. This woman had been bleeding for 12 years. As Jesus was attending to her, Jairus was informed that his daughter had died. He said that there was now no need to trouble Jesus. Jesus encouraged Jairus not to despair but to have faith. When they got to Jairus's house, Jesus allowed only his three disciples and the parents into the house. Jesus told the people to stop mourning as the child was not dead but only asleep. She was brought back to life. Jesus ordered the parents not to tell anyone.



Jesus raises Jairus's daughter

Why is this miracle significant?

- This is the only miracle in which the story of one miracle is interrupted by another miracle.
- This is the first time a religious leader had asked Jesus for help. The religious leaders usually discredited Jesus and rarely regarded him as a hero.
- As a Jewish leader who was in charge of the synagogue administration, Jairus represented the rich people of Jesus's time.
- The miracles showed that Jesus was the supreme agent of God. One of the signs of the kingdom of God was raising the dead, so Jesus showed that he was the key to this kingdom.

The raising of the widow's son (Luke 7:11–17)

Jesus, his disciples and a great crowd came to Nain. A widow there had a son who had died. The son was brought to Jesus. Jesus had compassion for the widow who had lost her son. He ordered the widow not to weep. Jesus touched the bier and told the son to arise. The man rose and began to speak. The people glorified God. The news spread through all Judea.

Why is this miracle significant?

- It shows Jesus's compassion. He decided to help the woman because she was a widow and her son had died. In Palestine widows were often poor people who looked after themselves. This widow was unfortunate as she had lost her son, her only source of income. Jesus disregarded the law concerning the dead in order to help the widow.
- This miracle shows the power of God. As a childless widow the woman would be regarded as one who had lost God's favour.

Exorcisms

Some Christians believe in possession, which is when an evil spirit takes over the body of a person or animal. To drive out the spirit, the Christians hold an exorcism. Some exorcists use words, rituals or gestures to drive out the evil spirit. Jesus performed a number of miracles in which he drove out evil spirits from people or animals.

A man with an evil spirit in the temple (Luke 4:31–37)

Jesus started his public work in Galilee. He was teaching in the synagogue. One of his listeners was possessed by a demon, and shouted at Jesus during his teaching. Jesus commanded the demon out of the man, and freed the man from the spirit.

Why is this miracle significant?

- This was the first miracle Jesus performed after his temptations. It showed that Jesus was more powerful than Satan who had just tempted him.
- The evil spirit recognised Jesus's authority – it recognised him as the Messiah by obeying his command.
- The people were amazed and wondered at Jesus's power over the spirit world.
- This miracle took place in the synagogue on the Sabbath day, when people were not supposed to work. However, no-one complained that Jesus had broken the Sabbath on this occasion, because they recognised that he had performed a miracle.

The Gerasene demoniac (Luke 8:26–39)

Jesus arrived at Gerasene, and was met by a man possessed by many demons. The possessed man refused to wear clothes and lived among the tombs. Jesus drove the devils out by the power of the spirit of God. The demons went into a herd of pigs that were close by, and the demon-possessed pigs rushed down a steep hill and into a lake, where they drowned. The man who had been possessed wanted to follow Jesus, but Jesus said that he should rather tell people about what had happened.

Why is this miracle significant?

- This is the only instance where demons find another home after being cast out.
- It is most likely that this miracle happened in a Gentile place because Jewish people considered pigs to be unclean.
- This is the only occasion where Jesus gave permission for the story to be repeated (Luke 8:38–39). Jesus only visited this place once, so he knew that there were no curious crowds wanting to see miracles.

The epileptic boy (Luke 9:37–42)

A man asked Jesus to heal his son, who was having epileptic seizures, caused by a demon. The man had asked the disciples, but they had not been able to help the boy. The father then brought his only son to Jesus, who drove out the demon and cured the boy.

Why is this miracle significant?

- Jesus had given the apostles the power to heal during their mission tour. This was therefore not their first attempt at performing a miracle.
- Jesus rebuked his disciples for their lack of faith, and used this miracle as a way of teaching them about faith.
- This is the last miracle in Galilee mentioned by Luke.

A disabled woman (Luke 13:10–17)

Jesus left Galilee, the place of his youth and early ministry. He went to Judea, with Jerusalem as his final goal. One Sabbath he was teaching in a synagogue. There was a woman who had been possessed by a spirit, which had caused her to be disabled for 18 years. She was bent and had not been able to hold her head up for all this time. Jesus laid his hands on her and healed her. However, the synagogue official said that this act of healing on a Sabbath was against the Jewish law. He scolded the woman and those who were seeking healing on the Sabbath. Jesus responded that the woman had been bound by Satan, so it was appropriate to release her on the Sabbath.

Why is this miracle significant?

- Jesus exposed the hypocrisy of the official, saying that they would untie a donkey and lead it to water on the Sabbath, so he could help a woman on the same day.
- We see Jesus's kindness to women, who were not powerful people in society. In this case the woman was also disabled, so she was even more marginalised.

Healing miracles

The healing miracles show that Jesus was compassionate, and cared for people who were ill. At the time, sickness was often seen as a result of possession by demons, or as a punishment from God for bad actions, so Jesus's actions were unusual, because he was kind to people who were considered bad.

Healing Peter's mother-in-law (Luke 4:38–41)

Jesus entered Simon Peter's house and was told that Simon's mother-in-law was sick with a high fever. The disciples pleaded with Jesus to heal her. Jesus then spoke to the fever and instantly she was healed and carried on with her chores, serving them immediately. In the evening, more people brought their sick relatives to be healed. Jesus laid his hands on them and they were healed. Demons also came out of many and acknowledged Jesus as the saviour. Jesus rebuked them and did not allow them to speak.

Why is this miracle significant?

- We see Jesus showing compassion for a woman and other sick people. These were the marginalised people in society.
- We learn that Jesus had humanity for all people in this story.

Healing the centurion's servant (Luke 7:2–10)

Jesus entered Capernaum, a town in Galilee. While there, he heard that a centurion had asked for his help. This centurion had a servant who was very sick. The centurion sent Jewish elders to ask Jesus to come to his house to help his servant. The elders passed on the message and told Jesus about the good things the centurion had done, such as building a synagogue for the Jewish people. When Jesus was close to the centurion's house, the centurion sent messengers to inform Jesus that he did not need to come into his house – he just needed to say a word and his servant would be healed. Jesus was

amazed by this faith. He told his disciples that he had never seen such faith. Immediately the servant was healed.

Why is this miracle significant?

- Jesus healed a Gentile's servant, which shows us that Jesus's teachings were for all people, not just Jewish people.
- The miracle teaches us that faith is important: the Gentile believer showed great faith in Jesus.

New words

centurion: a Roman military leader in charge of 100 soldiers

Healing a bleeding woman (Luke 8:43–48)

There was a woman who had been haemorrhaging (bleeding) for 12 years. When she saw Jesus in the crowd, she went behind him and touched the fringes of his garments. Immediately the bleeding stopped. Jesus felt power leaving him. He asked his disciples who had touched him. They told him that it was impossible to identify the person because the area was crowded. The woman came to Jesus trembling and fell down. She explained why she had touched the fringe of Jesus's garment and how she was instantly healed. Jesus praised the woman for her faith.

Why is this miracle significant?

- In this miracle, Jesus responded to the woman's illness because of her strong faith.
- We see again Jesus's concern for marginalised people: a sick woman, in this case.

Healing a man with dropsy (Luke 14:1–6)

One Sabbath, Jesus was invited to a meal at a Pharisee's house. There was a man there who suffered from **dropsy**. Jesus asked the lawyers and the Pharisees present whether it was lawful to heal on the Sabbath. None of them responded. Jesus healed the man and sent him away. He asked the people there if they would not respond if a child or ox had fallen into a well on the Sabbath day by pulling it out.

Why is this miracle significant?

- Luke's Gospel emphasised how Jesus helps sick people.
- Luke shows that Jesus was concerned with helping humanity rather than just following the laws of the Old Testament. He asks whether the people there would not pull a child or an ox that had fallen into a well on a Sabbath.
- The story reveals the Pharisees' concern for keeping the law at the expense of people's suffering.

New words

dropsy: a disease in which watery fluid collects in the tissue of the body and causes swelling

Cleansing 10 lepers (Luke 17:11 – 19)

As Jesus travelled to Jerusalem, he passed a village where there were 10 men with leprosy. The men stood at a distance and pleaded with Jesus to heal them. Jesus told them to go and show themselves to the priests. On their way they were healed. Only one of them went back to Jesus to show his gratitude.



He fell on his face and praised Jesus. Jesus was amazed because the man was a Samaritan.

Why is this miracle significant?

- The relations between the Jewish people and the Samaritans were hostile, but only the Samaritan showed gratitude for the healing. This shows us that Jesus could reconcile traditional enemies.
- Jesus ordered the Samaritan to go because his faith had made him well. We see that faith is more important than anything else, even nationality or previous religion.

Activity 3 (Work on your own)

Write your answers to the following questions in your exercise book.

1. Describe how Jesus healed the 10 lepers.
2. Why did Jesus tell the 10 lepers to show themselves to the priests?
3. What do we learn about Jesus from the story of Jesus healing the 10 lepers?
4. Tell the story of the healing of the 10 lepers in your own words.

Healing a blind man of Jericho (Luke 18:35–43)

When Jesus approached Jericho, a blind man was begging by the roadside. He heard crowds of people passing and he asked what was happening. They told him Jesus of Nazareth was passing by. The blind man shouted out, asking Jesus for mercy. Jesus stopped and ordered that the man should be brought to him, and asked the man what he could for him. The man asked Jesus to restore his sight, which Jesus did instantly. Jesus told him that it was by his faith that the man was healed. The man praised God, and became one of Jesus's followers.



Jesus healing a blind man

Why is this miracle significant?

- The story emphasises that miracles need faith.
- Again, Jesus overlooked the Jewish belief that misfortunes were a result of sinfulness.

Activity 4 (Work in pairs)

Answers the following questions in your exercise book.

1. Compare and contrast the miracles about the centurion's servant, the widow's son and the blind beggar, noting the similarities and differences.
2. What moral lessons can you draw from these stories?
3. Choose one of the miracles that we have studied in this unit. Prepare and act out a role play of that miracle.



Revision activity (Work on your own)

Answer the following questions in your exercise book.

1. Give two reasons Jesus performed miracles.
2. Explain the importance of miracles.
3. What do we learn about Jesus's character from the miracles?
4. What do we learn about the characters of the disciples from the miracles?
5. Give an account of the miracle of the raising of Jairus' daughter.
6. The miracles demonstrate the power of Jesus over life's challenges. Explain how this applies to your life.

Summary

In this unit, you learnt that:

- a miracle is an event that cannot be explained by science, and so is generally explained as an intervention of by a divine being
- Jesus used miracles as a response to people's faith, and as signs of God's love and power
- the miracles were important for Jesus's ministry they made Jesus' ministry more believable
- there were four types of miracles:
 - Nature miracles
 - Restoration of life miracles
 - Healing miracles
 - Exorcisms
- the miracles show that Jesus was especially concerned with the poorest and least important people in society.



This unit focused on the miracles as a major part of Jesus's ministry. The next unit will focus on the parables that Luke describes and that form another part of his ministry.



Assignment (Work on your own)

Research any miracles that have happened in recent years. Find out how the miracle happened and what drove it. Describe the difference between this miracle and the miracles performed by Jesus.

Unit 2

The Lukan parables of Jesus Christ

Outcomes

By the end of the unit, you should be able to:

- ✓ define a parable
- ✓ explain why Jesus used parables in his teachings
- ✓ describe the characteristics of the Lukan parables
- ✓ narrate the Lukan parables
- ✓ explain the meaning of the parables
- ✓ explain the lessons learnt from the parables.

Introduction

In the previous unit you learnt about the miracles performed by Jesus. In addition to miracles, Jesus also used parables in his teaching. This unit will focus on the parables that Luke describes, the reasons Jesus used them, and the meaning and lessons learnt from the parables.

Activity 1 (Group discussion)

1. Tell your group a traditional story that you know.
2. Discuss the meaning or lessons learnt from the traditional story.
3. Why do you think lessons are sometimes taught through stories, like the traditional stories you have just exchanged?

Parables of Jesus

Teaching was a very important part of Jesus's ministry as he travelled around the towns and villages of Palestine. Like other teachers of the time, Jesus used different teaching methods to get his message across. One of his teaching methods was to use parables to teach about the kingdom of God.

A parable is a simple story that illustrates a moral or spiritual lesson. Jesus uses parables to illustrate his message by using concrete examples drawn from everyday life. There are 37 parables in the Gospels and 27 of these are found in Luke. Of these, 13 only told by Luke so they are known as the Lukan parables.

The Lukan parables are the wise and foolish builders, the sower, the lamp under the bushel, the good Samaritan, the friend at midnight, the rich fool, the watchful servant, the faithful servant, the fig tree, the yeast, the great banquet, the lost sheep, the lost coin, the prodigal son, the the rich man and Lazarus, dishonest steward, the widow and unjust judge, the Pharisee and the tax collector, the pounds, and the wicked tenants.

Reasons Jesus used parables in his teachings

A parable is a simple story with a clear meaning. Parables were part of the Palestinian culture and teaching tradition. He used them for these reasons:

- They were useful in illustrating profound, divine truths for people who wanted to learn about God while hiding the truth from those who did not.
- He used them to correct misconceptions about his teachings.
- They were easy to understand and remember.
- They used the language and everyday events of his audience, so the audience could relate to them easily.
- They conveyed many messages in one story.
- They communicated a lot of information in very few words.

Characteristics of the Lukan parables

The parables given in Luke have some characteristics in common:

- The parables often focus on poor and humble people. This is because of Luke's interest in the marginalised people in society. Examples include the parables of the good Samaritan, the rich man and Lazarus, and the unjust judge.
- A number of the parables refer to food and feasts. Interest in food is one of the characteristics of Luke's Gospel. Examples include the parables of the great feast, the friend at midnight, and the leaven.
- They present a favourable picture of women. This comes from Luke's positive attitude towards women. Examples include the parable of the widow and the unjust judge and the parable of the two debtors.
- Many of the parables show a happy event. Luke's Gospel includes parables that end in a joyful way. Examples include the parables of the lost son, the friend at midnight, and the good Samaritan.
- The parables show a favourable attitude towards the Gentiles. Parables such as the good Samaritan and the great feast show this attitude.
- They make reference to Old Testament stories, such as the story of the Israelites travelling from Egypt to Canaan. This forms the basis of stories involving people travelling, such as the parable of the good Samaritan.

Parables of Jesus in Luke

In this unit, we will look at the parables that are only found in Luke, and not in any of the other Gospels.

The good Samaritan (Luke 10:25–37)

Jesus told this parable in response to a question posed by a lawyer. The lawyer wanted to know what he should do to gain eternal life. Jesus made him give the answer himself: love the Lord your God and your neighbour. To justify asking the question, the lawyer wanted to know who his neighbour was. Jesus then told the story of the good Samaritan. The road from Jerusalem to Jericho was lonely and dangerous road. Robbers stole from a man, beat him and left him naked on the road. Three people passed the man. Only the third person, a Samaritan, stopped and helped him.

Three people had an opportunity to help the man:

- A priest passed the man. He was a representative of the official ceremonial religious life of the country. Perhaps he thought that the man was dead and did not like to defile himself by touching a dead body.



The good Samaritan

- A Levite passed the man. Levites were priests and temple servants. He also passed the man, possibly worrying that touching the man would defile him.
- A Samaritan stopped and cared for the wounded man. The Jewish people and the Samaritans were traditional enemies, so it was unexpected for the Samaritan to care for a Jewish man.

Why is this parable significant?

Jesus showed that to live in the kingdom of God is to respond to the needs of a person regardless of race, creed, sex or social status.

New words

defile: to make something impure/swelling

The friend at midnight (Luke 11:5–13)

In traditional Swazi culture, the home was open to visitors no matter what time of the day. If visitors came late at night, they would always find something to eat. The Jewish people had a similar practice. They left their doors open all day. However, at night their animals slept on the ground floor so they closed the door, and it would be hard to wake a family then. This is what happened in this parable. A man went to his neighbour and asked for some bread to give to an unexpected visitor. At first the neighbour did not get up, but eventually he gave his neighbour the bread he wanted because the neighbour was persistent in asking for what he needed.

Why is this parable significant?

It teaches that God is loving and will always help those who ask. It tells us that he gives us what we ask for.

The rich fool (Luke 12:13–21)

A rich man had a good harvest and planned to tear down his old barn and build a bigger one to store his food, rather than eating it or giving it to those in need. However God required his soul from him on the same day; in other words, the man died.

Why is this parable significant?

Jesus was addressing the problem of constant desire for wealth and possessions. The main teaching here is the correct way of looking at money and possessions. He said it was good to 'build barns' (to prepare and plan for the future), but that it is wrong to be greedy, keeping everything for ourselves and not sharing. Spiritual preparation is also important.

Activity 2 (Pair work)

Discuss these questions with your partner and report to the rest of the class.

1. What do you have that might be shared with others?
2. Jesus is against wealth. How far do you agree with this statement? Give reasons for your answer and show you have thought about different points of view.

The lost sheep (Luke 15:1–7)

The three parables of the lost recorded in Luke are also known as the L-Parables. They all have the same message but were repeated probably to emphasise the message.

A farmer lost one of his sheep. He left the other 99 sheep to search for it. When he found the lost sheep, he rejoiced.

Why is this parable significant?

The lost sheep represents a person who had sinned or moved away from God. The shepherd represents God, who looks after people in the way that the shepherd looks after sheep. A shepherd had great responsibility:

- He had to find grass and water in a dry and stony land.
- He had to protect his sheep from the weather and wild animals.
- His work was to seek and find stray animals.
- He himself suffered hardship and lived in a tent.
- If a sheep was lost he was personally responsible and had to pay for it.



A shepherd finds a lost sheep

The idea that God seeks sinners was a new thought for the Pharisees. They thought of God as rejecting and condemning sinners. The symbol of God as a shepherd created a new picture of God, as a loving, caring and seeking God.

The parable teaches that there is more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over 99 righteous people who do not need to repent. The parable was Jesus's answer to people who accused him of welcoming sinners and having fellowship with them. He was justifying his attitude by explaining how God welcomes everyone and rejoices when sinners repent.

The lost coin (Luke 15:10)

A woman lost one of her 10 coins. She lit a lamp and searched for it. When she found the coin, she called her neighbours to rejoice that she had found it.

Why is this parable significant?

Like the parable of the lost sheep, this focuses on finding one lost thing, even if you still have others that are not lost. In the same way, God rejoices when one sinner repents and returns to him. The parable emphasises the joy that God feels when this happens.

The lost (prodigal) son (Luke 15:11–32)

A younger son asked for his share of the inheritance while his father was alive. He wasted the inheritance and had to work at feeding pigs for a living. For a Jewish person this was unacceptable, because pigs were considered unclean. He returned home, where his father was happy to see him, and slaughtered an animal to celebrate.



The prodigal son

Why is this parable significant?

All three parables in Luke 15 show the value of the individual soul to God. This parable reveals the love of God the Father who waits for the sinner to come to him and who is ready to forgive when there is true repentance. The following actions showed that the son was truly repentant:

- He showed that he was sorry for his sins.
- He confessed his sin to his father.
- He was willing to take the consequences and be treated as a servant.

The father in his kindness accepted his son with joy and restored him to his position as a son in the home. The older brother who had always done his duty symbolised the self-righteous character of Pharisees. He was not glad that his brother had come back and was jealous that the father had thrown a party for his brother.

Activity 3 (Work on your own)

Answer these questions in your exercise book.

1. What do the lost things symbolise in the parables of the lost?
2. Describe the characteristic of Luke's Gospel shown in the L-parables.
3. Explain two lessons learnt from the attitude of the elder son.
4. If you were the older son in the parable of the prodigal son, what would you have done if you got home and found a party for your younger brother? Give reasons for your answer.

The unjust steward (Luke 16:1–17)

A steward was responsible for the management of his master's estate. He had wasted the master's money and would be dismissed. He worried about his future and decided to use his present wealth to secure his future. Realising that he would need friends, he reduced the debts of people who owed his master money in order to win their friendship.

Why is this parable significant?

The steward represents sinners, who worry about their future on earth and do dishonest things to improve their future. People should think of eternity and prepare themselves for it.

The parable also shows that a person's character is shown in the little actions as much as in the big actions. We should be sensible in dealing with earthly things in order to be trusted with heavenly riches. If we do not do what God entrusted to us on earth, we will not receive everlasting riches. Jesus said that a man should be committed either to God or to earthly things.

The Pharisees loved money and they laughed at Jesus. Jesus rebuked them because they were not honest even though they pretended to be honest before God. Jesus said that wealth was not the same as goodness, and wealth is often gained in bad ways. Things that the Pharisees valued were valueless before God. In order for the Pharisees to enter the kingdom of God, they would have to repent and change their behaviour.

Lazarus and the rich man (Luke 16:19–31)

Lazarus, a beggar, lived at the door of a rich man's house, where he hoped to get some crumbs from his table. When they both died, Lazarus went to Abraham's side, which was a place of comfort and joy. The rich man went to hell. He asked Abraham to send Lazarus with some drops of water for him. But

Abraham said that the rich man would get no comfort in death because he had not earned in his life, while Lazarus had. The rich man asked for Lazarus to go and warn his brothers of what would happen to them if they did not mend their ways. But Abraham again refused, and said that the brother would not listen to Moses and the prophets, they would not listen even if a dead man returned to life to warn them.

Why is this parable significant?

The rich man was selfish and did not practise charity: he saw Lazarus everyday but had not done anything for him. The parable is not suggesting anything about the location of heaven and hell but emphasises that people will be rewarded for their works on earth in the afterlife.

The parable is an example of Luke presenting Jesus's concern for poor people. Lazarus is poor and diseased: his name, 'Lazarus' means 'leper', a person with leprosy. The rich man is punished for his uncharitable life while Lazarus is presumably rewarded for his goodness. A person's wealth and status on earth mean nothing after death.

The unjust judge (Luke 18:1–8)

A poor widow had to beg a judge to do what was right. Eventually, the judge did the right thing, because the widow was persistent and did not stop asking him to do so.

Why is this parable significant?

In ancient Palestine, judges could favour people who were wealthy. The widow was poor and female, and the judge did not treat her fairly. Instead of the woman claiming what was her right, she had to beg for her rights. The parable teaches us that even the unjust judge in the end gave the woman justice because of her persistence. God will do the same to those who ask him. This is a call for persistent communication with God.

The Pharisee and the tax collector (Luke 18:9–14)

The Pharisee in the story was a typical Pharisee who followed all the rules about his worship: he prayed when he was supposed, fasted and tithed. However, he compared himself to others, finding fault with them. He was arrogant and believed that he was better than them. The tax collector was humble. He believed that he was worthy even to look at heaven, and acknowledged that he was a sinner. The parable tells us that God favoured the tax collector over the Pharisee.

Why is this parable significant?

The tax collector is sincere in his faith and he recognises that he is not perfect. Tax collectors were despised by many people in Palestine, while Pharisees were considered to be respectable and God-fearing. The parable turns this around: it is the tax collector who God favours, and he is exalted by God, rather than the Pharisee.

The parable teaches that a person's earthly position is not important, it is the sincerity of their belief and their willingness to humble themselves before God that is most important in God's eyes. The parable focuses on a person from a despised class – a tax collector – to make this point.

Activity 4 (Work in a group)

Discuss the following questions with your group and present your answers to the class.

1. a) Do you think the attitude of the Pharisee is still evident amongst Christians today? Give reasons for your answer.
b) Suggest ways of discouraging such attitudes among Christians.
2. Outline lessons that can be learnt from the parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector.
3. What do we learn from the characters of the Pharisee and the tax collector from the parable?
4. Choose one of the parables that we have studied in this unit. Prepare and act out a role play based on the parable.

Activity 5 (Class debate)

Debate this topic:

The parables are relevant to Christians today, and they still have meaning in our everyday lives.



Revision activity (Work on your own)

Answer the following questions in your exercise book.

1. What is a parable?
2. Explain why Jesus used parables in his teachings.
3. Describe three characteristics of the parables that appear in Luke.
4. Relate two of Lukan parables about the lost in your own words.
5. Explain three lessons learnt from the parable of the unjust judge.
6. 'For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.' (Luke 11:10).
 - a) Use your own words to briefly relate the parable that Jesus told just before making this comment.
 - b) Which of the characteristics of Luke's Gospel does this comment illustrate?
 - c) Explain Jesus's teaching about God in this parable.
7.
 - a) Recount the parable Jesus told in response to the question 'who is my neighbour?'
 - b) Explain the moral lessons that this parable teaches.
8. What do the parables tell us about the character of Jesus?

Summary

In this unit, you learnt that:

- a parable is a simple story that illustrates a moral or spiritual lesson as told by Jesus
- Jesus used parables in his teachings to:
 - illustrate divine truth about God
 - correct misconceptions
 - make the truth be easily understood and remembered
 - help the audience relate to his teachings

- convey many messages in one story
- communicate a lot of information in very few words.
- the characteristics of the Lukan parables include:
 - giving a prominent place to the poor
 - referring to food and feasts
 - presenting a favourable picture of women
 - having an element of joy
 - showing a favourable attitude towards Gentiles
 - referring to Old Testament stories.
- the parables of Jesus have meaning and practical lessons applicable to everyday life.



This unit dealt with the Lukan parables, which are not found in any of the other Gospels. The next unit will deal with the parables in Luke that are also found in the other Gospels.



Assignment (Work on your own)

1. Read the parable of the rich fool.
2. Outline lessons that can be learnt from the parable of the rich fool.
3. Interview two wealthy Christians in your community. Ask them what they think is the important lesson from the parable of the rich fool.
4. Also find out how they try to put the lesson into practice.
5. Compare their lessons with your own.
6. Present your findings to the class.