THE LOGO

The logo is an attempt to express Faith as an inward and outward journey.

This faith journey takes us into our own hearts, into the heart of the world and into the heart of Christ who is God's love revealed.

In Christ, God transforms our lives. We can respond to his love for us by reaching out and loving one another.

The circle represents our world. White, the colour of light, represents God. Red is for the suffering of Christ. Red also represents the Holy Spirit. Yellow represents the risen Christ.

The direction of the lines is inwards except for the cross, which stretches outwards.

Our lives are embedded in and dependent upon our environment (green and blue) and our cultures (patterns and textures).

Mary, the Mother of Jesus Christ, is represented by the blue and white pattern.

The blue also represents the Pacific…

Annette Hanrahan RSCJ
UNDERSTANDING FAITH

YEAR 12

This book is the Teacher Guide to the following topic in the UNDERSTANDING FAITH series

12D  LOSS, DEATH, GRIEF AND DYING

TEACHER GUIDE
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TOPIC 12D: LOSS, DEATH, GRIEF AND DYING

LEARNING STRAND: SACRAMENT AND WORSHIP

INTRODUCTION TO THE TOPIC

This book contains teacher material and resources for classroom use – including OHT originals and supplementary articles, as well as activities and tasks that can be photocopied – for Topic 12D “Loss, Death, Grief and Dying” which forms the Sacrament and Worship Strand of the Understanding Faith programme at year twelve.

The study of topics in the Sacrament and Worship Strand is intended to deepen students’ understanding of the way in which the mysterious reality of Te Atua (God) is revealed through signs of ordinary things and people, and especially through the Sacraments of the Church. It is also intended to promote understanding of public and personal modes of worship.

The material in this guide should be read alongside the following:

- The Religious Education Curriculum Statement for Catholic Secondary Schools in Aotearoa New Zealand
- The student resource book for Topic 12D “Loss, Death, Grief and Dying”
- The supplementary material and activities on the website

Nothing sharpens our awareness of the human condition more than loss, death, grief and dying. Much of the greatest music, art and literature produced by men and women across the centuries reveals and explores humanity’s response to these fundamental experiences. The various religions and philosophies attempt, each in their own ways, to come to terms with these harsh realities.

While many people approach life’s significant losses, especially death, with despair or stoic fortitude, the Christian response to suffering and death is one of hope. By seeing their own losses and deaths in the context of Jesus’ suffering, death and resurrection, Christians are able not only to grow in maturity through the sad and painful experiences of life but to look forward with confident expectation to a life beyond death.

*Father, all-powerful and ever-living God,*  
*we do well always and everywhere to give you thanks*  
*through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

*In him, who rose from the dead,*  
*our hope of resurrection dawed.*  
*The sadness of death gives way*  
*to the bright promise of immortality.*
Lord, for your faithful people life is changed, not ended.
When the body of our earthly dwelling lies in death
we gain an everlasting dwelling place in heaven.

And so, with all the choirs of angels in heaven
we proclaim your glory
and join in their unending hymn of praise …
(Preface of Christian Death I)

In the Gospels Jesus emphasises, paradoxically, that it is by letting go of their attachment to life that his disciples will find new life in him. By following the example of Jesus, who shows the way to eternal life, Christians hope to pass through death to experience the fullness of God’s life and aroha (love).

... whoever does not take up the cross and follow me is not worthy of me.
Those who find their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it. (Matthew 10:38-39)

If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it. (Matthew 16:24-25)

I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this? (John 11:25-26)

For those who believe in Christ, the mystery of their own death and hoped for resurrection is anticipated whenever they give themselves to others and to God in love. Through these “little dyings” Christians prepare themselves for that definitive moment in their lives when they will meet death and, through the action of God, enter the joys of eternal life.

The present topic explores loss, death, grief and dying from a Christian perspective, that is, in the context of Christ’s life, suffering, death and resurrection. It also seeks to raise students’ understanding of the human experience of death, especially the role of loss and grieving in their own lives and in the lives of others. The topic encourages students to develop skills that will help them cope with experiences of loss, grief, dying and death. During the topic students will study the funeral practices of various cultures, including those of the Māori people of Aotearoa New Zealand and the Irish wake. They will also learn about Catholic Funeral Rites and practices and come to see them as expressions of Christian hope and belief in eternal life.

This combination of theory and practical work is an important feature of this topic, which does not simply treat grief and death in a philosophically and theologically abstract way, but seeks to provide students with material that will be of use to them when they are faced with grief and death in their own lives.

In the course of this topic, teachers will need to be sensitive to students’ needs and select appropriate activities from those suggested in the student text. There may be some students who have experienced a recent bereavement or who for some other
reason may find it difficult to deal with feelings that arise during the course of this topic. Teachers should use their judgement as to how best to respond to such situations, for example, with follow-up support, provision for appropriate counselling, exemption from participating in parts of the programme etc. If vulnerable students wish to ‘pass’ on any activities or tasks, their choice should be respected.

The Catholic understanding of loss, death, grief and dying is intended to be the frame of reference for the ideas presented throughout the topic. At the outset, the topic establishes the Christian perspective on these subjects by placing them within the context of Christ’s death and resurrection. It then turns to the psychological and phenomenological aspects of the universal human experiences of loss, death, grief and dying. After examining Granger Westberg’s model of the grief process the topic explores ways in which people cope with loss in their lives, suggesting what to do when someone dies and how to care for those who grieve or mourn.

Although the psychological and phenomenological aspects of loss and death are emphasised in the topic’s earlier sections, these also touch on the spiritual and religious dimensions. A more detailed and explicit exploration of the Catholic understanding appears later.

The section on tangihanga provides a necessary bi-cultural perspective and is also intended to complement earlier project work on the funeral practices of different cultures and religious groups. It also provides a basis for an understanding of Catholic funerals and the Catholic perspective on death and the afterlife.

By reflecting on Christ’s experience and acceptance of his own suffering and death, and his eventual triumph over them in his resurrection, it is hoped that students will gain some insight into Saint Paul’s words:

\[
\text{Death has been swallowed up in victory. Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting? (1 Corinthians 15:55)}
\]

Christians live in sure and certain hope of the resurrection which makes Catholic funerals joyful celebrations – at least for those who believe. This hope is not a denial of the natural feelings of grief which overcome people when they lose a loved relation or friend, but rather the evidence of a genuine faith:

\[
\text{Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. (Hebrews 1:1)}
\]

Our life on earth is conditioned by time and space. When considering death and what happens after it, we are dealing with “things not seen”, realities not bound by time and space. Any discussion of death and eternal life must, by its very nature, be conducted by way of metaphor. Teachers need to make it clear to students that the language that we use to speak about death and the life that follows it is essentially figurative. Our human ideas about judgement, heaven, hell, and purgatory – for example, those put forward by Dante in his Divine Comedy – are analogies. Scriptural references, also, are to be understood in metaphorical terms. In Chapter 3 of Matthew’s Gospel, John the Baptist, speaking to the Sadducees and Pharisees, uses a series of powerful agricultural metaphors, to describe God’s judgement:
His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and will gather his wheat into the granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire. (Matthew 3:12)

While this image and others like it undoubtedly speak of the reality of judgement, they should not be understood as literal descriptions of purgatory or hell. No-one knows what the hereafter will be like.

It is important that teachers present the Church’s beliefs and teachings about loss, death, grief and dying with accuracy and confidence, but it is also necessary for them to recognise that in the end students make their own choices about what they believe. It is also important for teachers to be aware that the students’ beliefs will be influenced by their social and cultural contexts. Thus, students’ freedom to respond needs to be respected, as well as challenged.

ACHIEVEMENT AIMS

In this topic students will gain and apply knowledge, skills, values and attitudes to understand:

1. The centrality of Christ’s death and resurrection in the Christian perspective of life and death.
2. Loss, death, grief and dying as universal human experiences.
3. Catholic attitudes and beliefs about death and the after life.
4. Cultural and religious beliefs and practices associated with death and dying.

ACHIEVEMENT OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

1. Recognise that the mystery of Christ’s dying and rising to new life gives meaning to the death of Christians.
2. Develop an understanding of human loss and grief and explore ways of dealing with them.
3. Identify what the Catholic Church believes and teaches about death and dying.
4. Explore human attitudes and responses to dying, including Māori tangihanga.
5. Develop an understanding of the Catholic Funeral Rites.
6. Explain what the Catholic Church believes and teaches about life after death.

CHURCH TEACHINGS AND LINKS WITH CHURCH DOCUMENTS

Underpinning the six achievement objectives for the topic are important teachings of the Church. Where possible, direct links with the Catechism of the Catholic Church have been established and quotations used to highlight the relationship between the various achievement objectives and the Church teachings that they embody. On occasions, other Church documents are referred to and quoted.

In all cases the official translations of Church documents have been used, but where necessary changes have been made so that the language is gender inclusive.
Achievement Objective 1

Students will be able to recognise that the mystery of Christ’s dying and rising to new life gives meaning to the death of Christians.

Church Teachings

Jesus’ Death

- God’s great love for us can be seen in Hehu (Jesus), who freely gave himself in death on the cross for our salvation.
- By following Christ’s example and uniting ourselves with his sufferings on the cross we come to eternal life.
- Through his death Jesus destroyed the power of death.

Christ’s Resurrection

- Christ’s resurrection is a real and historical event that the New Testament attests to.
- Although the risen Christ appears to his disciples not as a ghost but with the same body that had been tortured and crucified, his humanity is no longer restricted by space and time.
- At the resurrection Jesus’ human body is filled with the divine life of God.
- Christ’s resurrection confirms the truth of all that he said and did, and his identity as the Son of God.
- By Te Aranga (the resurrection) Christ frees humanity from sin and makes possible for us a new life in Te Atua.
- The risen Christ is the principle and source of our future resurrection.

Catechism and Church Document Links

Jesus’ Death

By giving up his own Son for our sins, God manifests that his plan for us is one of benevolent love, prior to any merit on our part: “In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the expiation for our sins.” God “shows his love for us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us.” (CCC 604)

This sacrifice of Christ is unique; it completes and surpasses all other sacrifices. First, it is a gift from God the Father himself, for the Father handed his Son over to sinners in order to reconcile us with himself. At the same time it is the offering of the Son of God made human, who in freedom and love offered his life to his Father through the Holy Spirit in reparation for our disobedience. (CCC 614)

The cross is the unique sacrifice of Christ, the “one mediator between God and men”. But because in his incarnate divine person he has in some way united himself to every man, “the possibility of being made partners, in a way known to God, in the paschal mystery” is offered to all people. He calls his disciples to “take up [their] cross and follow [him]”, for “Christ also suffered for [us], leaving [us] an example so that [we] should follow in his steps.” In fact Jesus desires to associate with his
redeeming sacrifice those who were to be its first beneficiaries. This is achieved supremely in the case of his mother, who was associated more intimately than any other person in the mystery of his redemptive suffering.

Apart from the cross there is no other ladder by which we may get to heaven. (CCC 618)

Christ went down into the depths of death so that “the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live.” Jesus, “the Author of life”, by dying destroyed “him who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and [delivered] all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong bondage.” Henceforth the risen Christ holds “the keys of Death and Hades”, so that “at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth.” (CCC 635)

Christ’s Resurrection

The mystery of Christ’s resurrection is a real event, with manifestations that were historically verified, as the New Testament bears witness. In about A.D. 56 St. Paul could already write to the Corinthians: “I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, and that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the Twelve. . .” The Apostle speaks here of the living tradition of the Resurrection which he had learned after his conversion at the gates of Damascus. (CCC 639)

By means of touch and the sharing of a meal, the risen Jesus establishes direct contact with his disciples. He invites them in this way to recognise that he is not a ghost and above all to verify that the risen body in which he appears to them is the same body that had been tortured and crucified, for it still bears the traces of his Passion. Yet at the same time this authentic, real body possesses the new properties of a glorious body: not limited by space and time but able to be present how and when he wills; for Christ’s humanity can no longer be confined to earth, and belongs henceforth only to the Father’s divine realm. For this reason too the risen Jesus enjoys the sovereign freedom of appearing as he wishes: in the guise of a gardener or in other forms familiar to his disciples, precisely to awaken their faith. (CCC 645)

Christ’s Resurrection was not a return to earthly life, as was the case with the raisings from the dead that he had performed before Easter: Jairus’ daughter, the young man of Naim, Lazarus. These actions were miraculous events, but the persons miraculously raised returned by Jesus’ power to ordinary earthly life. At some particular moment they would die again. Christ’s Resurrection is essentially different. In his risen body he passes from the state of death to another life beyond time and space. At Jesus’ Resurrection his body is filled with the power of the Holy Spirit: he shares the divine life in his glorious state, so that St. Paul can say that Christ is “the man of heaven”. (CCC 646)

“If Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain.” The Resurrection above all constitutes the confirmation of all Christ’s works and teachings. All truths, even those most inaccessible to human reason, find their
justification if Christ by his Resurrection has given the definitive proof of his divine authority, which he had promised. (CCC 651)

The truth of Jesus' divinity is confirmed by his Resurrection. He had said: “When you have lifted up the Son of man, then you will know that I am he.” The Resurrection of the crucified one shows that he was truly “I AM”, the Son of God and God himself. So St. Paul could declare to the Jews: “What God promised to the fathers, this he has fulfilled to us their children by raising Jesus; as also it is written in the second psalm, “You are my Son, today I have begotten you.” Christ's Resurrection is closely linked to the Incarnation of God's Son, and is its fulfilment in accordance with God's eternal plan. (CCC 653)

The Paschal mystery has two aspects: by his death, Christ liberates us from sin; by his Resurrection, he opens for us the way to a new life. This new life is above all justification that reinstates us in God's grace, “so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.” Justification consists in both victory over the death caused by sin and a new participation in grace. It brings about filial adoption so that men and women become Christ's brothers and sisters, as Jesus himself called his disciples after his Resurrection: “Go and tell my brethren.” We are brothers and sisters not by nature, but by the gift of grace, because that adoptive filiation gains us a real share in the life of the only Son, which was fully revealed in his Resurrection. (CCC 654)

Finally, Christ's Resurrection – and the risen Christ himself is the principle and source of our future resurrection: “Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. . . For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.” The risen Christ lives in the hearts of his faithful while they await that fulfilment. In Christ, Christians “have tasted. . . the powers of the age to come” and their lives are swept up by Christ into the heart of divine life, so that they may “live no longer for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.” (CCC 655)

Achievement Objective 2

Students will be able to develop an understanding of human loss and grief and explore ways of dealing with them.

Church Teachings

Human Loss and Suffering

- Jesus brings Te Rongopai (the Good News) of God's concern to all who suffer and are diminished in any way.
- By his passion and death on the cross Christ has given a new meaning to suffering.
- In order to find Karaiti (Christ) and gain eternal life we must be prepared to lose all things, suffering and dying as he did.
- Times of suffering and loss prepare us for the experience of the power of the resurrection.
• When we experience suffering and loss our whakapono (faith) is tested because God can seem to be absent from our lives.
• Experiences of suffering and loss, such as illness, can make a person more mature, bring them closer to Te Atua, and be a cause of thanksgiving.
• The Church, as the Body of Christ, loves and recognises Christ in all who experience suffering and loss.

Catechism and Church Document Links

Human Loss and Suffering

Illness and suffering have always been among the gravest problems confronted in human life. In illness, man experiences his powerlessness, his limitations, and his finitude. Every illness can make us glimpse death. (CCC 1500)

“The blind receive their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have good news preached to them” (Luke 7:22). With these words of the Prophet Isaiah (35:5-6, 61:1), Jesus sets forth the meaning of his own mission: all who suffer because their lives are in some way “diminished” thus hear from him the “good news” of God’s concern for them, and they know for certain that their lives too are a gift carefully guarded in the hands of the Father (cf. Matthew 6:25-34).

It is above all the “poor” to whom Jesus speaks in his preaching and actions. The crowds of the sick and the outcasts who follow him and seek him out (cf. Matthew 4:23-25) find in his words and actions a revelation of the great value of their lives and of how their hope of salvation is well-founded. (The Gospel of Life 32)

By his passion and death on the cross Christ has given a new meaning to suffering: it can henceforth configure us to him and unite us with his redemptive Passion. (CCC 1505)

Whoever is called “to teach Christ” must first seek “the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus”; he must suffer “the loss of all things . . .” in order to “gain Christ and be found in him”, and “to know him and the power of his resurrection, and [to] share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, that if possible [he] may attain the resurrection from the dead”. (CCC 428)

Now, however, “we walk by faith, not by sight”; we perceive God as “in a mirror, dimly” and only “in part”. Even though enlightened by him in whom it believes, faith is often lived in darkness and can be put to the test. The world we live in often seems very far from the one promised us by faith. Our experiences of evil and suffering, injustice and death, seem to contradict the Good News; they can shake our faith and become a temptation against it. (CCC 164)

Faith in God the Father Almighty can be put to the test by the experience of evil and suffering. God can sometimes seem to be absent and incapable of stopping evil. But in the most mysterious way God the Father has revealed his almighty power in the voluntary humiliation and Resurrection of his Son, by which he conquered evil. Christ crucified is thus “the power of God and the wisdom of God. For God’s
foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God’s weakness is stronger than human strength.” It is in Christ’s Resurrection and exaltation that the Father has shown forth “the immeasurable greatness of his power in us who believe”. (CCC 272)

Illness can lead to anguish, self-absorption, sometimes even despair and revolt against God. It can also make a person more mature, helping him discern in his life what is not essential so that he can turn toward that which is. Very often illness provokes a search for God and a return to him. (CCC 1501)

Every joy and suffering, every event and need can become the matter for thanksgiving which, sharing in that of Christ, should fill one’s whole life: “Give thanks in all circumstances” (1 Thessalonians 5:18). (CCC 2648)

Similarly, the Church encompasses with its love all those who are afflicted by human infirmity and it recognises in those who are poor and who suffer, the likeness of its poor and suffering founder. It does all in its power to relieve their need and in them it endeavours to serve Christ. (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church 8)

In the unity of this Body, there is a diversity of members and functions. All members are linked to one another, especially to those who are suffering, to the poor and persecuted. (CCC 806)

Achievement Objective 3

Students will be able to identify what the Catholic Church believes and teaches about death and dying.

Church Teachings

What is Death?

- At death the wairua (soul) separates from the human body only to be reunited on the day of resurrection.
- Death limits and marks the end of earthly life.
- Death is contrary to God’s original plan but entered the world as a consequence of human sin.
- Jesus, through his own death, transforms death and gives it meaning.

Christian Death

- Sacramentally, through Baptism, and then at physical death the Christian dies with Karaiti in order to rise to new life with him.
- For each person there is only one death which marks the end of their single earthly journey and of their opportunity to work out their destiny – there is no reincarnation after death.
Preparation for Death

- The Church encourages Christians to prepare for the time of death, especially through *karakia* (prayer).
- The dying should be given attention and care to help them live their last moments in dignity and peace.
- The sick should receive, at the proper time, the sacraments that prepare them to meet God.

Catechism and Church Document Links

What is Death?

*To rise with Christ, we must die with Christ: we must “be away from the body and at home with the Lord.”* In that “departure” which is death the soul is separated from the body. *It will be reunited with the body on the day of resurrection of the dead.* (CCC 1005)

Death is the end of earthly life. *Our lives are measured by time, in the course of which we change, grow old and, as with all living beings on earth, death seems like the normal end of life. That aspect of death lends urgency to our lives: remembering our mortality helps us realise that we have only a limited time in which to bring our lives to fulfilment:*

> Remember also your Creator in the days of your youth ... before the dust returns to the earth as it was, and the spirit returns to God who gave it. (CCC 1007)

Death is a consequence of sin. *The Church's Magisterium, as authentic interpreter of the affirmations of Scripture and Tradition, teaches that death entered the world on account of human sin. Even though human nature is mortal God had destined men and women not to die. Death was therefore contrary to the plans of God the Creator and entered the world as a consequence of sin. “Bodily death, from which people would have been immune had they not sinned” is thus “the last enemy” of humankind left to be conquered.* (CCC 1008)

Death is transformed by Christ. *Jesus, the Son of God, also himself suffered the death that is part of the human condition. Yet, despite his anguish as he faced death, he accepted it in an act of complete and free submission to his Father’s will. The obedience of Jesus has transformed the curse of death into a blessing.* (CCC 1009)

Christian Death

*Because of Christ, Christian death has a positive meaning: “For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.” “The saying is sure: if we have died with him, we will also live with him. What is essentially new about Christian death is this: through Baptism, the Christian has already “died with Christ” sacramentally, in order to live a new life; and if we die in Christ's grace, physical death completes this “dying with Christ” and so completes our incorporation into him in his redeeming act:*


It is better for me to die in (eis) Christ Jesus than to reign over the ends of the earth. Him it is I seek – who died for us. Him it is I desire – who rose for us. I am on the point of giving birth. . . . Let me receive pure light; when I shall have arrived there, then shall I be a man (Saint Ignatius of Antioch) (CCC 1010)

Death is the end of a person’s earthly pilgrimage, of the time of grace and mercy which God offers them so as to work out their earthly life in keeping with the divine plan, and to decide their ultimate destiny. When “the single course of our earthly life” is completed, we shall not return to other earthly lives: “It is appointed for men and women to die once.” There is no “reincarnation” after death. (CCC 1013)

Preparation for Death

The Church encourages us to prepare ourselves for the hour of our death. In the ancient litany of the saints, for instance, she has us pray: “From a sudden and unforeseen death, deliver us, O Lord”; to ask the Mother of God to intercede for us “at the hour of our death” in the Hail Mary; and to entrust ourselves to St. Joseph, the patron of a happy death.

Every action of yours, every thought, should be those of one who expects to die before the day is out. Death would have no great terrors for you if you had a quiet conscience. . . . Then why not keep clear of sin instead of running away from death? If you aren’t fit to face death today, it’s very unlikely you will be tomorrow. . . . (The Imitation of Christ)

Praised are you, my Lord, for our sister bodily Death, from whom no living man can escape. Woe on those who will die in mortal sin! Blessed are they who will be found in your most holy will, for the second death will not harm them. (Saint Francis of Assisi) (CCC 1014)

The dying should be given attention and care to help them live their last moments in dignity and peace. They will be helped by the prayer of their relatives, who must see to it that the sick receive at the proper time the sacraments that prepare them to meet the living God. (CCC 2299)

Achievement Objective 4

Students will be able to explore human attitudes and responses to dying and death, including Māori tangihanga.

Respect for the Dead

- In anticipation of their resurrection, the bodies of the dead must be treated with respect and dignity.
- Autopsies may be permitted for legal and scientific purposes.
- The donation of body organs after death is of value.
Comfort to People who Mourn

- God’s blessing and comfort are given to those who mourn and are in grief.

Catechism and Church Document Links

Respect for the Dead

The bodies of the dead must be treated with respect and charity, in faith and hope of the Resurrection. The burial of the dead is a corporal work of mercy; it honours the children of God, who are temples of the Holy Spirit. (CCC 2300)

Autopsies can be morally permitted for legal inquests or scientific research. The free gift of organs after death is legitimate and can be meritorious. (CCC 2301)

Comfort to People who Mourn

The Beatitudes are at the heart of Jesus' preaching. They take up the promises made to the chosen people since Abraham. The Beatitudes fulfil the promises by ordering them no longer merely to the possession of a territory, but to the Kingdom of heaven:

- 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.
- Blessed are you when men revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.
- Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven. (CCC 1716)

Achievement Objective 5

Students will be able to develop an understanding of the Catholic Funeral Rites.

Church Teachings

Liturgical Rites

- The liturgy of the Church presents death as the entrance into everlasting life.
- Through its funeral rites the Church commends the dead to God, raises the tūmanako (hope) of its members, and witnesses to its own faith in the future resurrection of the baptised with Christ.
The vigil is the first formal opportunity for the mourners to experience, within the context of the Christian community, the comfort of God's word through reading of the scriptures and communal prayer.

The Mass, the memorial of Christ's death and resurrection, is the principal celebration of the Christian funeral.

The parish church is the usual place where the Christian community gathers to commend one of its deceased members to God.

The rite of committal expresses the communion that exists between the Church on earth and the Church in heaven — the deceased passes with the farewell prayers of the community of believers into the welcoming company of those who need faith no longer but see Te Atua face to face.

Cremation

The Church permits cremation as long as it does not represent a denial of faith in the resurrection of the body.

Catechism and Church Document Links

Liturgical Rites

The Christian vision of death receives privileged expression in the liturgy of the Church:

Lord, for your faithful people life is changed, not ended. When the body of our earthly dwelling lies in death we gain an everlasting dwelling place in heaven. (CCC 1012)

By means of the funeral rites it has been the practice of the Church, as a tender mother, not simply to commend the dead to God but also to raise high the hope of its children and to give witness to its own faith in the future resurrection of the baptised with Christ. (Decree for the Order of Funerals, Congregation for Divine Worship, 1969)

The vigil is the first gathering of family and friends with the faith community in the time immediately following the death of a loved one and is the first opportunity for the mourners to experience, within the context of the Christian community, the comfort of God's word through reading of the scriptures and communal prayer. (Order of Christian Funerals, 56)

The Mass, the memorial of Christ's death and resurrection, is the principal celebration of the Christian funeral. (Order of Christian Funerals, 128)

The (parish) church is the place where the Christian life is begotten in baptism, nourished in the Eucharist, and where the community gathers to commend one of its deceased members to the Father. (Order of Christian Funerals, 131)

In committing the body to its resting place, the community expresses the hope that, with all those who have gone before marked with the sign of faith, the deceased awaits the glory of the resurrection. The rite of committal is an expression of the
communion that exists between the Church on earth and the Church in heaven — the deceased passes with the farewell prayers of the community of believers into the welcoming company of those who need faith no longer but see God face to face. (Order of Christian Funerals, 206)

Cremation

The Church permits cremation, provided that it does not demonstrate a denial of faith in the resurrection of the body. (CCC 2301)

Achievement Objective 6

Students will be able to explain what the Catholic Church believes and teaches about life after death.

Church Teachings

Particular Judgement

- At the moment of death each person’s eternal destiny is determined by their acceptance or rejection of God’s aroha.

Heaven

- Those who die in God’s grace and friendship are destined for heaven – eternal life with Te Atua, the fulfilment of the deepest human longings and the source of all happiness.
- To live in heaven is to be with Christ in the company of Mary, the angels, and the saints.

Purgatory

- Purgatory is the name given by the Church to the purification that those who die in God’s grace and friendship may need to experience in order to achieve the holiness necessary to enter heaven.

Prayer for the Dead

- The Church encourages karakia, almsgiving and penance by the living on behalf of the dead to assist their purification and entrance into the glory of God.

Hell

- Hell is the name given to the state of freely chosen and permanent separation from God brought about by sin and the rejection of God’s merciful love.
Final Judgement

- At the end of time, following the resurrection of all the dead, Christ will return in glory and there will be a final judgement revealing God’s justice and great aroha and inaugurating the definitive triumph of good over evil.

Catechism and Church Document Links

Particular Judgement

Each person receives their eternal retribution in their immortal soul at the very moment of their death, in a particular judgment that refers their life to Christ: either entrance into the blessedness of heaven – through a purification or immediately, – or immediate and everlasting damnation.

At the evening of life, we shall be judged on our love. (CCC 1022)

Heaven

Those who die in God’s grace and friendship and are perfectly purified live for ever with Christ. They are like God forever, for they “see him as he is,” face to face:

By virtue of our apostolic authority, we define the following: According to the general disposition of God, the souls of all the saints... and other faithful who died after receiving Christ's holy Baptism (provided they were not in need of purification when they died, ... or, if they then did need or will need some purification, when they have been purified after death, ...) already before they take up their bodies again and before the general judgment - and this since the Ascension of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ into heaven - have been, are and will be in heaven, in the heavenly Kingdom and celestial paradise with Christ, joined to the company of the holy angels. Since the Passion and death of our Lord Jesus Christ, these souls have seen and do see the divine essence with an intuitive vision, and even face to face, without the mediation of any creature. (Benedict XII) (CCC 1023)

This perfect life with the Most Holy Trinity – this communion of life and love with the Trinity, with the Virgin Mary, the angels and all the blessed – is called “heaven.” Heaven is the ultimate end and fulfilment of the deepest human longings, the state of supreme, definitive happiness. (CCC 1024)

To live in heaven is “to be with Christ.” The elect live “in Christ,” but they retain, or rather find, their true identity, their own name.

For life is to be with Christ; where Christ is, there is life, there is the kingdom. (CCC 1025)

Purgatory

All who die in God’s grace and friendship, but still imperfectly purified, are indeed assured of their eternal salvation; but after death they undergo purification, so as to achieve the holiness necessary to enter the joy of heaven. (CCC 1030)
The Church gives the name Purgatory to this final purification of the elect, which is entirely different from the punishment of the damned. The Church formulated her doctrine of faith on Purgatory especially at the Councils of Florence and Trent. The tradition of the Church, by reference to certain texts of Scripture, speaks of a cleansing fire:

As for certain lesser faults, we must believe that, before the Final Judgment, there is a purifying fire. He who is truth says that whoever utters blasphemy against the Holy Spirit will be pardoned neither in this age nor in the age to come. From this sentence we understand that certain offenses can be forgiven in this age, but certain others in the age to come. (CCC 1031)

Prayer for the Dead

This teaching is also based on the practice of prayer for the dead, already mentioned in Sacred Scripture: “Therefore [Judas Maccabeus] made atonement for the dead, that they might be delivered from their sin” (2 Maccabees 12:46). From the beginning the Church has honoured the memory of the dead and offered prayers in suffrage for them, above all the Eucharistic sacrifice, so that, thus purified, they may attain the beatific vision of God. The Church also commends almsgiving, indulgences, and works of penance undertaken on behalf of the dead:

Let us help and commemorate them. If Job’s sons were purified by their father’s sacrifice, why would we doubt that our offerings for the dead bring them some consolation? Let us not hesitate to help those who have died and to offer our prayers for them. (CCC 1032)

Hell

We cannot be united with God unless we freely choose to love him. But we cannot love God if we sin gravely against him, against our neighbour or against ourselves: “Whoever does not love abides in death. All who hate a brother or sister are murderers, and you know that murderers do not have eternal life abiding in them” (1 John 3:14-15). Our Lord warns us that we shall be separated from him if we fail to meet the serious needs of the poor and the little ones who are his brothers and sisters. To die in mortal sin without repenting and accepting God's merciful love means remaining separated from him forever by our own free choice. This state of definitive self-exclusion from communion with God and the blessed is called “hell.” (CCC 1033)

The teaching of the Church affirms the existence of hell and its eternity. Immediately after death the souls of those who die in a state of mortal sin descend into hell, where they suffer the punishments of hell, “eternal fire.” The chief punishment of hell is eternal separation from God, in whom alone men and women can possess the life and happiness for which they were created and for which they long. (CCC 1035)

God predestines no one to go to hell; for this, a wilful turning away from God (a mortal sin) is necessary, and persistence in it until the end. In the Eucharistic liturgy and in the daily prayers of her faithful, the Church implores the mercy of God, who does not want “any to perish, but all to come to repentance”:
Father, accept this offering from your whole family. Grant us your peace in this life, save us from final damnation, and count us among those you have chosen. (CCC 1037)

Final Judgement

The resurrection of all the dead, “of both the just and the unjust,” will precede the Last Judgment. This will be “the hour when all who are in the tombs will hear [the Son of man’s] voice and come forth, those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of judgment.” Then Christ will come “in his glory, and all the angels with him . . . Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate them one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, and he will place the sheep at his right hand, but the goats at the left . . . And they will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.” (Matthew 25:31, 32, 46) (CCC 1038)

The Last Judgment will come when Christ returns in glory. Only the Father knows the day and the hour; only he determines the moment of its coming. Then through his Son Jesus Christ he will pronounce the final word on all history. We shall know the ultimate meaning of the whole work of creation and of the entire economy of salvation and understand the marvellous ways by which his Providence led everything towards its final end. The Last Judgment will reveal that God’s justice triumphs over all the injustices committed by his creatures and that God’s love is stronger than death. (CCC 1040)

ORGANIZATION OF THE TOPIC

For teaching purposes the material in this topic is organised into twelve sections each of which is linked to one of the achievement objectives:

- Part One: Jesus’ Victory Over Death
- Part Two: The Experience of Loss
- Part Three: The Process of Grief
- Part Four: Coping with Loss
- Part Five: What is Death?
- Part Six: When Death is Near
- Part Seven: Some Attitudes Towards Death
- Part Eight: What to Do When Someone Dies
- Part Nine: Caring for Those Who Grieve or Mourn
- Part Ten: Tangihanga – Māori Funeral Customs
- Part Eleven: Catholic Funeral Rites
- Part Twelve: Death and After – A Catholic Perspective
LEARNING OUTCOMES

Each learning outcome for the topic is derived from one of the achievement objectives. The learning outcomes identify what students are expected to learn as they work through each section of the topic.

While teachers must ensure that the learning outcomes for the topic are covered so that all of the achievement objectives for the topic are met, it is not intended that students work through every task or activity, nor that every learning outcome is assessed.

Teachers should select a range of tasks appropriate for their students’ interests and abilities and well-matched to their own teaching style.

Learning outcomes for each of the twelve sections of the topic are listed at the beginning of the appropriate part.

LINKS WITH OTHER TOPICS IN UNDERSTANDING FAITH

The material covered in this topic links with various themes explored in other topics in the Understanding Faith programme. “Part Eight: Euthanasia” and “Part Nine: Care of the Dying” in Topic 12F “Christian Morality and Moral Development” are especially relevant.

THE USE OF MĀORI LANGUAGE IN THIS PROGRAMME

The first time a Māori word or phrase appears in a particular topic, either in the teacher material or the student texts, it is followed by its English equivalent which is placed inside brackets. In most cases the meaning of the Māori terms can be worked out from the context in which they appear.

A glossary which gathers together all the Māori terms used in a particular topic is provided. This glossary often explores the Māori concepts in greater depth than is possible in the brief descriptions that appear in the teacher material and student texts.

THE MĀORI SPIRITUALITY OF THE HUMAN PERSON

Christian morality is based on the understanding that the human person is made in the image and likeness of Te Atua. By responding freely to God’s great gifts of life and aroha men and women are able to realise their full human potential and so achieve genuine happiness – both here on earth and, in all its fullness, in the life to come. Morality is God’s revelation and humanity’s perception about how to be happy.

The present topic with its strong focus on identity of the human person is greatly enhanced by an awareness of the Māori understanding of te tangata (the human person). Other key Māori concepts which contribute to our understanding of morality and values include tapu (sacred), mana (spiritual power), and whānau (family).
For Māori, the human person has a place above every other being in the created universe. A well-known proverb emphasises the unique value given to the human person:

Hūtia te rito o te harakeke, kei hea te kōmako e ko?
Ki mai ki ahau: He aha te mea nui o te ao?
Māku e kī atu: He tangata he tangata!

If you pluck out the heart of the flax bush, how can the bell bird sing?
You ask me: What is the greatest reality of the universe?
I reply: The human person!

At the same time with its reference to the singing of the bell bird, the proverb also expresses human fragility and dependence on the other parts of creation.

Underlying the Māori understanding of the universe is the awareness that every aspect of creation is tapu or sacred. The ultimate value of every created thing comes from the very fact of its ‘being’ and from its connection with particular spiritual powers. Tapu is the spiritual essence of all things. It arises from the mauri, the life principle of all creation, and constantly points us back to the source: Io, or God. Every part of creation has its tapu, because every part of creation has its link with one or other of the spiritual powers, and ultimately with Io matua kore, ‘the parentless one’, Io taketake, ‘the source of all’.

The human person’s tapu ultimately, therefore, comes from the person’s origins in Io or God. Once a human begins to exist, the person has her own tapu.

The Māori way of expressing this worth of the human person is to speak of a person’s mana or power. Mana is the term for spiritual power that proceeds from tapu, the power that radiates out from being. Mana finds its source in tapu.

Michael Shirres describes the connection between tapu and mana in these terms:

“Mana and tapu are closely linked. Where the tapu is the potentiality for power, mana is the actual power, the power itself.”

Mana comes to people in three ways: Mana tangata, from people, mana whenua, from the land, and mana atua, from the spiritual powers.

Over time tapu and mana can either increase or decrease. The greater the tapu of a person or thing, the greater the mana. However, if tapu is diminished, this leads to a loss of mana.

Because, during life a person’s mana can be either protected or destroyed, the real sign of a person’s mana and tapu is not that person’s power to destroy other people, but that person’s power to manaaki, to protect and look after other people.
As Shirres explains:

“The best way to build up one’s own mana and tapu, is not to destroy other people, but to recognize them, to manaaki, welcome them and show them fitting hospitality, and to tautoko, support them in the issues they take up.” (page 47)

Because death is not the end for the human being, a person still has tapu and mana after death.

For the Māori, to be a person is not to stand alone, but to be one with one’s people. The deeper this oneness the more the person develops his or her own humanity and have that mana tangata – mana from people. The persons we stand one with are not only the living, but even more so the ancestors, ngā tūpuna, those members of the family who have already gone before us. So basic to being a person and to being Māori is to be whānau, family, not just with the living, but also with the dead. For the Māori, identification with the ancestors stretches right back to human origins.

The word whānau, ‘family’, means to give birth. Māori are bound to their whānau, their family, by birth. The word hapū, ‘extended family group’, means to become pregnant. The hapū is made up of family groups bound together by marriage. The word for tribe, the word iwi, also means ‘bones’. The iwi finds its bond in a common ancestor and as Māori Marsden puts it, the ancestral bones are “the physical remains, the tangible links and association with one’s historic being, as derived through one’s ancestors.” It is through their whakapapa or genealogy, that Māori maintain and strengthen these vital links with their tūpuna (ancestors).

Thus, each person can become one with other people, not just with those in the present, but with people from the past. The whole movement of the human person is to be one with all people. As we move through the different stages of life, beginning with conception, life in the womb and birth, our journey is a movement ‘from the nothingness, into the night, into full daylight’.
PART ONE: JESUS’ VICTORY OVER DEATH

Achievement Objective 1

Students will be able to recognise that the mystery of Christ's dying and rising to new life gives meaning to the death of Christians.

Church Teachings

Jesus’ Death

- God’s great aroha for us can be seen in Jesus, who freely gave himself in death on the cross for our salvation.
- By following Christ’s example and uniting ourselves with his sufferings on the cross we come to eternal life.
- Through his death Hehu destroyed the power of death.

Christ's Resurrection

- Christ’s resurrection is a real and historical event that the New Testament attests to.
- Although the risen Karaiti appears to his disciples not as a ghost but with the same body that had been tortured and crucified, his humanity is no longer restricted by space and time.
- At the resurrection Jesus’ human body is filled with the divine life of God.
- Christ’s resurrection confirms the truth of all that he said and did, and his identity as the Son of God.
- By his resurrection Christ frees humanity from sin and makes possible for us a new life in Te Atua.
- The risen Christ is the principle and source of our future resurrection.

Learning Outcomes

At the end of this section of the topic students will:

- Describe characteristics of the risen Jesus that are revealed in his post-resurrection appearances.
- Identify implications of Jesus’ resurrection from the dead for his first followers and for Christians today.

Teacher Background

Christ’s Resurrection – Victory Over Death

The resurrection is the crowning event in the historical life of Jesus and God’s authentication that Jesus really is the Christ of our faith.

The resurrection reveals that Jesus lived, died and then was raised up by God on our behalf (see Romans 4:25). It is also a sign that joined to Christ through Baptism,
we, too, are raised up and can “walk in newness of life” (Romans 6:4). Christians believe “that the one who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus, and will bring us … into his presence” (2 Corinthians 4:14). Jesus’ resurrection has given us “victory” over sin, ensuring that evil cannot finally triumph:

‘Death has been swallowed up in victory.’
‘Where, O death is your victory? Where, O death is your sting?’
The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.
(1 Corinthians 15:54-57)

We know for sure that we will die but also trust that “all will be made alive in Christ” (1 Corinthians 15:22). Our Christian faith leads us to believe that for Christ’s faithful people “life is changed not ended” (Preface of Christian Death I).

If Jesus had simply lived and died, he would most likely be remembered as another great prophet of Israel. It was his disciples’ conviction that God had raised Jesus from the dead which led to the emergence of the Church and the development of a distinctively Christian faith. Saint Paul recognised that the resurrection was central to Christianity – all depended on it:

… if Christ had not been raised, then our proclamation has been in vain and your faith has been in vain. (1 Corinthians 15:14)

Christians are given “a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead” (1 Peter 1:3). If we are convinced that Christ is truly risen then “neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8:38-39).

Christ’s “Spiritual Body”
Jesus’ resurrection was much more than the bodily resuscitation that the disciples had witnessed when Jesus raised Lazarus (John 11:1-44), the daughter of Jairus (Mark 5:21-43) and the son of the widow of Nain (Luke 7:11-17) from the dead – these three would all have to die again someday. Jesus’ resurrection involved a bodily transformation that enabled him to pass through walls (John 20:19). He suddenly “vanished” from two disciples on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:31) and “appeared in another form” (Mark 16:12). A large group of disciples, having seen him bodily “alive”, then witnessed him ascending from their midst “into heaven” (see Acts 1:6-11 and Luke 24:50-53).

Jesus’ resurrection was not just wishful thinking on the part of his disciples. They were not expecting it and on a number of occasions – for example, on the road to Emmaus – failed to recognise who Jesus was. Others were “startled and terrified and thought they were seeing a ghost” (Luke 24:37). If this were a made-up story, they would have represented themselves in a more positive light.

The disciples grew in their conviction that God had raised Jesus to new life. They knew his resurrection was “real” because Jesus had shown them the wounds in his
body – even inviting Thomas to touch them (John 20:24-29). He had asked them for food and eaten it (Luke 24:36-43), and had invited himself to breakfast (John 21:12).

Saint Paul provides what is, perhaps, the best description of Christ’s resurrected body when in 1 Corinthians 15 he refers to it as “a spiritual body”. Though his followers cannot explain Jesus’ new mode of spiritual embodiment they realise that it springs from the life and the power of God.

**Our Resurrection**

The Church teaches that Christ’s resurrection guarantees the faithful Christian’s resurrection with Christ:

> For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. We know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be destroyed, and we might no longer be enslaved to sin. For whoever has died is freed from sin. But if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. (Romans 6:5-8)

Belief in our own resurrection is not the same as believing in the immortality of the soul or some vague form of afterlife. The major Christian creeds all affirm the resurrection of the body – before the final judgement each individual soul will be united with its own body and those who are judged as just will have their bodies glorified.

Although many contemporary Christians think that the resurrection of body refers to some form of spiritual survival, Saint Paul is clear in 1 Corinthians 15:1-58 that the followers of Christ can expect to experience a bodily resurrection – God will make new spiritual bodies, not subject to death, out of the material of the old. The word “spiritual” which we read in 1 Corinthians 15 translates the Greek *pneumatikos*. This Greek adjective does not describe the substance out of which the body is made but the force that is animating the body. Paul seems to be saying that at the resurrection from the dead we will receive spirit-powered bodies. While our present bodies are animated by the ordinary human souls, our future bodies will be animated by God’s spirit and hence not corruptible. Transformed in Christ, we will become new creations.

**Links with the Student Text**

**Task One**

Here students are asked to read the following gospel accounts of Jesus’ appearances to his disciples after the resurrection.

- The appearance to Mary Magdalene: John 20:11-18
- In the upper room: Luke 24:33-49
- In the upper room: John 20:19-29
- By the Sea of Galilee: John 21
They are then asked to choose one of the accounts and explain:

a) How it presents the risen Jesus as a physical reality.
b) How it shows the risen Jesus to be different in some way.

While the details of each of these incidents differ each establishes that the risen Jesus is the same Lord who had died – for example, his body shows the signs of his torture and crucifixion. Although his followers do not always recognise Jesus at first, the physical reality of his presence is stressed. The disciples not only see the risen Lord with their eyes – they speak with him, touch his flesh and share food with him.

At the same time Jesus’ resurrection is presented as being much more than the bodily resuscitation that the disciples had witnessed when Jesus raised Lazarus (John 11:1-44), the daughter of Jairus (Mark 5:21-43) and the son of the widow of Nain (Luke 7:11-17). Jesus’ resurrection involved a bodily transformation that enabled him to pass through walls (John 20:19).

Jesus appeared to his disciples on unexpected occasions. For example, on the road to Emmaus two of them failed to recognise who Jesus was. Later he suddenly “vanished” from their midst (Luke 24:31). Others were “startled and terrified and thought they were seeing a ghost” (Luke 24:37).

The disciples grew in their conviction that God had raised Jesus to new life. They knew his resurrection was “real” because Jesus had shown them the wounds in his body – even inviting Thomas to touch them (John 20:24-29). He had asked them for food and eaten it (Luke 24:36-43), and had invited himself to breakfast (John 21:12).

**Something to Discuss**
Here students are asked to discuss some of the implications of Jesus’ resurrection from the dead for his first followers and for Christians today.

For Jesus’ first followers his resurrection from the dead confirmed the truth of everything that Jesus said and did, establishing his power over sin and death.

For Christians today, Jesus’ resurrection enables us to look beyond death with great hope. It points to our resurrection and encourages us to look forward to “a new heaven and a new earth God” (Revelation 21:1), where God “will wipe every tear” and “death will be no more” (Revelation 21:4).

**Something to Think About**
Here students are to reflect on which of the following gospel accounts of the risen Jesus’ appearances they find most appealing and give reasons why.

- The appearance to Mary Magdalene: John 20:11-18
- In the upper room: Luke 24:33-49
- In the upper room: John 20:19-29
- By the Sea of Galilee: John 21

Answers will vary from student to student.
PART TWO: THE EXPERIENCE OF LOSS

Achievement Objective 2

Students will be able to develop an understanding of human loss and grief and explore ways of dealing with them.

Church Teachings

Human Loss and Suffering

- Jesus brings the Good News of God’s concern to all who suffer and are diminished in any way.
- By his passion and death on the cross Christ has given a new meaning to suffering.
- In order to find Karaiti and gain eternal life we must be prepared to lose all things, suffering and dying as he did.
- Times of suffering and loss prepare us for the experience of the power of the resurrection.
- When we experience suffering and loss our faith is tested because Te Atua can seem to be absent from our lives.
- Experiences of suffering and loss, such as illness, can make a person more mature, bring them closer to God, and be a cause of thanksgiving.
- The Church, as the Body of Christ, loves and recognises Christ in all who experience suffering and loss.

Learning Outcomes

At the end of this section of the topic students will:

- Define loss.
- Identify various types of loss and link them to different stages of human life.
- Explore some responses to loss.

Teacher Background

Loss and its Meaning

The material in this section of the topic focuses on developing students’ understanding of loss by getting them to reflect on their reactions to loss in everyday situations. By developing a positive attitude to loss students may come to see that loss can lead to growth. The person who successfully copes with loss is all the stronger for the experience.

Loss is a universal human experience that does not discriminate on the grounds of age, race, gender, education, economic status, religion, or nationality, and which is encountered many times during a lifetime.
The most shocking experiences of loss are those that alter the structure and functioning of our personal and family life. These kinds of losses and disappointments can have lasting impacts.

While human death brings the most intense sense of loss, loss is experienced in many contexts:

- The aging process
- The breakdown of intimate relationships and of friendships
- Divorce or separation
- Miscarriage
- Victimisation as a consequence of criminal or antisocial activity
- Changing schools
- Relocating to a new neighbourhood
- Genocide
- Competitive sports
- Unemployment
- Homelessness
- Migration
- Loss of a body part or a physical function
- Receiving a diagnosis of a serious illness
- The death of a pet

Loss may be universal but subtle nuances will distinguish one person’s loss from that of another. While intense feelings of anger, depression, loneliness, fear, frustration, and desperation are typically felt by those who have endured and survived a loss, each person experiences loss in their own way.

Learning to acknowledge our losses and deal with them is essential to our emotional and spiritual growth. While most people recognise obvious losses such as death, divorce, or the theft of a favourite possession, less tangible disappointments can easily be overlooked, for example, the loss of a dream or vision, or of independence and self-esteem.

Disappointments that are more difficult to identify – often because they are linked to a success – can also be very significant. An exciting event such as the birth of a baby may bring the end of a promising career, or a job promotion the loss of a valued workmate.

Throughout our lives we continue to be challenged to discover meaning in our losses and, in spite of the pain, to learn from these experiences. How we deal with life’s small disappointments – the “little deaths” we experience each day – shapes our response to more dramatic losses. In a very real sense the death of a family pet can serve as a preparation for the death of close family members, and ultimately our own.

For Christians, life’s “little dyings” have great value. They immerse us in the mystery of Christ’s life, death and resurrection, and prepare us to enter, one day, into the eternal life of God.
Links with the Student Text

Task Two
Here students are asked to consider a number of different types of loss:

- Losing a pet
- Separation from a parent
- Shifting to a new house
- Changing schools
- Being in hospital
- Death of a family member
- Moving neighbourhoods or towns
- Growing older
- Injury or disability
- Breakdown of a friendship
- Failing a test or assessment activity
- Divorce or separation
- Unemployment through layoff or termination
- Serious illness
- Burglary or theft
- Miscarriage
- Sporting defeat
- Criminal damage
- Loss of a prized possession
- Violence

a) Students are asked to identify which of these types of loss they have either experienced or been personally affected by.
b) Students are then asked to reflect on which of these types of loss are the most serious and give reasons why.
c) They should also suggest other types of loss that they can think of.

Responses will vary from student to student.

Task Three
Here students are asked to write their own definition of loss. They should then compare their definition with those written by other members of the class.

Definitions will vary but the following points are relevant:

- Loss occurs whenever a person is separated from someone or something that is important to them.
- Loss is experienced by people regardless of age, race, gender, education, economic status, religion, or nationality.
- Loss may be experienced many times during a life.
- Loss causes sorrow, the depth of which depends on how closely someone is attached to the object or person from which they are parted.
**Something to Think About**
Here students are asked to consider how true the following statement is in terms of their own experience:

*The more closely attached someone is to the object or person that they are parted from the greater their sense of loss.*

Answers will vary.

**Task Four**
This task asks students to construct a timeline on which they mark the different phases of human life. It should include the following:

- Infancy
- Childhood
- Adolescence
- Young Adulthood
- Mature Adulthood
- Mid-life
- Beyond Retirement

For each phase identified on the timeline students should add examples of the sorts of losses that they think are typical of that phase. They should name and / or illustrate these losses.

Depending on circumstances, this task may be done individually, in a pair, or in a small group. Students should prepare for the task by brainstorming.

**Alternative Card Activity**
This activity is an alternative to Task Four. Students should work in a small group.

The teacher will need to make sets of cards from the photocopy original on the following pages of this teacher guide and distribute one set of cards to each group in the class.

Each card describes a loss that people are likely to experience during the course of their lives.

Students should place the set of cards face down in the centre of their group. Group members should take turns to pick up a card and read out the loss described on it. Together, the group should decide on the phase of life (Infancy, Childhood, Adolescence, Young Adulthood, Mature Adulthood, Mid-life, Beyond Retirement) that each loss is most likely to belong to.

Most losses named on the cards are clearly linked to a particular phase of life but others could happen at any time.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Losses Experienced During Life</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Birth – loss of the environment of the womb</td>
<td>Weaning – loss of breastfeeding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loss of blanket, toy, dummy, bottle, attention</td>
<td>Starting school – adjusting to change of lifestyle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moving house – possible loss of friends</td>
<td>Loss of pet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loss of a grandparent through death</td>
<td>Loss of a parent through separation or divorce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loss of sense that life goes on forever</td>
<td>Change in body image due to puberty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loss of friends – more friction in peer groups.</td>
<td>Fears of death – must be allowed to express such feelings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loss of friends – being on the edge of a group</td>
<td>Failure in exams – can lower feelings of self-esteem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leaving school</td>
<td>Unemployment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Struggling to find identity.</td>
<td>Death among friends and peers through vehicle accidents, alcohol and drug abuse, suicide</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Photocopy Original: Card Activity – Losses Experienced During Life (2)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Move – new job</th>
<th>New commitments make demands on personal independence – marriage, mortgage, parenthood</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Birth of child – father may feel loss of wife’s attention</td>
<td>Infertility or miscarriage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empty-nest syndrome, as children leave home</td>
<td>Loss of job</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Possible loss of opportunities to advance in career</td>
<td>Menopause – loss of ability to conceive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Possible lowering of self-esteem following the end of a career</td>
<td>Possible loss of health – slowing down</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loss of partner</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Something to Discuss**  
After reading two cases described in their texts students are asked to discuss the following in a pair or small group:

- a) They should identify at least three feelings displayed in each case study.
- b) They should then select words or actions from each study which show how the characters felt.
- c) They should describe the sort of loss involved in each case.
- d) They should then suggest what positive growth Sandy (case one) and Michael (case two) have gained from their experience.

Answers may vary.

**Task Five**  
This task asks students to choose a situation of loss which they have experienced at some time – for example, the loss of a pet, a friend who shifted, the death of someone in their family etc and complete the following phrases in a profile of loss:

1. The loss I experienced was ……………………………………………………..
2. At the time I felt …………………………………………………………………
3. Physical symptoms I experienced (for example, dry mouth, numbness etc.) were ……………………………………………………………………………………
4. I got through the situation by …………………………………………..
5. I would have found it easier if…………………………………………………
6. From the experience I have learnt …………………………………………..
7. From this experience I was able to grow in the following ways: ……………………………………………………………………………………..

Students should be encouraged to share what they have written.

**Something to Discuss**  
Students are asked to share what they have written about their loss in a pair or small group, but only as much as they feel comfortable. Students should compile a list of all the different emotions or feelings that group members have experienced in reaction to their various losses.

**Something to Do**  
Here students are asked to design a poster or write a poem or present a mime or a piece of scripted drama that explores a response to a loss.
PART THREE: THE PROCESS OF GRIEF

Achievement Objective 2

Students will be able to develop an understanding of human loss and grief and explore ways of dealing with them.

Church Teachings

Human Loss and Suffering

- Jesus brings *Te Rongopai* of God’s concern to all who suffer and are diminished in any way.
- By his passion and death on the cross Christ has given a new meaning to suffering.
- In order to find Christ and gain eternal life we must be prepared to lose all things, suffering and dying as he did.
- Times of suffering and loss prepare us for the experience of the power of the resurrection.
- When we experience suffering and loss our faith is tested because God can seem to be absent from our lives.
- Experiences of suffering and loss, such as illness, can make a person more mature, bring them closer to God, and be a cause of thanksgiving.
- The Church, as the Body of Christ, loves and recognises Christ in all who experience suffering and loss.

Learning Outcomes

At the end of this section of the topic students will:

- Identify feelings and emotions that are part of the grief process.
- Demonstrate familiarity with the stages of grief outlined by Granger Westberg.

Teacher Background

Grief – A Response to Loss

Grief is an emotional response to a significant loss, especially the death of a loved one. It is a normal process – rather than an event – that people go through in order to heal.

Grief can affect our thoughts, feelings, behaviours and beliefs, and our relationships with others. The experience of grief can sometimes feel wave-like – a person may feel that their grief is behind them, but are then surprised when it suddenly returns.

Sudden temporary upsurges in grief can be particularly profound when there is an anniversary of the death (such as the date of the death or funeral), or when memories are triggered, for example, by a piece of music or a particular smell. It is important to recognise that grief is a normal experience and that the process of
grieving does require experiencing the pain of the loss. Many people will continue to grieve in subtle ways for the rest of their lives.

**Grief Reactions**

Grief includes a wide range of emotions and people may experience some or all of the following reactions, as well as many others. Feelings can even be contradictory at times. Some of the many reactions associated with grief include:

- Anger
- Anxiety
- Change in worldview
- Confusion
- Depression
- Despair
- Drop in self-esteem
- Fear of going mad
- Feeling unable to cope
- Guilt and remorse
- Helplessness
- Hopelessness
- Loneliness
- Questioning of values and beliefs
- Relief
- Sadness
- Shock and disbelief.

**Stages of Grief – Granger Westberg**

In the early 1960s Granger Westberg, then a Lutheran pastor, gave a sermon on grief at Rockefeller Chapel at the University of Chicago. This occasion provided the basis for a book, *Good Grief* (1962), which since it was first published, has sold millions of copies in more than thirty-five editions.

According to Westberg, there are ten stages of grief. However, since grieving is a very individual and personal process, not everyone will go through all the stages and not necessarily in the order listed. While knowledge of these stages can make the grief process more comprehensible, it is important to remember that there isn't any 'one' way or 'right' way to grieve.

**Stage 1: Shock**

In response to tragic death, sorrow may be so overwhelming that a person’s senses are numbed. Often, during the shock phase, a person will experience denial of the loss of a loved one. It is common to hear phrases, words or actions that hide the reality that a loved one is gone. If the survivor is experiencing shock, this is a mental method of temporarily escaping reality. As long as the shock is a temporary phase, it is completely normal. It is recommended that an individual continue with their usual daily activities as much as possible because routine promotes healing. Shock can help a person deal with their grief until they are ready to move on to the next stage.
Stage 2: Emotional Release
Emotional release tends to occur when a person mentally realises how devastating their loss is. Uncontrollable urges to express grief can occur without warning, especially when there is a build up of emotions. Letting out emotions is a healthy thing to do. It can promote healing by allowing feelings to come to the surface. Repressing feelings can make the situation worse. It is perfectly natural and therapeutic to cry. No one should feel embarrassed to cry because it is essential to release and express both positive and negative emotions. Some people may not want to grieve in front of others. For them, it is healthy to release emotions in private.

Stage 3: Depression and Isolation
Often, a time will probably come when a person may feel totally depressed and isolated. They may also feel that no one has ever grieved the way they are grieving. Despite this sense of isolation, grief is a universal process. After experiencing a great loss, sadness is completely normal and essential to grieving. At this stage the grieving person may be without hope and unable to identify positive things that are happening around them. This despair leads to feelings of loneliness where no end is in sight. For some, this stage ends quickly but for others it can last for months. If a person is within this stage for a prolonged period of time, they may be experiencing clinical depression. This is especially the case if their normal functioning is seriously impaired or if they express suicidal thoughts. In such circumstances professional help is required.

Stage 4: Physical Symptoms
The distress of many survivors is expressed in various physical side-effects. Common physical symptoms can include overeating, undereating, nausea, dizziness or headaches. Any prolonged or extended physical symptoms should be taken seriously and treated by a professional. Long-term physical symptoms that are left untreated will usually get worse – not better.

Stage 5: Panic (also referred to as Anxiety)
Many people become panicky because they can only think of the loss. This can prevent a person from being effective in accomplishing things, such as work. It may cause an individual to worry about their own mental health and their inability to concentrate. Some people also panic because they feel as if they are “losing their mind.” It is important to understand that experiencing panic and having uncharacteristic thoughts is sometimes a part of the grieving process. When a grieving person is warned about the worrisome and fearful thoughts, it is less likely they will be overwhelmed with thoughts that they are “losing it.” It may also be comforting to know that panic is normal in this situation.

Stage 6: Guilt
Guilt is also a typical feeling associated with grief. Two types of guilt can be considered, ‘normal guilt’ and ‘irrational guilt’. ‘Normal guilt’ is when a person feels guilty for something they did or didn’t do – for example, feeling guilty that they didn’t provide adequate care for a loved one. ‘Irrational guilt’ is when a person feels responsible for a particular situation that they had no control over – for example, feeling guilty because they couldn’t prevent the murder of a loved one. This is also called self-blame. Both types of guilt are often linked, so distinguishing between the
two can be difficult. Everyone has feelings of ‘irrational guilt’ but it depends upon the degree to which it is experienced. Unresolved guilt can cause further distress if it is not dealt with properly. It can be dealt with through expression and in some cases speaking to mental health professionals.

**Stage 7: Anger and Resentment**
As a person comes out of feeling depressed, they may be able to express strong feelings of anger and resentment. Some people may not be aware of their anger until the depression dissipates. Anger is an important and normal part of going through grief. When there is a significant loss, most people go through a stage where they are very critical of everything and everyone associated with the loved one who has died. Sometimes, people need someone or something to blame for the death that has occurred. This can cause hostility toward relatives, doctors, police and others. Even though anger is healthy, it can be damaging if it becomes all-consuming or is expressed inappropriately.

**Stage 8: Resistance**
People may feel that they are progressing through the grieving process and express a desire to return to their usual activities, yet they may, at the same time, be resistant to returning to their regular life. This can sometimes be because they feel others don’t understand how special the loved one was to them. Some people may want to remain in grief to keep the memory of the person alive or because facing ‘life’ again seems too painful. For others, the grief has become a familiar and comfortable place to be in. Resistance can also occur because there doesn’t appear to be a place for grief in society. Grief tends to remain quite private and some people may feel they are forced to carry the burden within themselves.

**Stage 9: Hope**
Grief can last anywhere from a few weeks to a few years. How long grief will last for a survivor cannot be predicted. During a period of grief there will be glimpses of hope. Eventually this hope will outweigh discouraging feelings. No two people are the same and no two people grieve the same. Some may go through the stages not asking for help while others may grieve openly. Most will want affection and reassurance. Although grieving is an individual process, most cannot do it alone. It makes a significant difference when there is support and encouragement for someone who is grieving.

**Stage 10: Affirming Reality**
The final stage is affirming reality. This does not mean that a person becomes their “old self again”. When someone goes through a significant grief experience, they come out as a changed person. Although life won’t be the same, it is important for those emerging from the grief process to reaffirm what is good in their lives – even though they have endured a tremendous loss, they realise that everything good has not been taken from them. As the struggle to affirm reality begins, a person should be encouraged not to be afraid of the real world anymore. This stage is also known as acceptance.

**Factors That Can Influence Grief**
Grieving is not a simple process that is as clear-cut as these ten stages may suggest. It is complicated because there are internal factors (components within the
grieving person) and external factors (outside influences) that impact the grieving process.

Internal factors, which make grieving difficult and confusing, include:

- **The extent of the loss** – how much was actually lost? For example, a person’s hopes and dreams for the future, their shared memories of the past, their prospects of grandchildren etc.

- **The range of emotions** – including emotions a person may not have felt before. For example, in the case of a homicide or a death by medical misadventure, this could include anger and hatred of someone they do not even know, the person said to be responsible for their loved one’s death.

- **The intensity of emotions** – these can erupt and be overwhelming sometimes.

- **The uniqueness of every loss** – the personal relationship with the loved one and the circumstances of their absence or death makes the situation unique. Although a person may have grieved before, this is a separate experience. Circumstances, such as an accidental death, may make a particular loss seem “different” because fewer people experience loss in this way.

- **Lack of understanding** – a grieving person’s ability or inability to understand why they feel the way they do will determine how difficult and confusing the grieving process is for them.

External factors that can have an impact on the grieving process for people include:

- The availability of professional support services.
- The extent to which people around those in grief understand and support them.
- The involvement of the media and / or the criminal justice system in the case of “unusual” deaths.

**Factors Affecting the Experience of Grief**

It is often thought that people progress through grief in similar ways, but this isn’t the case. Everyone experiences grief differently depending on a range of individual factors, including:

- The age and stage in life of the person who is grieving – for example, child or adult.
- The type of relationship with the deceased – for example, spouse, parent or friend.
- The nature of the relationship with the deceased – for example, close and loving, or remote and troubled.
- The way the deceased died – for example, long illness, sudden death or suicide.
- The grieving person’s religious or spiritual beliefs.
• Cultural practices – for example, the ways in which the grieving person’s culture expresses grief.
• The availability of support from family and friends.
• Associated stresses – for example, financial difficulties, job loss or suddenly needing to develop skills as a single parent.

Different Grieving Styles
There is no right or wrong way to grieve. Generally, there are two broad styles of grieving. Most people use a combination of both:

• The intuitive approach – People may seek out social support and tend to focus on the emotional aspects of their loss. Their primary focus is on managing their feelings.

• The instrumental approach – People tend to focus more on the cognitive (thinking) aspects of the loss. They may grieve through activity and problem solving. This style tends to be more solitary and private, with the primary focus on managing the thoughts that arise.

Grief and Physical Illness
Research indicates that grief often leads to a reduction in the functioning of the immune system and that there are clear links between the experience of grief and illness. Health impacts can range from colds, influenza, anxiety, depression and sleeping difficulties, through to suicide and increased risk of various forms of cancer.

Philosophical and Spiritual Questions
Grief can also raise important philosophical and spiritual questions, and prompt us to ponder our faith and the meaning of life. Our experience of loss may destroy many of our assumptions that we held about the world, such as “the world is a safe place”, “the old die before the young” or “bad things don’t happen to good people”. These beliefs are often shattered in the wake of a profound experience of loss. The experience for many grieving people is one of “re-learning” the world. Many people also discover a deepening of their spiritual beliefs and can identify how they have grown as a result of their grief experience.

Links with the Student Text

Something to Think About
Here students are asked to describe an experience that has brought grief to them or to someone they know. They should list at least five feelings or emotions that were part of the grief process.

They may identify some of the following reactions that are commonly associated with grief:

- Anger
- Anxiety
- Change in worldview
- Confusion
- Depression
- Despair
- Drop in self-esteem
- Fear of going mad
Feeling unable to cope        Guilt and remorse
Helplessness               Hopelessness
Loneliness                 Questioning of values and beliefs
Relief                     Shock and disbelief

Students may wish to share about these reactions in a pair or small group.

**Task Six**
Here students are asked to study Westberg’s ten stages of grief which are described in the student text.

They are asked to list an emotion or feeling or way of behaving that is typical of each of the ten stages. The following are possible answers:

1. **Shock** (numbness, disbelief, denial)
2. **Emotional Release** (crying, sobbing, cursing, sighing, uncontrollable urges to express grief)
3. **Depression and Isolation** (hopelessness, alienation)
4. **Physical Symptoms of Distress** (change in normal sleeping and eating habits, headaches, dizziness, nausea, lack of energy, weak immunity, sickness)
5. **Panic / Anxiety** (inability to concentrate, worrying about mental health, feeling “out of control”, fear of “loss of mind”)
6. **A Sense of Guilt** (regret, feeling of responsibility, self-blame)
7. **Anger and Resentment** (very critical, blaming others, hostility)
8. **Inability to Return to Usual Activities** (feeling that the past was perfect and that the future has little to offer, retreat from the present, grief becomes “comfortable”)
9. **Hope Returns** (less intense images of the past, more positive feelings about the future)
10. **Readjustment to Reality** (adjustment to loss but not dominated by it, changed by grieving)

**Something to Do**
Here students are asked to work in a pair or small group. They should choose one stage of the grief process and prepare a chart or poster on it to present to the class. Alternatively, teachers may wish to allocate the stages of the grief process to the students so that all ten of them are covered by the class.

Students should include the following details:

- The number of the stage in the grief process
- The title of the stage
- A short summary of what the stage involves
- A visual symbol representing the stage

The completed charts or posters may be displayed
**Something to Think About**
Students are asked to consider where each of Westberg’s ten stages of grief would fit in the Grief Trough.

The following groupings are appropriate although some placements could be debated:

**Shock**
Shock
Emotional Release

**Reaction**
Depression and Isolation
Physical Symptoms of Distress
Panic / Anxiety A Sense of Guilt
Anger and Resentment
Inability to Return to Usual Activities

**Gradual Acceptance**
Hope Returns
Readjustment to Reality
PART FOUR: COPING WITH LOSS

Achievement Objective 2

Students will be able to develop an understanding of human loss and grief and explore ways of dealing with them.

Church Teachings

Human Loss and Suffering

- *Hehu* brings the Good News of God’s concern to all who suffer and are diminished in any way.
- By his passion and death on the cross Christ has given a new meaning to suffering.
- In order to find Christ and gain eternal life we must be prepared to lose all things, suffering and dying as he did.
- Times of suffering and loss prepare us for the experience of the power of the resurrection.
- When we experience suffering and loss our faith is tested because *Te Atua* can seem to be absent from our lives.
- Experiences of suffering and loss, such as illness, can make a person more mature, bring them closer to God, and be a cause of thanksgiving.
- The Church, as the Body of Christ, loves and recognises *Karaiti* in all who experience suffering and loss.

Learning Outcomes

At the end of this section of the topic students will:

- Reflect on various situations of loss and suggest possible ways of coping with them.
- Describe Jesus’ attitude to the loss and grief he experienced when facing his own death.
- Recognise the value of prayer in times of loss.

Teacher Background

The Christian Response to Loss

When loss and its consequent grief are not dealt with, serious psychological problems can result, and may affect a person for their entire lifetime. Each person can develop mechanisms for coping, and in fact has probably done so from early childhood. Some mechanisms are more healthy and appropriate than others. Taking refuge from grief in denial, alcohol, drugs, excessive activity and work etc, is not desirable. Students need to look at their own ways of coping with loss and can be encouraged to become more healthy in their approach.
For Christians, the basic coping aid is the realisation of God’s personal love and concern for each person, no matter what the situation. “I will never leave you or abandon you”, were God’s words to the Israelites when they prepared to enter the Promised Land (Joshua 1:5). A steady, loving relationship with Christ is the greatest support in time of loss. Jesus too passed through times of loss and grief:

*It was fitting that God, for whom and through whom all things exist, in bringing many children to glory, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through sufferings.* (Letter to the Hebrews 2:10)

Young people generally develop their concepts of loss, grief, suffering and death quite slowly. It is not easy for them, for example, to accept that a death is final, or that they themselves will die one day. Teachers can help students to handle grief and loss by offering practical ways to cope, and by helping them to see that prayer, while it does not remove the pain of loss, can help them through it.

**Links with the Student Text**

**Task Seven**

This task asks students to:

a) Read the case study about neighbours which appears in the student text.

b) Identify the different sorts of loss involved in this situation. Some possibilities are:

- Loss of job and income (father)
- Loss of house (whole family)
- Loss of security (children)
- Loss of friends (children)
- Loss of car (parents)
- Loss of self-esteem and confidence (father)
- Separation from other family members (three-year-old)
- Loss of time with children (mother)
- Loss of peace of mind (parents)

c) List the different feelings that they think each of the people in the story might be experiencing. Possible responses include:

- Father (frustration, anger, depression, isolation, failure)
- Mother (disappointment, confusion, exhaustion, anxiety)
- Children (loneliness, fear, rejection)
Card Activity

Students should work in a small group and appoint a group member to be a recorder / spokesperson for the group for this activity.

The teacher will need to make up sets of cards from the photocopy original on the following page and distribute one set to each group in the class. The cards describe various situations of loss.

These are the instructions that are given in the student text:

Part One:
   a) Place the cards face down in the centre of the group.
   b) Group members should take turns picking up a card and reading out the loss described on it.
   c) Imagine yourself in the situation described on the card.
   d) Take turns to share briefly with the group any feelings that you experience as you imagine yourself in the situation of loss.
   e) When all have had a turn to share, a spokesperson for the group should report back to the whole class.

Part Two:
   a) Choose one of the situations of loss described on the cards.
   b) In your group come up with possible ways of coping with the loss.
   c) Record these and then report back to the class.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I have lost my job.</th>
<th>I have failed my exams.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I have been turned out of my home.</td>
<td>I will never walk again.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My father has left us.</td>
<td>My mother has been diagnosed with cancer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My best friend has gone away.</td>
<td>My dog has just been run over.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Someone has stolen my savings.</td>
<td>My parents are going to divorce.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My sister has been accused of shoplifting.</td>
<td>I have been in a motorcycle accident and am going to lose my leg.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have been dropped from the soccer team.</td>
<td>We don’t have enough money for our usual beach holiday this year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My driving licence has been confiscated by the police.</td>
<td>Rain came through a hole in the roof and damaged my books.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My boyfriend has told lies about me.</td>
<td>I have a learning difficulty.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem</td>
<td>Loss</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We are shifting to another city.</td>
<td>My twin sister is leaving home.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have to give up my room so my Nanna can live with us.</td>
<td>I have to go on medication for depression.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My Mum’s so busy at work I have to give up sport to help her.</td>
<td>I’m a refugee and will never be able to return to my country of origin.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Because I need to baby-sit my brother I have no social life on the weekends.</td>
<td>I’m always losing friends because of my anger problem.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t get too close to people because they might find out my Dad’s in prison.</td>
<td>My Dad didn’t keep up the payments on the new furniture so it was repossessed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I never ask friends home because my sister is always drunk.</td>
<td>My Mum’s a lesbian and I refuse to be seen with her in the street.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’m the brainiest in the class but have no friends.</td>
<td>I don’t have enough money to buy an outfit for the school ball so won’t be going.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was caught cheating in a test.</td>
<td>The doctor told me my asthma will continue to get worse.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I won’t go to church because no one speaks to me there.</td>
<td>I’m developing an addiction for gambling.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Extension Activity**
Here students are asked to find and interview a student in the class who chose a different situation and discuss their ways of coping with the loss. They should compare these with their own methods.

**Task Eight**
Here students are asked to imagine they are Mary or Joseph in the situation described in Luke 2:41-52.

The Scripture passage deals with the incident where the twelve-year-old Jesus becomes separated from Mary and Joseph when they are visiting Jerusalem for the festival of the Passover. After three days of searching they find him sitting in the Temple among the teachers.

Students should jot down how they feel about having lost Jesus and then finding him in the temple among the teachers.

Answers will vary, but words and phrases that describe their reaction in the Scripture passage include: “astonished”, “in great anxiety”, “did not understand”, “why have you treated us like this?”

**Something to Do**
Students are asked to work in a small group and present the situation described in Luke 2:41-52 either in the form of a role-play or as a newspaper article with a suitable headline.

**Something to Think About**
Here students are asked to:

a) Recall an experience of losing someone or something they were responsible for and try to remember their reactions.

b) Explain how their reactions were similar / different to those of Mary and Joseph.

Answers will vary from student to student.

**Task Nine**
This task asks students to read the account of Jesus’ agony at Gethsemane in Mark 14:32-42.

a) They should identify what Jesus says that indicates he is willing to lose everything to do God’s will.

   Jesus says: “Abba, Father, for you all things are possible; remove this cup from me; yet, not what I want, but what you want.”

b) They should say what Jesus does to cope with the grief he is experiencing. Jesus deals with his grief by praying to his Father in heaven.
**Something to Discuss**
Here students are asked to identify some of the ways in which they might “lose” themselves if they are committed to following God and serving others out of love.

Answers will vary.

**Something to Think About**
Here students are asked to identify lines from Psalm 23 that they think would bring comfort to people who are experiencing feelings of loss or grief. The lines in bold are especially appropriate:

*The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.*
  He makes me lie down in green pastures;
  he leads me beside still waters
  he restores my soul.
He leads me in right paths
  for his name’s sake.

*Even though I walk through the darkest valley,*
  *I fear no evil;*
  *for you are with me*
  your rod and your staff –
  *they comfort me.*

*You prepare a table before me*
  in the presence of my enemies;
*you anoint my head with oil;*
  my cup overflows.

*Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me*
  all the days of my life,
*and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord*
  *my whole life long.*

**Something to Do**
This activity requires students to design a card that will bring comfort to people experiencing loss or grief. They should use text from Psalm 23 or from another of the psalms. *Otherwise,* they could search the gospels and find appropriate words of Jesus. Students should combine the words with a suitable image.

**Extension Activity**
Here students are invited to compose a prayer or poem of their own that would be suitable for a time of loss or grief.
PART FIVE: WHAT IS DEATH?

Achievement Objective 3

Students will be able to identify what the Catholic Church believes and teaches about death and dying.

Church Teachings

What is Death?

- At death the soul separates from the human body only to be reunited on the day of resurrection.
- Death limits and marks the end of earthly life.
- Death is contrary to God’s original plan but entered the world as a consequence of human sin.
- Jesus, through his own death, transforms death and gives it meaning.

Christian Death

- Sacramentally, through Baptism, and then at physical death the Christian dies with Christ in order to rise to new life with him.
- For each person there is only one death which marks the end of their single earthly journey and of their opportunity to work out their destiny – there is no reincarnation after death.

Learning Outcomes

At the end of this section of the topic students will:

- Give reasons why humans fear death.
- Define death in medical and legal terms.
- Identify what the Catholic Church teaches about death.

Teacher Background

The Christian Understanding of Death

Death is the one inevitability facing every person and it is natural to fear it. Human beings fear death itself and what might lie beyond it. They fear that if death is the end of all consciousness, achievements in this life have no lasting meaning, and wickedness and injustices go forever unrecompensed. People also fear the process of dying, especially in an age when, at least in the developed world, witnessing a death is rare. For some, fantasies about what dying might be like are more frightening than the reality.

All religions grapple with the issue of death and in their various ways provide answers to the deep and often disturbing questions that people ask about this great mystery. For Christians death is definitive, occurring “once only” (Hebrews 9:27).
Reincarnation, either as a repetition of the same life or in another form determined by the moral quality of one’s previous existence, has never been part of the Christian response to life and death.

Christians believe that the meaning of life is achieved by union with God, made possible through Christ’s death and announced by his Resurrection. Christianity is unique in that it is through the death of its central figure, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, that life is given to the world. In Jesus’ dying, Christians see not only an assurance of God’s great love for them, but also a model of Christian dying.

Jesus’ dying is both disturbing and reassuring to Christians. It is disturbing because its squalor and God-forsakenness confront us with Jesus’ utter humanity – Jesus’ own disciples were shaken by the manner of his death until their experience of the risen Christ showed them its significance. It is reassuring because Christ shared the fears which people have about their own death.

The synoptic gospels reveal that Jesus was afraid of death. In Gethsemane (Mark and Matthew) and on the Mount of Olives (Luke) Jesus prayed to be spared the trial and execution that lay ahead. In Mark and Matthew, his death was heralded by a desolate cry to God, from whom he felt utterly separated. Jesus’ dying was full of physical and mental anguish: it was thoroughly human. Christians facing death can have the consolation that if they fear what lies ahead, if they fear humiliation, physical pain, or spiritual separation so did their saviour.

The early Christians cultivated the ideal of a calm approach to death. They believed that the action of the Holy Spirit in someone obedient to the will of God would bring peace. Their model for this was not Jesus himself but Stephen, the first martyr:

> . . . filled with the Holy Spirit, he gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. . . . While they were stoning Stephen, he prayed, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit”. (Acts 7:55, 59)

Stories of holiness maintained in the face of agonising deaths grew more elaborate: Saint Lawrence (died 258) is said to have lain “broiling upon the burning coals, as merry and as quiet as though he lay upon sweet red roses”. The more authentically attested ability of Thomas More to joke with his executioners as he was led to the scaffold – “I pray for you to see me safe up, and for my coming down let me shift for myself” – carries the same message.

Calmness in the face of death was seen as the sign of a clear conscience stemming from a life rightly lived. It implied that the person was ready to meet God and would be received into eternal life in heaven.

During the late Middle Ages the *artes moriendi* appeared. These were illustrated exercises that had the purpose of preparing a person for death. In them the sick person is seen to be experiencing a deathbed presentation of the events of their past life. Their reaction, of contrition or pride, determines the nature of the person’s reception by God.
How often Christians of former times achieved, or were granted, what they believed to be the ideal death cannot be known, but believers today can still feel that their death ought somehow to be “better” than that of someone without faith. Nevertheless, Jesus’ own death shows that faith in God and a life lived in prayerful obedience do not necessarily take away the fear of death.

The story of Jesus shows us that our weaknesses in the face of death are accepted by God. We are not expected to relish the thought of leaving this life behind, which whatever its trials, will for most people have brought pleasure in relationships and in the experience of the physical world. It is the only existence we have known and few can give it up lightly, even in extreme age. The God of the Old and New Testaments is our Creator who is committed to an on-going renewal of an intimate relationship with creation. The created world is not rejected but taken seriously as a context for the working out of God’s plan for humanity. The world of matter is not merely an antechamber to the world of spirit, although it is certainly a place of preparation for it.

Sadness at losing the familiar people and things of this life is natural. So is a sense of failure and a fear that God might not accept us or might even not be there. Any life of faith must be subject to doubt – and doubt is likely to be strongest when facing death.

Faith in the face of death presents people with a double challenge – belief in the presence of God now and in the fulfilment of a new life, beyond death, with God. Even Jesus at his death experienced alienation from his Father, despite intimate prior knowledge of his love and faithfulness. Yet Christ’s Resurrection demonstrated that his Father was with him after all, and not as one uniquely privileged but as the first to walk a path that all Christians can now follow.

Christ’s death involved physical as well as mental and spiritual suffering. Even if people do not fear death they often fear dying, because of their physical symptoms, indignity, and loss of control that might accompany it. Jesus experienced all these things. It is not appropriate to conclude from this that suffering is to be welcomed or left unrelieved. Saint Paul writes ambiguously of the linkage of his own bodily suffering with that of Christ (Colossians 1:24), but it is inconsistent with the New Testament presentation of a loving God concerned for the well-being of all his creatures to imply that he seeks our suffering. Christian moral theology does not prescribe extra-ordinary means to extend a life made burdensome by ill health and expects the use of all available skills to ease that burden.

A life after death which is more than a shadow existence makes its first appearance in Scripture in the Book of Daniel (12:1-3) and the second book of Maccabees. The distinctive nature of this life by contrast with Greek or Egyptian ideas of immortality is the survival of the person as a complete mind-body entity, not merely a soul. This new life involves the transformation of the human body by its Creator despite physical mutilation or disintegration (2 Maccabees 7:11; John 20:27). This is the consequence of the encounter between God, who is entirely life, and death, which is entirely creaturely. This encounter was made possible when God became fully human in Jesus Christ. In taking on humanity, the Son of God took on death that is inseparable from it.
Links with the Student Text

**Something to Discuss**
Here students are asked to suggest some of the cultural taboos associated with death. Possible responses, which vary from culture to culture and within societies, include:

- Burning the clothes and personal items belonging to a dead person.
- Refusing to stay overnight in the same house as the body of a dead person.
- Refraining from eating in a room where a dead person is.
- Washing after touching a dead person.
- Refusing to touch or even look upon the dead.
- Lifting a *tapu* on a room where a person has died.

The teacher could also explore with students the use of euphemisms to disguise the reality of death or the presence of the dead person – “passing on”, “lost”, “deceased”, “asleep”.

**Something to Think About**
Here students are asked to reflect on why so many people find being in the presence of death frightening and unwelcome.

Some of the reasons why people find being in the presence of the dead unwelcome or frightening include:

- An unwillingness to acknowledge that a death has occurred.
- Fear of the unknown and unexpected.
- Uncertainty about how to behave in the presence of the dead.
- Anxiety that thoughts of one’s own death will be aroused.
- Distaste for the physical realities of death, including the appearance, feel and smell of the dead body.
- Fear of the presence of “spirits”, both friendly and malign.

**Task Ten**
Here students are asked to give both a *medical* and a *legal* definition of death.

Although there is no legal definition of death in New Zealand, the law in a number of places, including most Australian states, defines death as either the irreversible cessation (stopping) of the circulation of blood in the body of the person or the irreversible cessation (stopping) of all function of the brain of the person.

Medically speaking, it is difficult to determine the exact moment of a person’s death. Medicine regards death as a process which begins when the heart stops beating and the blood stops pumping. Deprived of oxygen, the cells of the body start breaking down. The term *brain death* describes the situation where a person’s upper brain and brain stem have stopped functioning permanently. In the case of people who are brain dead essential functions such as heartbeat and breathing can be maintained by respirators and other technologies.
**Something to Think About**
Here students are asked to consider some of the ways death was determined in the past and indicate which seem strangest to them and which the most sensible.

Answers will vary.

**Something to Discuss**
This asks students to consider the following comments about death from young people. In a group students should discuss each of the statements and then put together a statement of their own that reflects their group’s opinion about death.

- I wish someone could die, come back to life, and tell us what really does happen. (Dave)
- I believe in God because when my little brother died, praying helped a lot. (Meri)
- I think death is final – it’s a terrifying thought, the thought of nothing. So life must be lived to the max! (George)
- I often wonder if there is a heaven or a hell. (Paul)
- I’d like someone in the next life to drop me a letter and tell me what’s really going on up there. (Kim)
- After my death, I’ll be 100% fully alive. (Alma)
- When I die, there’ll be another person there for me. That person is Jesus. (Tui)
- Bodies wear out, but I don’t see how souls can. (Lena)
- If you’re buried, you rot away to earth. The earth feeds the plants and then something or someone will eat the plants, so your dead body has created an after-life. (Troy)
- I am a Muslim, so I have to try and follow the rules of Islam as best I can; I believe in a life after death, an eternal heaven and hell, and in God whether He is the God of Christians, Jews or Hindus. (Ali)

Statements will vary from group to group.

**Task Eleven**
Here students are asked to identify which of the following statements are accurate descriptions of what the Catholic Church teaches about death. They are then asked to explain why those statements which they believe are inaccurate descriptions of Catholic belief are incorrect.

a) Death marks the end of a person’s life on earth. **Accurate.**
b) For each person there is only one earthly journey which ends in death. **Accurate.**
c) Reincarnation gives people another opportunity to work out their destiny. **Inaccurate. Catholics believe that we only have one earthly life which is our single opportunity to work out our destiny.**
d) People can experience the fullness of God’s life and love without passing through death. **Inaccurate. Catholics believe that we must pass through death in order to experience the fullness of God’s life and love.**
e) For humans, death is sad because it seems so final. **Accurate.**
f) Christ’s death and resurrection enable people to find meaning in their own deaths. **Accurate.**

g) At death the soul separates from the body. **Accurate.**

h) The term “soul” describes the physical aspects of the human person. **Inaccurate.** The “soul” refers to the spiritual aspects of the human person.

i) At our deaths, God will raise our bodies to new life and reunite them with our souls. **Inaccurate.** God will raise our bodies to new life and reunite them with our souls at the end of time.

j) The Catholic understanding of death can be seen in the words of the liturgy that we pray at funerals. **Accurate.**

**Something to Think About**
Here students are asked to suggest which sentence or phrase from the First Preface of Christian Death they find the most comforting or encouraging.

Answers will vary but students should be able to explain their choice.

**First Preface of Christian Death**

Father, all-powerful and ever-living God,  
we do well always and everywhere to give you thanks through Jesus Christ our Lord.

In him, who rose from the dead,  
our hope of resurrection dawnd.  
The sadness of death gives way to the bright promise of immortality.

Lord, for your faithful people life is changed, not ended.  
When the body of our earthly dwelling lies in death we gain an everlasting dwelling place in heaven.

And so, with all the choirs of angels in heaven we proclaim your glory and join in their unending hymn of praise …
PART SIX: WHEN DEATH IS NEAR

Achievement Objective 3

Students will be able to identify what the Catholic Church believes and teaches about death and dying.

Church Teachings

Preparation for Death

- The Church encourages Christians to prepare for the time of death, especially through prayer.
- The dying should be given attention and care to help them live their last moments in dignity and peace.
- The sick should receive, at the proper time, the sacraments that prepare them to meet Te Atua.

Learning Outcomes

At the end of this section of the topic students will:

- Identify and describe the five stages of dying described by Elisabeth Kübler-Ross.
- Reflect on ways to support those who are sick and / or dying.
- Explain Jesus’ response to the sick and the dying.
- Recognise that the Church continues Jesus’ ministry to the sick and dying through the sacraments of the Anointing of the Sick and of Eucharist as Viaticum.

Teacher Background

Coming to Terms with Death

Elisabeth Kübler-Ross, in her widely quoted book On Death and Dying, outlined five “stages of dying” which are widely quoted.

According to Kübler-Ross when a dying person is told that they have a terminal illness they progress through these stages – denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. This model has been widely adopted by various authors and applied to many other situations where someone suffers a loss or change in social identity. It is often used in bereavement work.

1. Denial [Numbness]. The body protects the person facing the news of their own death or some other profound loss from what is really happening. Their experience does not seem real: “This is not happening to me.” The person can feel as through they are spectators watching from a distance. This can be a stage of bargaining as well, telling God they will do or change anything to avoid their own death or have their loss restored. Over a period of time,
reality is faced. It is important for the person to talk about what they are experiencing, not to keep it at a distance with frantic activity, pills or alcohol.

2. Anger. This may be directed at the doctor, nurses, the priest, family members, friends, anyone who might “save” them or prevent their death or loss: “How dare this happen to me!” The person may blame God or themselves for their situation. They may even direct their anger at innocent bystanders, those around them not having to face death or loss.

3. Bargaining. Guilt is anger turned towards the self. The person facing death or loss may feel bad about things they have said or done to hurt themselves or others. They may be left with unfinished business and may continue to attempt to bargain: “Just let me live to see my son graduate.” Guilt can extend to their failure to see into the future or prevent the death or loss. They may say a million times, “If only . . ." People can even feel guilty when they find themselves having a good time or forgetting about their grief for a while.

4. Depression. A heavy pall hangs over everything. In the mind of the person facing death or loss nothing will ever be all right again. Depression paralyses them. The simplest and most ordinary jobs become very difficult. Looking forward to tomorrow is impossible. This is the most challenging and frightening stage. People going through it are tempted to withdraw from daily life and limit communication with others.

5. Acceptance. In time, the person comes to some form of acceptance of what they are going through. They are able to say “I'm ready, I don't want to struggle against death or loss anymore.” This stage may be accompanied by a sense of spiritual healing and peace.

Not all workers in the field agree with the Kübler-Ross model, and some critics feel the stages outlined are too rigid:

- Using the term “stages” implies a set order of set conditions. However, it has not been established that all grieving people work through the exact stages in their proper order. Any grieving person could experience the stages in a different order, or feel emotions that are not linked to a particular stage. There is no evidence that people coping with their impending death move through all of stages one through to five.

- The stage theory tends to prescribe rather than describe. The theory has become very well-known, and it is common for positive value to be placed on the attainment of each new stage. Patients may rush themselves, or may be pressured by family members, to move through the stages on some imaginary schedule. Patients may feel that they need to accept their death to die properly simply because that’s what the famous theory prescribes. Also, the stages of dying can become an easy and convenient way for patients to deal with their death, rather than doing what comes naturally to them, or having to seek out answers of their own.
A person's whole life may be overlooked in favour of the stages they are supposed to be going through. As people near death it is easy to focus on the last months or weeks of life rather than to celebrate a person's life as a whole. A person's unique personality and identity may be lost as they supposedly move through these generic stages. Each person's experiences are unique and different, so each person's death process is unique.

Environmental factors play a role. A patient's environment can have a great effect on their attitude towards death. A patient in a positive and supportive environment is likely to exhibit very different "stages" of dying than a patient in a negative and unsupportive environment.

**Christian Sacraments and Care of the Dying**
The Christian's preparation for death involves prayer and the celebration of the sacraments appropriate to this stage of life.

Through the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick, the Church brings Christ's healing presence to its members who are seriously ill.

As they draw close to death, Viaticum provides spiritual food for their journey from death to eternal life. Viaticum – the reception of Holy Communion by a person close to death – is the last sacrament of Christian life.

Students have studied these sacraments elsewhere in the *Understanding Faith* programme:

- The Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick is treated in Part Eight of Topic 11A: “Reverence for Life”.

- Viaticum is dealt with in Part Nine of Topic 12F: “Christian Morality and Moral Development”.

In this section of the present topic, it may be appropriate for teachers to revise the material from 11A or to introduce that from 12F if it has not yet been covered.

**Links with the Student Text**

**Something to Think About**
Here students are asked to suggest at least one reason why the apparent cheerfulness of Linda’s parents in the case study made it more difficult for her to talk about her illness.

The parents’ cheerfulness was a way of denying the reality that Linda was dying. By putting on happy faces and insisting that everything was going to be all right, they were also refusing Linda the opportunity to communicate how she was feeling about what was happening.
Task Twelve

a) Here students are asked to name the stage of the dying process which, according to Father Kenny, seems to be the most difficult for the dying person’s family. They should give reasons for their answers.

The period of depression is probably the hardest for the family because the patient withdraws and rarely talks.

b) Here students are invited to suggest appropriate help that friends and family can give to a person in the denial stage.

At this time, the quiet understanding found in silence is perhaps the most meaningful way to communicate. Holding the patient’s hand is sometimes the most effective thing to do.

c) Which advice that Father Kenny gives about how to deal with a dying teenager do you think is most worthwhile? Why is the advice appropriate / useful?

Answers will vary, but the following are possibilities:

- Relationships with friends are very important.
- Friends can comfort and support in a way that no one else can, providing the support is appropriate.
- Don’t pretend the person is going to get well.
- Allow your friend to express feelings of anger, disappointment, worry, or despair.
- Have the strength and compassion to visit even though it’s a painful experience.
- Continue to visit when the illness lasts a long time and the enthusiasm for visiting has worn off.
- Be by their bedside even if there’s nothing much to talk about anymore.
- Communicate in silence.
- Be a friend to the very end.

Something to Do

Here students are asked to use the ideas that Father William Kenny presents in the article about Elisabeth Kübler-Ross’s five stages of dying to prepare a pamphlet to help teenagers understand dying. Students should clearly describe / show with text and illustrations what she says happens at each of the following stages as terminally ill patients come to terms with their approaching death:

- denial
- anger
- bargaining
- depression
- acceptance

Students could work on the pamphlet individually or in pairs.
**Something to Discuss**

Students are asked to discuss the following questions in a pair or small group:

a) What do they think people fear most when they are dying?
b) What advantages are there for a person to know they are dying?
c) Might there be disadvantages? If so, what are they?
d) It has been said that most dying people can learn to cope with their situation. What resources do they think a person might have within themselves to cope with their approaching death?

Students should then return to the large group and share the issues that came up. It is suggested that they keep a record of the class sharing.

Responses to the questions will vary from group to group.

**Something to Think About**

Here students are asked whether they would avoid their closest friend if the friend had a terminal illness. They are also asked to consider what their friend would most appreciate from them.

Perhaps, students could also reflect on what they would appreciate from others if they were dying.

Answers will vary.

**Task Thirteen**

Students are asked to consider the following suggestions about what to do to help make things easier for a dying person or when visiting a sick person in hospital.

Students should:

a) Identify the pieces of advice about making things easier for a sick or dying person or visiting a hospital that they find the most helpful.
b) Decide which piece of advice they think they would find the easiest to put into practice.
c) Decide on the most difficult for thing for them to do.
d) Come up with other suggestions to add to the list.

People can help make things easier for a dying person in a number of ways:

- By allowing the sick person plenty of time to talk.
- By being sensitive listeners who are prepared to be available when needed.
- By being honest and sincere, never raising false expectations but still full of hope.
- By offering realistic assurance, but never making promises that can’t be fulfilled.
- By acting normally as they would with any friend.
- By sometimes giving a simple gift – such as a flower or a card – that will bring comfort and pleasure.
- By keeping them informed of any important or interesting news.
• By not tiring them by staying too long.
• By praying with them if asked.
• By offering a simple prayer that they can join in saying.
• By being open about our own faith and sharing it gently.

When visiting a hospital people should:

• As a rule, make visits short. Be alert to signs of fatigue and pain.
• Sit down. Get at eye level, touch, establish real contact. Listen.
• Be genuine in what you say. Avoid false cheeriness or empty words. A hug
  or a pat on the arm may say all that needs to be said.
• Avoid criticism of the care the patient is receiving. It can be upsetting.
• Let the patient guide you about their needs and wants. Don’t impose your
  own ideas.
• Treat the patient as a person not an illness.
• Be sensitive. Be yourself.

**Task Fourteen**
Here students are required to read the story of the healing of Jairus’ daughter in
Mark 5:22-23, 35-43.

a) They are asked how Jesus responded to Jairus’ request for the healing of his
sick daughter.

Jairus, the leader of the synagogue, begged Jesus repeatedly to come and lay his
hands on his little daughter who was close to death, so Jesus went with him. Before
Jesus could get to her – he was delayed healing a woman who had been suffering
from haemorrhages for twelve years – news came from Jairus’ house that his
daughter was dead.

Jesus encouraged Jairus: “Do not fear, only believe.”

b) They are asked to list the ways in which Jesus showed compassion to Jairus’
daughter.

Once at Jairus’ house, Jesus assured those who were making a commotion because
they were upset at his daughter’s death that the child was not dead but sleeping. He
and the girl’s parents went into the room where she was. He took her by the hand
and said to her, “Talitha cum,” which means, “Little girl, get up!” Immediately the girl
got up and began to walk. Jesus ordered those who were present not to tell anyone
what he had done and asked them to give the girl something to eat.

**Extension Activity**
Here students are asked to look up the following accounts of healing in the Gospels,
and any others that they wish to:

• Matthew 15:21-28
• Matthew 15:29-31
• Mark 9:14-29
• Luke 5:12-16
They should then explain how in reaching out to these sick people Jesus restored their human dignity and showed them that he loved them.

The passages cover the following incidents:
• Jesus heals the Canaanite woman’s daughter who is possessed by a demon (Matthew 15:21-28)
• Jesus heals the lame, the maimed, the blind, the mute and many others (Matthew 15:29-31)
• Jesus heals the boy who is unable to speak because he is possessed by a spirit that causes him to foam at the mouth and to collapse as if dead – he seems to be an epileptic (Mark 9:14-29)
• Jesus cures a man covered with leprosy and crowds gather also to be healed (Luke 5:12-16)

Something to Do
Here it is suggested that students invite a priest or parish pastoral worker to speak to the class about the Anointing of the Sick and Viaticum.

The teacher may also consider inviting a hospice worker to share with the class about visiting the dying.
Achievement Objective 4

Students will be able to explore human attitudes and responses to dying and death, including Māori tangihanga.

Church Teachings

Respect for the Dead

- In anticipation of their resurrection, the bodies of the dead must be treated with respect and dignity.
- Autopsies may be permitted for legal and scientific purposes.
- The donation of body organs after death is of value.

Learning Outcomes

At the end of this section of the topic students will:

- Describe the death and funeral customs of a religion or culture other than their own.
- List reasons why many New Zealanders today tend to avoid the reality of death.

Teacher Background

Responses to Death

New Zealand society tends to deny the reality of death, despite the fact that death comes to everyone. This section of the topic gives students the opportunity to explore ways in which the religions and cultures of the world respond to death. It also examines some of the reasons why people today generally avoid becoming involved with the topic of death.

In presenting this material the teacher could emphasise the following key ideas:

- The true destiny of all people is full union with God and that this is finally brought about by the experience of death.
- People’s fears of death arise because it is an “unknown”.
- People fail to recognise death as the beginning of the ultimate experience of personal happiness and fulfilment in God.

Links with the Student Text

Something to Research

For this research assignment students are required to use the Internet, as well as resource material supplied by the teacher, or from the school or public library, to research the death and funeral customs of a religion or culture other than their own.
The completed project should include:

- A title
- An introduction, giving the religion or culture’s general beliefs regarding death and the after-life
- Customs:
  - Before death i.e. during illness
  - At death
  - After death
  - Other
- Relevant illustrations.

Although Māori Tangihanga and the Irish Wake will be covered later in the topic, some teachers may decide that it is more appropriate for students to research these in this section of the topic.

**Something to Discuss**

Here students are asked to work in a pair or small group. They should list all the reasons that they can as to why many New Zealanders today tend to avoid the reality of death.

Students should then consider which of these reasons they find most convincing and why.

Answers will vary from student to student but should take into account the following broad areas:

- The decline in religious belief
- Less contact with the dead than in the past because of developments such as:
  - more people dying in hospitals than at home
  - medical advances reducing mortality, especially for women and children
  - increased use of funeral directors
- The denial of death

**Something to Think About**

Students are asked to consider how facing death might be different for a person with no religious beliefs than for someone with a strong religious faith.

Christian beliefs that were once widely held – the reality of heaven, reunion with loved ones after death, Christ’s Second Coming at the end of the world, and the resurrection of the body – are no longer accepted by the majority of people. Many people are uncertain about what they believe concerning life after death. Although they may have a general interest in spiritual matters they are not actively committed to a particular religious community or Church.

People who believe that death is not the end but a new beginning have reasons to hope. Those for whom death is an annihilation of identity have nothing to look forward to.
PART EIGHT: WHAT TO DO WHEN SOMEONE DIES

Achievement Objective 4

Students will be able to explore human attitudes and responses to dying and death, including Māori tangihanga.

Church Teachings

Respect for the Dead

- In anticipation of their resurrection, the bodies of the dead must be treated with respect and dignity.
- Autopsies may be permitted for legal and scientific purposes.
- The donation of body organs after death is of value.

Learning Outcomes

At the end of this section of the topic students will:

- Recognise the legal requirements that must be met following a death in New Zealand.
- Explain the role of the funeral director.

Teacher Background

After a Death

When someone in a family dies, the family not only has to cope with their feelings of loss, but also needs to make practical arrangements for the funeral.

Knowing what to do in such circumstances can allay unnecessary anxiety and feelings of helplessness, especially if this is the first death in the family.

When someone in the family dies, Catholics would normally contact the parish priest or another priest known to the family, the doctor attending the patient, and some members of the extended family to let others know.

The priest or doctor may recommend a funeral director if the family do not have particular preferences. However, it is not a requirement of the law that a funeral director be hired – any person nominated by the family can make arrangements for the burial.

It is a good idea for a family to contact the funeral director – if they wish to hire one – as soon as possible after the death. The funeral director works closely with other agencies involved – the doctor, police, hospital, coroner and pathologist. The funeral director can also help families, if they so wish, to prepare the kind of funeral they would like for their deceased member.
Certain legal requirements need to be met regarding procedures for burial, the type of container used for the body, and the place of burial. Details about these matters can be obtained from the Ministry of Justice, PO Box 5094, Wellington.

Legal Requirements
In New Zealand the law states that before a body is buried or cremated, either:

- a doctor must give a certificate as to the cause of death; or
- a coroner must make an Order.

This is necessary to make sure that everyone who dies is identified and the cause of death is established. This helps to ensure that crimes do not go undetected and protects the public interest generally.

The following explanation about the laws and procedures relating to the Coroners Act 1988, the work of coroners and the operation of the Coroners' Court is intended to help bereaved families understand the reasons why:

- Permission must be obtained to bury or cremate a deceased relative
- There is sometimes a delay before a body is released for burial or cremation
- A person's death sometimes becomes the subject of a formal judicial hearing (an inquest)

What is needed before a body can be buried or cremated?
Before a body can be buried or cremated, either:

- A medical certificate as to the cause of death must be signed by a doctor, or
- A Burial Order must be issued by a coroner

If a body is to be cremated a certificate from the Medical Referee is required under the Cremation Regulations.

When is a medical certificate as to cause of death issued?
In general, the doctor in attendance during any final illness signs a medical certificate as to cause of death.

After the doctor does this, the funeral director can proceed with burial arrangements. There are no delays.

If the death has occurred in sudden, violent, unnatural or suspicious circumstances or the cause of death is unknown, the doctor must report the death to the coroner. If the coroner decides that an inquest is unnecessary, the coroner informs the doctor who can then issue a medical certificate as to cause of death.

When must a death be reported to the coroner?
Whenever there is something violent, unnatural, unexpected, or suspicious about a death, or where a doctor cannot issue a medical certificate as to cause of death it must be reported to the coroner. Such deaths are initially reported to the police, who in turn report them to the coroner.
The law lays down some occasions when a death must be reported to the coroner:

- When such a person seems to have died in a violent or unnatural way, such as drowning or a car crash, or poisoning
- When the cause of death is unknown
- When a person dies in prison
- When a person dies “in care”, for example, in a psychiatric hospital or a children’s home
- When a person appears to have taken their own life
- When a person dies while under anaesthetic or during or following a medical procedure, or as a result of anaesthetic or a medical procedure

Anyone finding a dead body, or knowing of a violent or unnatural death, must report this to the police who will inform the coroner.

**Are all deaths that occur in hospitals reported to the coroner?**
Deaths in an operating theatre or under anaesthetic, or arising from some violent or unnatural event, must always be reported to the coroner. Deaths where there may be some questions as to medical treatment given or concerns expressed as to the circumstances of death or hospital treatment given, should be reported to the coroner.

In other cases there is usually no need to report the death to the coroner, for instance when a patient has been treated for some disease and dies of it, and the doctor signs the medical certificate as to cause of death.

**What is a postmortem examination?**
A postmortem is a surgical examination of the body of the deceased person in order to establish how the person died. A postmortem will usually involve the pathologist examining the internal organs of the body, as well as any external injuries. The pathologist will repair any incisions made during the postmortem so that the body is left as presentable as is possible.

If the coroner orders a postmortem to be carried out, then they will advise the deceased person’s immediate family that this is being done, telling them the reasons why the postmortem was ordered.

In the rare event of a body organ being retained for testing or examination, the aim is to return the body organ to the body for burial or cremation. Where this is not possible, the coroner will notify the person’s immediate family.

**Who are coroners and what do they do?**
Coroners are appointed by the Governor General. Many coroners have legal qualifications but there is no requirement that coroners be lawyers. For centuries, the Coroners’ Court has been the place where the evidence surrounding a death has been openly presented, critically examined, and a finding then made establishing when, where and how the death occurred. In many cases the police act as the coroner’s officers in carrying out investigations on behalf of the coroner.
Coroners have wide powers to help them carry out their duties including the power to summons witnesses.

There are over seventy coroners in New Zealand, and they are widely distributed throughout the country.

**What action can a coroner take?**
The coroner has a wide discretion under the law to make enquiries and publicly investigate deaths. When a death is reported the coroner must establish a cause of death. To do this the coroner may ask a pathologist (a medical specialist in diseases) to examine the body to find out the cause of death. Other specialists may need to be called in, for instance, an analyst, if poisoning is suspected. The examination of the body to establish the cause of death is called a postmortem examination or autopsy.

If the coroner decides to order a postmortem examination, then the funeral arrangements can go ahead only after the postmortem is completed and the coroner has signed the burial order.

The coroner may hold a public inquiry, called an inquest, to establish the facts surrounding the death – who has died, when, where and how.

Before signing the burial order, the coroner has to make sure that the body has been seen and identified by someone who will give evidence at the inquest. If the coroner ordered a postmortem then they must also be satisfied that the postmortem has been carried out, and that the body is not required for any further medical examination. Requiring the body to be held for further examination is rare and occurs generally only in cases of suspicious deaths or homicide.

**How does the coroner decide whether or not to order a postmortem?**
The Coroners Act 1988 requires that coroners take into account certain considerations when deciding whether or not to order a postmortem examination. These considerations include:

- The likelihood that a postmortem will reveal information about how, when and where the person died, or about the deceased person's identity
- Any distress or offence which may be caused to people because of their ethnic origins or spiritual beliefs
- Whether the death may have been caused by the actions of other people
- The existence of any allegations or suspicions about the death
- The wishes of the deceased person's immediate family
- Whether the cause of death can be determined without a postmortem

**How soon after death will the body be released for burial or cremation?**
When a doctor issues a medical certificate of cause of death the body is released immediately. When the death is reported to the coroner, the release of the body for burial or cremation takes place when the coroner has signed a burial order. There will be some delay if a postmortem is required, but usually the body will be released within twenty-four hours.
In some cases there may be a longer delay, for instance if the body has to be taken a long distance to the nearest pathologist, or if an analyst or other specialists have to be called in. If the death occurs over a weekend or public holiday, then there may be an extra delay.

In cases where cultural or other values suggest that the delay in releasing the body be kept to an absolute minimum, the coroner may order the pathologist to conduct an urgent postmortem. In these cases, the body is released as soon as possible.

**If a coroner decides to open an inquest is a postmortem always ordered?**
There may be situations where a coroner is required to enquire into the circumstances of death, but where it is not necessary for a postmortem to be carried out. In such cases a coroner will rely on other medical evidence to determine cause of death. In these cases, there is normally no more delay in release of the body than would normally occur if a doctor signs a medical certificate.

**Does an inquest always follow a postmortem?**
Only in a minority of cases does an inquest follow a postmortem, for instance, in situations of a sudden and unexplained death. If a postmortem shows that the death was due to natural causes, the coroner may decide not to hold an inquest, or to close an inquest that has been opened.

**Are there times when an inquest must go ahead?**
The circumstances where an inquest must go ahead are set out in the Coroners Act 1988, section 17. These include:

- Apparent suicides
- Deaths in prisons and police custody
- Deaths “in care” for example, in a psychiatric hospital or a children's home

**What happens at an inquest?**
The coroner is required to hold an inquest in a place that is open to the public and the media. This is normally a courthouse but it could be an office or some other venue. The coroner has limited power to exclude any persons from the whole or any part of the inquest. The coroner may also prohibit publication of any evidence, if satisfied that it is in the interests of justice, decency or public order to do so.

At the inquest, the coroner hears evidence to establish the identity of the deceased person, and when, where and how the person died. While most inquests are simple and straightforward, they can occasionally be lengthy.

The coroner can summons witnesses to attend. If a person is summoned to appear as a witness, it is an offence not to attend. The coroner questions each witness on oath.

Those people whom the coroner considers have an interest in the inquest, such as relatives, may also question witnesses themselves or through their lawyers. They may also apply to the coroner for permission to call their own witnesses. Permission to call a witness should be sought before the inquest is held.
In the case of a finding of suicide, the media can publish only the name, address and occupation of the person, the fact that an inquest was held, and that the coroner has found that the death was self-inflicted. In cases of a suicide finding, publication of any further details of the proceedings can be made only with the coroner's authority.

If criminal proceedings begin before an inquest is completed, it is normal practice for the coroner to adjourn the inquest until the criminal proceedings have been concluded.

Questions of criminal or civil liability are not decided in the Coroner's Court, so the coroner should not comment on whether any particular person is to blame for the death.

A coroner may, however, make recommendations which are brought to the attention of the appropriate authorities, so that the chances of similar deaths occurring in the future may be minimised.

If the coroner intends to make any adverse comment about the deceased person, then the coroner must first inform the deceased person's immediate family. If the coroner intends to make any adverse comment about any living person, then the coroner must first inform that living person.

After the inquest, a copy of the inquest proceedings can be obtained from the Coronial Services officer, Ministry of Justice. Items that can be obtained include:

- The finding of the coroner
- Any recommendations made by the coroner
- Any written evidence presented at the inquest

However, if a coroner has made an Order that certain material not be published, then copies of that material will not be released.

**What can someone do if they disagree with a decision by a coroner?**

If a person disagrees with a decision by a coroner to prohibit publication of the evidence at an inquest, they can apply to a District Court Judge for variation of the coroner's Order under section 30 of the Coroners Act 1988.

If they disagree with:

- A coroner's decision not to order a postmortem examination
- A coroner's decision not to hold an inquest

Or if they think there was something unfair or irregular about an inquest, then they may approach the Solicitor General at the Crown Law Office, Wellington.

If new facts have been discovered since a coroner held an inquest, or declined to hold an inquest, then the Solicitor General may order that an inquest (or a second inquest) be held.
Where no new facts have been discovered, but there was some irregularity in the first inquest, the Solicitor General would need to apply to the High Court for an Order that an inquest (or a second inquest) be held.

The Solicitor General may also apply to the High Court for an Order that a postmortem examination be held in cases where a coroner has failed or refused to order one.

On application by the Solicitor General, the High Court may order an inquest, a second inquest or a postmortem examination if it is necessary or desirable to do so for the purposes of the Coroners Act 1988.

Where a second inquest is ordered, the second inquest will usually be held by a different coroner, and the findings at the second inquest will replace the findings at the first inquest.

All decisions by coroners are also subject to judicial review by the High Court.

**Links with the Student Text**

**Something to Discuss**
After a death people may find decision-making overwhelming.

a) Here students are asked to discuss some of the difficulties that people might experience doing the following tasks:

- Informing others of the death
- Making the funeral arrangements
- Carrying out the dead person’s last wishes
- Executing the will

Possible difficulties include:

- Confusion about what to do
- An inability to make decisions and carry them out
- Rising tensions between family members who react to the death in different ways
- A lack of knowledge about the sort of funeral the deceased wanted
- Arguments about what needs to be done and who should do it

b) Students should offer suggestions that might make these people’s tasks easier.

Survivors’ tasks can be made easier, for example:

- If a person leaves clear instructions about their funeral arrangements
- If family members can reach an agreement about who is responsible for what
- If close family members are supported by relatives and friends
- If the assistance of a trusted priest, funeral director or lawyer is sought
**Task Fifteen**

Here students are asked to match up the beginning of each sentence in the left hand column of a table with its correct ending in the right hand column to form an accurate statement about the legal requirements that must be met following a death in New Zealand.

The answers appear on the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Column A</th>
<th>Column B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. A coroner must give permission for a burial or cremation to take place</td>
<td>E. if a doctor is unable to issue a certificate as to the cause of death.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The law stating what must happen after a death</td>
<td>I. is designed to prevent crime and protect the common good.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. When a person dies after a long illness</td>
<td>K. there is usually no delay in issuing a medical certificate as to cause of death.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The police must be notified</td>
<td>A. when a sudden or violent death occurs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. The coroner decides whether</td>
<td>L. an inquest into a suspicious or violent death is necessary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. It is the coroner’s job to examine the evidence surrounding a death</td>
<td>J. and to establish how and when it took place.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. The dead person’s family must be informed</td>
<td>B. that a postmortem has been ordered.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Usually bodies are released for burial or cremation</td>
<td>G. within twenty-four hours.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Generally body parts that are removed during a postmortem for testing</td>
<td>D. are returned to the body for burial or cremation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Inquests are required</td>
<td>H. when people die in prison or police custody.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Inquests do not decide</td>
<td>C. who is to blame for a death.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. A coroner may recommend changes to the way things are done</td>
<td>F. so that the likelihood of similar deaths is reduced.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Task Sixteen**

This task asks students to look through the list of services that a funeral director can provide if a family wishes, which appears in the student text.

Students are asked to identify some of the things that a funeral director has arranged / done following the death of someone they know.
Students’ answers will vary according to their own experiences.

**Something to Think About**
Here students are asked to consider, in the light of the experience of their family and friends, why it is important for people to deal with a funeral director whom they trust and feel comfortable with.

Funeral directors help arrange the various aspects of a funeral, taking into account the cultural background and spiritual beliefs of the deceased and the wishes of the family. They are also able to assist others to deal with the grief and stress associated with the death of a family member or friend. This can only happen in an environment of trust where the family of the deceased are at ease with the funeral director.

**Something to Do**
Here students are invited to find out more about the role of one of the following people when someone dies:

- doctor
- coroner
- police
- pathologist
- funeral director
- priest or minister

Students may be able to arrange an interview.

**Card Activity – Good Grief**
Students should work in a small group.

The teacher will need to make sets of cards from the photocopy original on the following pages of this teacher guide and distribute one set of cards to each group in the class.

Each card contains a statement about a particular way in which people respond to death and deal with grief.

Students should place the set of cards face down in the centre of their group. Group members should take turns to pick up a card and read out the situation described on it. The group should then discuss what is written on the card and decide whether they agree with the statement or not.

After considering what is written on each card, students should choose the three statements that they *most agree with* and the three that they *least agree with*. Students should be able to give reasons for their decisions.
Some New Zealanders have little involvement with funerals until an immediate family member dies. They don’t like to talk about death, especially their own. They feel they are ‘tempting fate’.

Māori and Polynesian peoples, and some of European descent, are familiar with the customs and traditions surrounding death because they have been involved as members of an extended family, even as children.

I won’t be here after I die, so it doesn’t matter what they do with me.

Some people insist that “no fuss” be made – no ceremony in a church or anywhere, just a private cremation or burial, and no notice in the newspapers until it is over.

Sometimes people forget that others have a right to grieve and must be allowed to grieve.

It is no kindness to family or friends to follow the “no fuss” requests. It denies people an opportunity to bid farewell and express grief.

The two fruits of unresolved grief are anger and guilt. The grieving rituals are important for the survivors. If we don’t resolve our grief at the appropriate time, it eats away at us.

People need time to adjust to the idea that the person has died. If the funeral follows too soon, the death doesn’t really sink in.

Three days is a good average time between death and burial, allowing the family time to talk, grieve and make decisions about the funeral.

The Māori tradition of having the body on the marae and of speaking to the dead person, saying what you want to say, is a very cleansing process.
Some families have never thought of having the body at home and are pleased with the idea when the funeral director mentions it. | This time with the body at home is for saying goodbyes, expressing feelings and coming to acceptance of the death.

Many funeral directors suggest the family provide the deceased's own clothes to be buried in. And not always the best, but the ones the family saw them in the most and which they enjoyed wearing. | Some families are pleased when asked if they wish to help dress the body.

The involvement of family in planning the funeral ceremony is a way of helping them come to terms with their loss. | Because people are in a state of shock, especially in the case of sudden or accidental death, even the rituals don't always make sense until later.

Christian funerals are celebrations. We celebrate the life of the person who has died, and that they are living forever with Christ, Mary and the saints. | The first anniversary of the death is a time when people experience a great flood of emotion. It is good to give this time some structure by erecting a headstone over the grave or a plaque where the ashes are interred.

Memorials are a way of acknowledging a person's life. By marking the spot where their earthly remains were placed, a memorial shows our love and respect for the person. | A memorial provides a focus for grief. It is a place where mourners can go to express the pain of loss. In time it can become like a photograph of the dead person, something that is a source of comfort, rather than pain.
PART NINE: CARING FOR THOSE WHO GRIEVE OR MOURN

Achievement Objective 4

Students will be able to explore human attitudes and responses to dying and death, including Māori tangihanga.

Church Teaching

Comfort to People who Mourn

- God’s blessing and comfort are given to those who mourn and are in grief.

Learning Outcomes

At the end of this section of the topic students will:

- Identify ways of bringing comfort to those who mourn.
- Communicate the importance of keeping hope alive in situations of grief and mourning.

Teacher Background

Self-Care in Times of Grief

The loss of a loved one is a shattering event that affects people emotionally, physically and spiritually. It is important that grieving people try to look after themselves by attending to the following areas of their lives:

- **Diet and exercise** – Grief impacts on the body and can cause symptoms including sleeplessness, anxiety and gastrointestinal upsets. People in grief need to be encouraged to care for themselves by paying attention to diet and getting regular exercise. They should have access to good medical care.

- **Relaxation** – People who are grieving may benefit from setting aside time every day to wind down, using whichever method works for them – for example, prayer, meditation, tai chi, taking a bath, playing sport, reading, attending to hobbies or listening to music.

- **Avoid drugs** – People in grief should avoid turning to drugs including cigarettes, alcohol or antidepressants to help manage their grief. Self-medication won’t ease the pain and can cause other health problems.

- **Be realistic** – People coming to terms with a death or other serious loss benefit from being kind and gentle to themselves. They need to be encouraged to grieve in ways that feel natural to them. Self-judgement or self-criticism is of no benefit.
Coping Strategies
People may need to experiment to find out which strategies are most helpful for them in dealing with their loss. Suggestions include:

- **Crying** – Some people feel that crying isn't appropriate or are afraid that once they start crying, the tears won't stop. If they feel the need to cry, they should go ahead and do it. Crying is a normal human response to intense feelings. However, if there are no tears, it does not mean there is no grief. Many people cry alone, perhaps in the car or in the shower.

- **Time alone** – It can be helpful for a person experiencing loss to schedule time alone every day to focus on their feelings and express them in whichever way feels natural to them. For example, they may choose to pray, cry, look through photographs of their loved one, or write a diary.

- **Time with family** – Families may find it useful to schedule time to grieve as a family. This could include talking about the deceased, crying together and sharing their feelings.

- **Pampering** – It can be of benefit for a person experiencing grief to include activities in their daily or weekly schedule that they enjoy.

- **Support team** – Actively seeking support can be important. This could include friends, workmates, priests, doctors, community health centres, bereavement support groups or professional counsellors.

- **Memorial** – Some people who have experienced a loss like to write letters to their loved one, plant a memorial tree, put together a special photo album, or commemorate their life in whichever ways feel meaningful to them and their family.

- **Professional help** – It is important not to try to 'speed up' the grief process. Coming to terms with a significant bereavement takes, in many cases, months and years rather than days or weeks. Most people simply require the loving and supportive presence of others, permission to talk about the deceased, and the encouragement to use their own coping strategies in order to deal with their bereavement. However, some people may benefit from professional help, such as grief counselling. A grieving person may need to ask their doctor for help, especially if they feel dangerously out of control – for example, if they're angry enough to want to hurt themselves or someone else.

How to Help the Bereaved
Sometimes it's hard to know how to offer support to a grieving friend. We may be afraid of saying the wrong thing, so we say nothing at all. If we haven't experienced the death of a loved one, we may have unrealistic expectations about how the grieving friend should feel, or how quickly they should get on with their life. Everyone's experience of grief is different, but some of the following suggestions may be appropriate. Just letting a grieving person know that we care and wish to help can be comforting.
The First Few Days
Suggestions include:

- Contact your friend as soon as possible after their loved one's death. This contact could be a personal visit, telephone call, sympathy card or flowers.
- Attend the funeral, if you can. Your friend needs to know that you care enough to support them through this difficult event.
- Offer your support. Ask your friend how they would like you to help.
- Listen to them if they want to open up to you.

Practical Help
Show the grieving person that you care by offering practical help.

- Do some of their housework, such as cleaning or clothes washing.
- Answer the telephone for them.
- Bring over pre-cooked meals that only need to be reheated before serving.
- Take over some of their regular duties, such as picking up the children from school.

Listen with Compassion
The most important help we can offer a grieving person is a willing ear. Allow a grieving friend to talk and express their grief in whichever way they need. This may include crying, fits of anger, screaming, laughing, expressions of guilt or regret, or engaging in activities that reduce their stress such as walking or gardening. Suggestions include:

- Listen carefully and with compassion.
- Everyone's experience of grief is unique. Let them grieve their own way. Don't judge or dispute their responses. Criticising the way they express their grief is hurtful and will make them less likely to share their feelings with you.
- If they don't feel like talking, don't press. Remember that you are comforting them just by being there. Sitting together in silence is helpful too.
- Don't forget the power of human touch. Holding the person's hand or giving them a hug offers emotional support.

Approaches to Avoid
Accept that there is nothing you can say to make a grieving person feel better about their loss. Approaches to avoid include:

- Telling them about your grief experience instead of listening to theirs.
- Comparing their grief with yours, or anyone else's.
- Describing the “stages of grief” and suggesting they're not moving through the stages quickly enough.
- Telling them they're grieving in the ‘wrong’ way.
- Giving them unsolicited advice about how they can best get over their loss.
- Reasoning with them about how they should or shouldn't feel.
Comments to Avoid
It is a natural reaction to want to ease a person's pain. However, well-meaning words that encourage the bereaved to "look on the bright side" can be hurtful. Examples of the type of comments that should be avoided include:

- 'You'll get married again one day.'
- 'At least you have your other children.'
- 'She's lucky she lived to such a ripe old age.'
- 'It was God's will.'
- 'You can always try for another baby.'
- 'He's happy in heaven.'
- 'Be thankful they're not in pain anymore.'
- 'Try to remember the good times.'
- 'You'll feel better soon.'
- 'Time heals all wounds.'
- 'Count your blessings. You still have a lot to be grateful for.'
- 'You've got to pull yourself together and be strong.'

Grief is a Process
Grief is a process and not an event. Coming to terms with the death of a loved one can take months and years, rather than days and weeks.

- Don't shy away from your friend after the funeral. Keep in contact.
- Never suggest that it's time they 'got over it' and moved on with life. Appreciate that your friend may continue to grieve in subtle ways for the rest of their days.
- Don't change the subject if the deceased naturally comes up in conversation. Your friend needs to know that their loved one hasn't been forgotten. Use the name of the deceased in conversation.
- Remember there will be days in the year that will be particularly hard for your friend to bear, such as anniversaries, Christmas and the deceased's birthday. Be sensitive to these times and offer your support.

Moving On With Life
There is an expectation that accepting the death of a loved one means letting go of them. The reality is that the bereaved continues to have a relationship with their loved one for the rest of their lives through remembering them. Death ends a life, not a relationship. A bereaved person may like to talk about their loved one in general conversation, or commemorate special events like the deceased's birthday. Keeping the relationship with the deceased ‘alive’ is a healthy, normal response. On the other hand, a bereaved person may prefer to keep their memories private and grieve more privately – and that’s healthy and normal too.

Special Days
Special days such as holidays, birthdays and anniversaries can heighten emotional pain in the absence of the loved one. Holidays can bring feelings of sadness, loss and emptiness. It is important for those supporting someone who is grieving to know that love does not go away with death. A renewed personal grief can result because special days bring feelings of loss that aren’t encountered during daily routines.
Although these days are associated with celebration, symbols of the day can trigger memories of the deceased. The easiest way to support survivors at these times is to listen without judgement to feelings and memories; accommodate plans to include their wishes for that day; and don’t try to make them do things that you think they should do.

**Children and Teenagers**

Children and teenagers typically use different coping strategies from adults when dealing with their loss experience:

- **Children** look to the adults around them to learn how to respond to this experience. A child needs timely, clear and direct information, and should be allowed to ask questions. Participation in the funeral and opportunities to view the body are important rituals that the child should be encouraged and supported to participate in.

- **Teenagers’** ways of coping sometimes create tension with other adults – for example, they may play music and spend more time with their friends. The typical adolescent is dealing with the normal issues of independence and separation from parents, and these developmental tasks can interfere with their capacity to receive support from the adults around them in dealing with their grief.

**Children and Grief**

While it can be difficult to talk to a child about death, it is important to be honest with them and help them to understand what has happened. For example:

- Tell the truth in a simple, direct way.
- Use concrete words that children know – for example, say 'died' rather than 'passed away'.
- If the child is quite young, it may help to use pictures, storybooks, toys and play to explain what has happened and how they feel.
- Only refer to religious explanations if you really believe them.
- Children are curious, so be prepared for questions and give the child details simply and honestly.
- If you are too distressed to answer a child's questions, ask an adult you and the child trust to talk to the child.
- Don't pretend that you are not grieving – express your feelings to a child. This can help the child feel able to express their own feelings.

**Children's Reactions**

Like adults, children can be deeply affected by loss and grief experiences. While everyone has different ways of grieving, common grief reactions in children include:

- Acting out feelings, rather than talking.
- Changes in eating, sleeping and behaviour patterns.
- Wanting to sleep in the bed with an adult.
- Displaying younger behaviours, such as wetting the bed or sucking their thumb.
• Being angry, frustrated and restless.
• Lacking concentration and energy at school.

Sharing Grief with Children
Children, even at a very young age, can sense and experience grief. They will be aware if their parents or other adults are sad or having difficulties with a particular situation. When an adult shares feelings of sadness and loss with a child it can help the child understand why the adult is sad and see that it is all right to express their own sadness. Death can also cause children to worry about their parents or themselves dying. Children need to be reassured that everyone is safe and that they are cared for during times of grief. It is important to remain open and willing to talk about the various experiences of loss and grief. As children grow and develop, they will have different reactions to grief. A child who doesn't react to or talk about a death or significant loss in the early stages may want to talk about it later, or may show their interest and feelings in play rather than discussion.

Sharing Grief with Teenagers
Young people often feel excluded from family grief. Sometimes, they are not allowed to view the dead person or attend the funeral. Certainly, young people’s distress is very painful to see and, often, family members don’t feel able to attend to them.

At such times a teacher, friend or fellow student can help and be ready to be supportive by listening and sharing. A support person can create a calm atmosphere where a bereaved young person feels accepted, can ask questions, express anger or cry. They can involve them in the usual activities without singling them out for comment or privileges.

Some young people may like to make a commemorative scrapbook with photos, pictures, drawings, poems etc – supportive people can help them with this. At school there could be a time of prayer and music, or some activity such as planting a tree to support the young person in their grief. Above all, they must be allowed to express their grief in their own way.

*May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.* (Romans 15:13)

Keeping Hope Alive
One of the major themes of the Old Testament is that only God can give Israel a future and a hope. However, it is only near the end of the Old Testament period that hope came to be seen as something that would be realised in a life after death.

The belief that hope would be fulfilled after death is most fully developed in the writings of Paul, especially in his Letter to the Romans. For Paul, the Christian is saved through hope (Romans 8:24) which is produced through patient suffering (Romans 5:4). God is the God of hope (Romans 15:13).

Together with faith and love, hope forms the basis of the spiritual life of the Christian. Hope in God is a safe secure anchor and a sign of communion with all who have faith in God.
But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about those who have died, so that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have died. (1 Thessalonians 4:13-14)

The Seasons for Growth Programme – Comments from a Trainer

The grief reactions outlined in the Granger Westberg model [see part three of this Teacher Guide] provide understanding in the ways in which young people can react to grief.

My training for, and participation in, the Seasons for Growth programme adds another dimension to our understanding of grief. The psychologist J. William Worden (1991) conceptualises grief work into 'tasks' which demand something active of the grieving person. His four tasks are:

1. To accept the reality of the loss
2. To work through the pain of the grief
3. To adjust to an environment in which the significant person is no longer present
4. To emotionally relocate the person and move on with life.

Looking at grief from the perspective of tasks helps to normalise the process and to promote the growth that can come from dealing with crises. As a young person becomes involved with the grief process, skills are learned for handling emotions, calling on strengths previously learned, and finding new ways of seeing the world as a good place to live. However, young people need to be taught how to manage these tasks.

Also, recent research into what makes our children resilient, points to a person's connectedness to others as being the single most important factor in the ability to cope with life's disappointments and crises. There are three main types of connection for a young person: to parents, to school, and to the community. And of these three, a sense of connectedness to parents and school is the most significant protective factor for young people. (Resnick et al. 1997). There are huge implications in this finding. When parents are divorcing, or there is a death in the family, the school has an awesome opportunity to be the significant protective factor in a child's life, being a stable influence, and encouraging the tasks of grieving to be accomplished.

The Seasons for Growth programme, developed by the MacKillop Foundation in Australia, provides the opportunity for a school to offer young people support and education in grief. This programme can be run by teachers, teacher aides, RTLBs, or school chaplains. It is also an opportunity to invite trusted people from the parish or community to work alongside staff in this programme, thereby offering the dimension of the community which cares – the third protective factor promoting resilience in young people.

Seasons for Growth provides professional development for teachers on resilience and managing grief, as well as training for facilitators in the young person's programme.
An adult programme also offers the same advantages to parents and others in the community who are dealing with grief and loss issues.

Information on the Seasons for Growth programme can be obtained from each diocesan centre or from the Family Life Office in Wellington, phone 04 496-1744 or email s.devereux@wn.catholic.org.nz.

**Hope – Father John Weir SM**
The following article by Father John Weir SM presents a very attractive view of hope, stressing the importance of keeping it alive in situations of grief. The article may be photocopied.
Singing Bird in a Green Bough

‘If I keep a green bough in my heart a singing bird will come.’ The green bough of this Chinese proverb is hope. The singing bird is hope’s fulfilment.

Hope imagines that, what has not yet happened, is possible and may yet come to be. It implies that our needs will be met at some future time, and is especially important during times of crisis.

Those who care for the dying have a particular obligation to help keep hope alive. If they are to achieve this, they themselves must first understand what hope is and what it is not.

Hope isn’t wishing or fantasy. It is grounded in the reality of what is possible and is confirmed by the fulfilled hopes of our past life experiences. Hope can’t be built on theory or belief alone.

Nursing experience demonstrates that patients retain hope as long as they live. When people are diagnosed as having a terminal illness, they may still hope at first for a cure, and later for a miracle cure. No one has the right to dash that hope. Instead, gently, they may be helped to redefine their hope more realistically.

Thus, in response to the question, ‘Am I going to die?’, it may be best to redirect the question back to the patient: ‘What do you think?’, or ‘What did the doctor say?’ Or you could reply honestly but indirectly, ‘We’re all going to die. You’re very sick but you never know what’s going to happen next, or who will die first, you or me.’ If the patient says, ‘I believe that I’m going to get better’, you may wish to say something like, ‘I hope that happens’.

At the same time, while allowing dying patients to define hope in their own terms, care-givers should still remain ready to help them move towards a more realistic definition of what can be expected. If this is done, the patient’s hopes may eventually narrow to such achievable goals as not experiencing great pain, surviving until an important anniversary or event, completing some important projects or not dying alone.

Care-givers can commit themselves to helping to make such achievable goals actual. Hope doesn’t alter our human nature; it doesn’t necessarily remove fear or doubt, though it can coexist with them. Sometimes people feel guilty because they are fearful or have doubt. Our chief gift to them may be to remind them that these responses are normal because they are human. We can also add that fear and doubt don’t necessarily preclude hope.

Such people may be showing their awareness of an apparent contradiction which lies at the centre of human existence: we are vulnerable and fragile, yet we strive for immortality. In this respect, our chief hope is to become what (in terms of our biological experience) we are not and cannot be. Yet hope is so powerful that it even allows people to believe that they can transcend biological death.

Such a belief comes more easily to people who have religious faith, but people who don’t have such a faith can still have hope.

Hope has other characteristics: it doesn’t despair; it points to new possibilities; it imagines; it gives us the energy to persevere; it makes a commitment to the unknown; it gives us a future, provided that we have had earlier experiences of hopes being fulfilled.
Where hopes are realistic and not harmful to anyone, it is important that care-givers help the hopes to become actual. Often this can be done quite simply. A friend of mine who had terminal cancer once asked me to register him for a lifetime driver’s licence. I was pleased to do such a little thing for him. When I returned with it, he looked at it interestingly before putting it aside with the words, ‘I wonder if I’ll have any use for it.’ In fact, even though he never drove a car again, it served a purpose merely by representing a future possibility. It helped keep the future real, which is one of the functions of hope.

When people who are dying continue to clutch at some unreasonable hope, specialist help may be needed to help them redefine their hope to something achievable. But any such intervention should occur only if the problem belongs directly to the dying person.

Sometimes it doesn’t. Sometimes the problem belongs to family members who are attempting to keep unreasonable hopes alive in the patient. They do this for various reasons: because they don’t want to seem to abandon or fail the one who is dying, or because their own needs are such that they can’t let the other go. Such a denial and lack of realism can be hurtful to patients, who may have accepted the terminal nature of their condition already, and, obviously, it won’t help the family in the long run.

In such a case, the solution is to have someone discuss the situation with the family so that its members can work towards a more realistic goal.

When the family’s and the patient’s hopes are at odds (for example, when the patient wishes to remain at home, and the family wishes the patient to enter a hospice or hospital), try to reach a compromise (such as intermittent institutional care) which will partially satisfy both needs. Whenever someone who is dying regards a particular hope as important, the care-givers can do everything possible to bring it about. And if a group of them work together, this can often be achieved.

The hospice staff in a medical centre have remarked: ‘Once we recognise that a dying patient remains a human being to the last, with personal needs and wants that should be respected, hope doesn’t become false or falsely sentimental, but real and realisable.’

Extraordinarily, no matter how weak the body becomes, hope persists through all stages of dying, even the hope that all this suffering and diminution must have some meaning and will pay off eventually.

Whatever people most hope for, is what they believe gives sense to their lives. That generally includes personal fulfilment. Professional and family care-givers can help by reminding them of their achievements.

People’s other chief hope may be for immortality, life beyond death. Some see this as being achieved through the continuation of the family line; others regard it as occurring through the deeds and works and artefacts we leave behind, or naturally, by absorption into the life cycle of the universe. Others encounter it in their religious belief.
After the nuclear blast devastated Hiroshima, the surviving residents despaired, convinced that life would never come to their region again. In that terrible cataclysm, life itself seemed to have died. But in the following March the unexpected appearance of the cherry blossoms brought a wonderful feeling of relief and hope. The cherry blossoms formed out of green boughs. All of us, living and dying, need to cherish and keep alive a green bough in our hearts so that, one day, the singing bird may come.

Links with the Student Text

Something to Think About
Often those who grieve or mourn become isolated from those around them. Here students are asked:

- If they have seen this happen to someone they know.
- What signs in the person indicated this.

Answers will vary.

Task Seventeen
Jesus said: *Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted* (Matthew 5:4).

This task asks students to list five ways they can bring comfort to someone who mourns.

Answers will vary but may include such things as:

- Visit and spend time with them.
- Listen to them.
- Allow them to talk freely about their loved one who has died.
- Let them know you cared about their deceased loved one too.
- Assist with practical tasks around the house.
- Keep in touch after the funeral and communicate with them on important occasions such as the anniversary of the death, Christmas time, or on the deceased person’s birthday.

Something to Think About
Here students are asked to reflect on the message of the story below and suggest how it might apply to their own lives.

Keeping a Green Bough in the Heart

There is an old Chinese proverb: *If I keep a green bough in my heart a singing bird will come.*

The green bough is hope and the singing bird is hope’s fulfilment.

After the atomic bomb devastated the Japanese city of Hiroshima in August, 1945, the surviving residents despaired, convinced that life would never come to their region again.

In that terrible nuclear blast, life itself seemed to have died. But in the following March the unexpected appearance of cherry blossoms forming out of green boughs brought a wonderful feeling of relief and hope. All of us, living and dying, need to cherish and keep alive a green bough in our hearts so that, one day, the singing bird – or cherry blossom – may come.
A message that can be taken from the story is that a hopeful attitude enables new life and growth to emerge in the most negative and destructive of circumstances.

How students apply this message will depend on their own situations.

**Something to Discuss**
Here students are asked to choose three of the following brief statements about hope that most appeal to them. They should be able to explain why they like them.

- Hope doesn’t despair.
- Hope gives us a future.
- Hope isn’t wishing or fantasy.
- Hope points to new possibilities.
- Hope speaks of a life to come.
- Hope commits to the unknown.
- Hope builds on earlier experiences of hopes fulfilled.
- Hope exists alongside fear or doubt.
- Hope gives us the energy to persevere.
- Hope tells us that God will meet our needs.
- Hope gives meaning to people’s lives.
- Hope imagines.

**Task Eighteen**
This task asks students to write a statement of their own about tūmanako (hope). They should take into account what they have read in this section of the topic about it.

**Extension Activity**
This extension activity requires students to find prayers, poems, songs and images that encourage hope, especially in situations of grief and mourning.

If time and resources permit, encourage students to introduce and present these under the title “Keeping Hope Alive.”
PART TEN: TANGIHANGA - MĀORI FUNERAL CUSTOMS

Achievement Objective 4

Students will be able to explore human attitudes and responses to dying and death, including Māori tangihanga.

Church Teachings

Respect for the Dead

- In anticipation of their resurrection, the bodies of the dead must be treated with respect and dignity.

Comfort to People who Mourn

- God’s blessing and comfort are given to those who mourn and are in grief.

Learning Outcomes

At the end of this section of the topic students will:

- Identify and describe key features of tangihanga.
- Compare and contrast aspects of tangihanga with those of other funeral customs, such as the Irish wake.

Teacher Background

Source Material

The following material on Māori attitudes towards death and tangihanga comes with minor adaptations from chapters four and eight of Tikanga Māori: Living by Māori Values by Hirini Moko Mead (Wellington: Huia Publications, 2003).

Māori Understandings of Death

Māori trace the origins of death back to Māui, the demigod who performed such feats as fishing up the North Island and taming the sun. Māui failed to gain immortality for humans when he attempted to reverse the birth process and enter the vagina of Hine-nui-te-pō, the Great Maid of the Night, in order to find the source of life. Instead, the Great Maid crushed him between her thighs and as a consequence all human beings inevitably die. In one of the journeys the dead are believed to make, one part of the wairua (spirit) visits the underworld and is attended to by Hine-nui-te-pō. She mothers the souls that travel to the underworld. That is her appointed task. So at a tangihanga one might hear an orator recommend that the spirit of the deceased go to Hine-nui-te-pō. (Haere, haere ki to tipuna ki a Hine-nui-te-pō. Depart and journey to your ancestor Hine-nui-te-pō.)

Some woodcarvings mirror attitudes towards death. One image depicts an
ancestor figure biting the tail of a lizard. Here the attitude is that life is a contest with death. The role of humans is to tease the tail of the lizard and cheat death wherever possible. Another image depicts the head of the lizard entering the mouth of an ancestor figure. In this case the contest has been won by death.

To Māori, the lizard is a sign and an instrument of death. When a sorcerer wishes someone to die he sends a lizard to enter the body of the victim, and this lizard is the metaphor for the disease that takes over the body of a victim and kills them. There are many carvings of ancestor figures which show a lizard entering the mouth. Some say that this means the ancestor died a natural death and was not killed by a weapon. It is bad luck to have a lizard cross your path while out walking. People were afraid of lizards.

It is recognised in our beliefs that human beings are transient and are not permanent features of the social landscape, as some youth mistakenly believe. The condition of human life is compared with the apparent permanence of the land or of a mountain range. Thus there are many ways of talking about death and of explaining it to relatives of the deceased, who often wonder why it should be their relative who lies in state in the meeting house. There are Christian explanations and there are traditional Māori explanations.

At death the mauri (life force) that a person is born with dies and disappears. It is extinguished when the spark of life ceases, breathing stops and the heartbeat throbbs no more. But the wairua that is released either prior to or immediately after death leaves the body and journeys upwards towards Ranginui, the Sky Father. It is not clear how far up the wairua travels, but common belief indicates that it hovers immediately above the body it left. All through the tangihanga ceremony the wairua hovers, lingers and watches over the proceedings to make sure that the rituals are being done properly. The belief is that if the ceremony has not been done properly the wairua will not leave but it will hover for a long time, bringing bad luck in its wake.

Another spirit or wairua travels to the underworld, which in Māori belief is more akin to a heaven. It is a beautiful place where there is no evil, no violence and no abuse. It is a world of light and peace. Hine-nui-te-pō is the protecting mother of the souls that took that journey. Those souls remain there. The other wairua that hovers above the body departs once the funeral is conducted and the body is returned to the whenua (land). There are a number of beliefs about the journeys of the wairua. Many tribes say that the wairua leaves the place where the body is buried and flies to Te Rerenga Wairua at the North Island's northernmost point and there it enters the ocean and travels to distant Hawaiki.

Other wairua, however, do not make that journey. Instead they hover permanently around the burial grounds, the mountains and culturally significant sights and are never ever far away from their kin. There is the belief that when the women make the karanga (call of welcome) and cry 'Hoki wairua mai e ngā tipuna' (Return oh spirits of the ancestors) the spirits are close by and are not at some distant location across the sea. They are the
spiritual dimensions of the Māori universe, always present and never too far away. So when they are called they come closer to the event to which they are invited. Some of the priests say they can see the wairua and can talk to them. Some say they feel the presence of their ancestors and are uplifted by it.

However there are others who are troubled by the notion that our wairua are close by. These people cannot come to terms with the belief system. For them, it is all too real and their lives are affected, not positively but negatively. The wairua become ghosts that haunt them and frighten them. However, a majority of Māori live happily with images of their ancestors all around them in a carved meeting house, with the wairua of the ancestors above them, with the bones of their ancestors at the burial ground near by and surrounded by their living relatives. All are part of the reality of being Māori. All elements are parts of the whole and death itself is not a frightening experience. Some say it is but another dimension of life. Even the children who attend tangihanga and participate in the whole ceremony accept that death is something we need to understand. It is manageable because we have tikanga (protocols) to guide us and help us through a crisis and a reality of life.

There is a time before death when the wairua of the person is more able to commune with the wairua of the ancestors. Some report being visited by their relatives long-since dead. It is almost as though the wairua of their ancestors had come to welcome another soul to the spiritual world. In this transitional period the world takes on a different hue. There is an acceptance of a move towards another world where the wairua, cleansed of all the human frailties of its human body, moves and exists forever. Close relatives may see the wairua of the deceased immediately after the funeral. They say they saw the ghost of their relative. Others believe that only the specially gifted among us can actually see wairua and talk to them. For most of us, that world exists as a concept and as an influence that we are aware of but may not ever see, until perhaps at the transitional stage when death is near.

What endures after death is the flax bush, te pā harakeke, a metaphor for the children who inherit parts of the gene pools of the two parents. A mother lives on in her children who may exhibit some of her characteristics and may even look like her. Similarly the father is reflected in the children. Where there is no pā harakeke the family is referred to as a whare ngaro, a lost house, in which the genes are lost and come to the end of a line that may have had great potential. But that is life.

**Tangihanga: Ceremonies of the Dead**

The tangihanga ceremony is a vital part of Māori culture today and demands the attention of hundreds of people. No other ceremony can mobilise Māori people quite as effectively as the tangihanga. They will travel from all over Aotearoa and from as far away as Australia in order to pay their respects to a relative, or workmate, or leader of some renown. Often they wait for hours before finally being called onto the marae when the tikanga of the tangihanga begins.
Travel arrangements are part of the preparations that all participants in the ceremony have to contend with today. Actually, there are many preparations and obligations that fall upon the bereaved family and not so many on distant relatives and friends for whom the main obligation is to find out where the tangihanga is to be held and to get there in order to become a part of the ceremony.

Once at the marae entrance visitors follow a set of protocols and procedures. No matter what the weather or the demands of the workplace, there are obligations to meet. The death of a relative immediately places obligations upon many people. An important obligation is to gather around the bereaved family, lend support and be part of the work force. The obligation is stated as an aphorism and as a value: he kanohi i kitea (a face seen). Nothing can really replace the fact of a relative or visitor actually being seen at the tangi. Consequently most relatives try their very best to go to the ceremony no matter how far away the marae might be.

**Degrees of Obligation**

There are tikanga for various classes of individuals depending on the whakapapa links or degree of relationship to the deceased. The immediate family members are obliged to gather around first, and many of them have in fact been alerted to the looming crisis beforehand. Many of them may already be present at the time of death. Other relatives are expected to get to the marae where the tangihanga ceremony is being held by the first day. Members of the wider whānau and the hapū of the deceased are expected to have paid their respects by the first day. The other two days are regarded as time for others. During the first day the local hapu closes ranks around the deceased and the ceremony becomes a public event. The more important the tangihanga the more the local hapū has to unite, combine resources, maintain their mana and carry the ceremony through to its proper conclusion.

**The First Gathering of the Whānau**

When a member of the whānau is critically ill and not likely to survive, the immediate members of the family are called together and they stay at the hospital. Many of the hospitals of Aotearoa have a facility for the whānau to gather and stay close to their dying relative. A minister of the church is usually on hand to conduct services to comfort the family but there is an important tikanga that the minister has to perform at the hospital and before death is pronounced by the doctors. This is called the tikanga of tuku wairua, which is at the point when death is sure to follow. Most experienced ministers know when this point has been reached. The family gathers at the bed and the minister conducts a service to send the wairua on its journey up into the sky. This is somewhat like performing the last rites. But in this case the purpose is very clear: it is to send the wairua away from the body of the person.

Once the relative breathes their last breath, their status changes immediately to that of being very tapu and of being classified as a tūpāpaku, meaning to stand shallow rather than stand tall. The traditional way of preparing a corpse was in sitting position with the knees trussed and bound to the body. Nowadays a tūpāpaku is laid out in a prone position.
While the whānau is gathered at the hospital they make their preparations and tasks are assigned to different members to carry out. These tasks are done while an undertaker is preparing the body. When the body leaves the hospital the whānau members disperse to do their preparations. The tasks can be summarised as follows:

1. Communications: relatives to be informed, advertisements put in newspapers.
2. Preparations at the marae: the whānau has to decide where the tangihanga is to be held. Tikanga dictates that the deceased should be taken to the hapū marae. Some families choose to have their relative at home first, sometimes for the first night. For very important people it is difficult to do this because hundreds of people begin to mobilise immediately and the hapū needs to be ready. Family members are assigned to prepare the marae. One person is assigned to look after the meeting house and this may mean finding a person who knows what to do.
3. Preparations for the wharekai are urgent and some people must take charge.
4. Butchers are organised.
5. Seafood divers are alerted. They need to obtain permits and get gear ready.
6. Speakers and karanga experts are arranged.
7. A waiata team is mustered.
8. Ringa wera (workers who care for the marae and its visitors) are organised. They will staff the kitchen and dining room and provide meals.
9. Finally, when the body is ready the kiri mate (bereaved family) organise the party to take their relative onto the marae.

The Second Gathering at the Marae
The hapū has meanwhile organised themselves at the marae to receive the deceased and the immediate whānau. A special pōhiri\(^1\) (welcome) is organised and there are preparations on both sides to ensure tikanga is being followed. The tangata whenua groups have prepared the place for the body and they are ready for the pōhiri ceremony to commence.

Placement of the Body
The rule concerning the actual location of the body once it is brought to the marae varies from region to region. In some tribal areas the body is placed on the centre line against the back wall of the meeting house. This is the custom in parts of the north and west of the North Island. In the eastern areas the custom is to place the body inside the house, against the tapu wall (the right wall when facing the house) and usually up against the third or fourth wall post from the window. This is the practice when the weather is not good or there is no whare mate. Where there is a whare mate at the marae the body is more likely to be placed there. This is an option. In this case the body is usually placed against the back wall of the whare mate in the central position. Some

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\(^1\) A variant on pōwhiri, which is used in some tribal areas.
marae have a permanent whare mate placed beside the meeting house, usually on the tapu side. Yet another option which is used when the weather permits and in the summer time is to place the body on the verandah of the meeting house, and towards the tapu side of the house on the right-hand side when one is outside facing the front of the house. There the body is laid out in state, in a coffin with the lid off so that the people can see the face of the deceased.

The Entrance onto the Marae
Meanwhile, the kiri mate group and their supporters have lined up at the gate with the pallbearers in front ready to approach.

1. A karanga signals the beginning and the kiri mate approach carrying the coffin with the feet of the tūpāpaku facing the marae.
2. The entrance onto the marae is accompanied with wailing on both sides.
3. The pallbearers take the tūpāpaku to the meeting house and they lead the party of mourners. Their progress is like a slow procession, the whole of which is conducted with the seriousness and dignity of the tangihanga ceremony.
4. The pallbearers are told where to take and place the body. The coffin is placed, the lid is removed and kiri mate take up their places around the deceased. Meanwhile the support group of speakers, together with the singers of waiata, separate themselves from them and go towards where they will sit.
5. For quite a period of time all parties stand as they pay their respects to the dead. When sufficient time has elapsed someone will say, 'Kua ea,' and all of the participants take up their appointed places. The cooks and waitresses very quickly leave and go to the wharekai.
6. Speeches begin, following the protocol of that tribe.
7. At the conclusion of speeches the parties come together and shake hands, hongi, hug and kiss one another. This is often punctuated by bursts of wailing.
8. There is a meal to follow. The hapū may reorganise very quickly and become a unified and co-ordinated group to begin receiving the groups of visiting mourners who might have meanwhile collected outside the marae while the welcome for the tūpāpaku was taking place.
9. Many other individuals who take up well-understood roles support the kiri mate group. It is one of the marvels of Māori society that a hapū organises itself, sets up an efficient organisation to manage three or more days of the ceremony, and then settles down to carry out the requirements of tikanga, ideally without a hitch. A well-organised tangihanga lightens the burdens upon the bereaved and makes everything much easier for everyone else.

The Rituals of Tangihanga
The group organised to manage the tangihanga is a segment of the hapū or the iwi. Each deceased brings together a slightly different constellation of people. However, the people who carry out important cultural roles, such as karanga, whaikōrero (speech making), church services, and waiata (singing)
performances, are basically the same people. They participate in practically all of the tangihanga ceremonies of their marae. If they are not available – and there are occasions when this happens – the tangata whenua have to scramble to find others to fill these important roles. People generally know what is expected of them. If they do not, they face a very steep learning curve and must cope the best they can.

1. The kitchen and dining-room group provide meals for all visitors and they need to have everything under control: ordering food, butchering and preparing meat; arranging for cooks to cook the food, waitresses to wait at the tables, dishwashers to wash up. They are prepared to provide meals for hundreds of visitors who come in waves all day. Every few hours, meals have to be provided. Some marae are well known for their efficiency and the goodwill with which they provide for their guests. At the same time they are preparing for the hākari, (ritual feast) that completes the ceremony.

2. Someone is looking after the flag or flags of the marae, putting them up in the morning and taking them down at sunset.

3. At some marae, the kiri mate eat only twice a day, the first before sunrise and the second after sunset. Members of the kiri mate are under the tapu of death and there are restrictions upon what they can or cannot do. They keep together as a group and sustain one another through the whole ceremony. They need to drink in between meals otherwise they suffer from dehydration. Their evening meal is often an elaborate meal that is a reward for the heavy burdens upon them. The burden is often referred to as he kākahu whakataratara (a cloak of nettles) or a kapua pōuri (a dark cloud).

4. A member of the kiri mate has been allocated the task of looking after the koha that manuhiri bring. This person records all koha given with the name of the donor group and the amount. The list is printed out and at some marae put up in the meeting house for all to see. There are two functions of 'publishing' the list this way. One is accountability to the hapū. Everybody in the hapū knows who appeared at the tangi and the amount they gave. If there are queries about the list, the kiri mate are required to provide explanations. There is usually a list of anonymous donors because a name was not written on an envelope or their money was lumped in with others. The second reason is that the list represents a set of obligations upon the kiri mate following the principle of reciprocity. The whānau will know who came to 'pay back' and hence cancel an obligation and who is establishing a new obligation. In other cases the whānau keeps the list and its members set about meeting some of their obligations as soon as they are able. Some may not be met until years later.

5. The kiri mate has meanwhile decided the hour and date of the burial service at the marae. Sometimes there are arguments about where the burial should take place. The speakers on the speaker's bench usually inform all visitors of the time, which is often 11 a.m. on the nominated day.

6. The kiri mate have also organised the gravediggers and decided on the exact position in the urupā where their relative is to be buried.
7. Some marae close at sundown the reception of visiting mourners to the marae. There is usually a cultural expert of the marae to advise and direct on these matters. What this means is that the home team, who have carried the ritual burdens all day, call for a rest and they leave their post. The main reason for this protocol is to allow the kiri mate to relax and have their evening meal at a reasonable time. Without such a tikanga the kiri mate might be required to remain at their appointed posts until 9 p.m. at night and this is far too long and onerous. Other marae vary this protocol by closing down the formal pōhiri at a set time, releasing the kiri mate and putting in place a relief team to welcome any latecomers. Relatives are free to come at night, but there may be no formal welcome for them.

8. The whānau have arranged a minister to conduct services every evening and often it is this service which closes the reception of visitors to the marae.

9. Relatives from overseas usually take some days to arrive at the marae and the burial might be delayed to accommodate them. On some occasions the deceased has been sent back from overseas to be buried at their traditional urupā.

10. The kiri mate are offered some relief in the speeches of the visiting groups when they refer to aspects of the work of their relative they were completely unaware of. Sometimes speakers refer to shared activities that go back many years. Sometimes they talk about death itself and at other times the focus might be upon some humorous events. Some visiting groups bring singers to provide some light entertainment later in the proceedings or they may bring a kapahaka team and sing. They may bring a haka team who will perform a war dance. All of these activities are possible and permitted. A tangihanga ceremony does have its lighter moments.

The Final Night
The events of the day follow the previous day except that this day it is more likely that the visitors come from further afield.

In many tribal areas the final night is a special event which is managed in different ways. It is not simply a matter of the poignancy of a last evening at the traditional marae. In fact, it signals an important stage in the gradual lifting of the heavy mantle of tapu that is upon the kiri mate.

1. The church service takes place after the evening meal.
2. Once the service is completed, speeches begin. These focus upon farewelling the deceased. If conducted inside the meeting house, the order of speeches is from the tangata whenua corner from which the church service was conducted. Speakers follow from the corner along the noa wall of the house to the back wall and then to the tapu side of the house.
3. Waiata might be lighter than those performed during the day, but this depends upon the marae and the tribe.
4. The last speaker comes from the kiri mate who, up until this very moment, have been required to remain silent. Now their speaker
breaks the *tapu* of silence. If the deceased is a father, then it is
expected that his eldest adult son will speak. If not, the *kiri mate*
selects one of their men to speak. This speech is the highlight of the
evening and it is often a tearful introduction into the world of speech
making for the speaker. In some tribal areas the *kiri mate* do not speak
until the day of the funeral.

5. There is a break for a cup of tea.

6. The rest of the evening is given over to light entertainment to take the
*kiri mate* further into their transformation from a highly *tapu* state to a
gradual reduction of it. This is a transitional stage and an important
one because of the high level of stress that has been upon the *kiri
mate*.

7. At some *marae*, the entertainment goes all night and it is all conducted
informally. The formal part of the evening ended with the speech of the
representative of the *kiri mate* and, from that point on, light-hearted
entertainment reigns.

**The Final Day**
The first business of the last day of mourning is the gathering of the *whānau*
early in the morning to witness the closing of the coffin. Up until this moment
the face of the deceased has been uncovered and visible to all mourners.
When the lid is screwed down the face of the deceased will never be seen
again. An important moment in the ceremony has been reached and it is
often a sad and poignant one. Mourners arriving on this day will see only the
coffin, but they understand the *tikanga*.

Closing the coffin early in the morning allows the bereaved family time to
themselves and affords an opportunity to mourn in a less public context. If
they fail to do this before the mourners begin to arrive then the closing of the
coffin becomes more formal and more public. On the part of the organisers of
the whole ceremony the delay will cause problems later in the day.

1. The bereaved *whānau* and their supporters gather early in the morning
to witness the closing of the coffin.

2. A minister stands by ready to conduct a service of closure.

3. The *whānau* might take the opportunity to say some words of farewell
to their relative.

4. If not, the lid is closed amidst considerable wailing.

5. The *kiri mate* and the *hapū* prepare for the last groups of mourners who
will begin to arrive soon after sunrise.

6. Some mourners have delayed their visit until now so as to catch the
funeral service. Some are accused of coming only to catch the *hākari*.
There are many reasons why mourners might be delayed.

7. The last groups of mourners are welcomed as before.

8. At some *marae* a bell is rung to signal the beginning of the funeral
service. This requires a reorganisation of seating, flowers are moved in
front of the house on the ground and the coffin may be moved forward
to be in full view.

9. The minister of the selected church or several of them begin the
service. There are favourite hymns which are sung at this service. A
common one is ‘Piko Nei te Matenga’ in the Anglican list of hymns and it evokes memories of many who have been farewelled at the marae.

10. At some part of the service the kiri mate put forward a person to give a eulogy in either English or Maori or in both languages. This service allows the deceased to leave the marae, but it is not the final service.

11. At the conclusion of this service pallbearers lift the coffin and they begin an alignment of kiri mate behind them. Children are assigned to carry the floral wreaths to the urupā. Others fall in behind them. The ministers of the church might lead the procession. There are variations as to how the procession is organised. At some marae a band might take the lead.

The Procession
1. The procession walks slowly to the urupā and halts on arrival at the gate.
2. Meanwhile, groups of people have gathered at the graveside. The karanga expert now issues a karanga to the group to enter the cemetery and proceed to the grave which has already been prepared by the gravediggers. Some iwi do not follow this tikanga.
3. The pallbearers take the coffin to the hole and place it on beams that have been laid across the hole. Ropes are attached to the coffin and the coffin is lifted, the beams taken away and the coffin is lowered into the bottom of the pit with the head towards where the headstone will be placed.
4. The final part of the burial service now takes place.
5. At the conclusion of the service, final speeches are made by any who care to do so. Waiata are sung.
6. The immediate whānau file past the pit and throw some dirt onto the coffin. The children are encouraged to join in and throw a flower into the grave.
7. The gravediggers now complete their job which is to cover the hole and shape the top of the grave.
8. Some floral wreaths are placed on the grave.
9. All participants now leave the urupā and go through the water cleansing ceremony to remove tapu from them.
10. They go back to the marae. The kiri mate are not yet free of the requirements of the tangihanga ceremony. They are ritually welcomed back to the marae and once this is done everyone waits for the call to attend the hākari.
11. Meanwhile, the women of the marae clear away the mats and cloaks that were used for the lying-in-state of the deceased. Ministers or tohunga perform cleansing ceremonies to lift the tapu of death from the place where the deceased lay.
12. The meeting house is cleared and any items for laundering are gathered up.
13. Then comes the call from the wharekai announcing that the final feast is ready. The kiri mate are the first to be called. Others follow.
14. After the shared meal the place and the people are restored to a state of noa and the people are free to go home, except the kiri mate. Obligations upon them are not quite over.
Te Takahi Whare: Tramping the House
The takahi whare ceremony is an essential component of the tangihanga complex of tikanga. This is a ceremony to clear away the tapu of death from the dwelling place of the deceased. Personal effects of the deceased are a particular problem. Formerly, these were put into bags or suitcases and buried with the deceased. Very personal items of clothing were either buried or burnt.

Nowadays there is a mix of attitudes about this tikanga. The family may share personal items of clothing like coats, suits, dresses and shoes, but there is a reluctance to use underclothing. The latter are usually destroyed or disposed of in some way. Personal ornaments are shared out among family members.

Highly valued heirloom items, such greenstone and cloaks, are usually given to a responsible member of the whānau to look after on behalf of the whole whānau. They may be brought out on special occasions.

1. The ceremony itself consists of a church service in which a minister cleanses the house with water and prayers, or the whānau may use a traditional tohunga (expert), or both may be employed.
2. Members of the family follow the minister or tohunga as all of the rooms of the house are ritually cleansed, often by the sprinkling of water.
3. When completed, the minister may call the kiri mate together and have a church service to help settle them back into their house.
4. Speeches follow, mainly for two purposes. Firstly, to welcome the family back into their house and to wish them well, and secondly, to thank the officiating minister or tohunga for their part.
5. Food is shared and sometimes liquor is served to help the whānau relax. The ringa wera of the kitchen would have brought some food to the house for this part of the tangihanga ceremony.
6. At some marae the kiri mate and ringa wera and those who carried ritual roles come together for what might be called a debriefing hui. It is one way the kiri mate can thank all of their helpers.
7. Some whānau turn this tikanga into a big event which might last all night.
8. Others keep it short and so allow the family to settle back into normal life.

Kawe Mate: Taking the Event to Other Places
There is an obligation upon the kiri mate to take their death to neighbouring tangihanga. If there is another death in the tribal region they are obliged to go there. If there is a relative lying at a marae miles away they are required to go. The whānau usually know or are told or are invited to take their mate to other marae and dates are negotiated for when this is to happen. There are variations in the protocols of kawe mate.

1. The kiri mate arrive at the gate of the marae.
2. The party is called onto the marae. Often a photo of the deceased is displayed as the party approaches.
3. They are treated to a formal pōhiri and the speakers refer to the death that is being honoured.
4. Sometimes the *kiri mate* are invited to sit at the verandah of the meeting house and put their photo up against the wall for all to see. Their speakers, however, are treated formally as *manuhiri*.
5. Once the speeches are over there is the usual coming-together to shake hands, *hongi* and so on.
6. The visitors share a meal.
7. Then they might be invited to stay overnight and not leave until the next morning. On other occasions the meal completes the ritual exchange.

**Unveiling the headstone**
Usually one year after the *tangihanga* ceremony was held the unveiling of the headstone falls due. Sometimes the time lapse may be shorter or longer depending upon whether there are other headstones to do. The unveiling is an event that the *kiri mate* have prepared for both in terms of finance and in the preparation of food.

Once the unveiling is completed the obligations upon the *kiri mate* are virtually over. All that remains are reciprocal obligations in relation to *koha*. But this ceremony also signals another milestone in the whole grieving and mourning complex of *tikanga*. The widow or widower is freed of obligations to the deceased spouse and may remarry after the unveiling.

The same group that organised and supported the *tangihanga* gather again to honour the dead in this final ceremony.

1. Visitors assemble at the *marae* and they are formally welcomed to the *marae* and to the event.
2. Speeches follow the usual pattern, followed by a church service.
3. Then everybody retires to the *urupā*.
4. They are formally called to enter the *urupā*.
5. The people gather around the headstone, which has been covered with a cloak.
6. The minister now conducts a service during which the cloak is ritually removed from the headstone.
7. At some point a member of the *kiri mate* is invited to read the inscription, which might be in English or in Maori depending upon the language preference of the immediate whānau.
8. The service is completed.
9. Sometimes several have to be unveiled at the same ceremony, in which case each one is done in turn and then there is a final common part of the service to cover them all.
10. Relatives will make a point of placing a hand on the headstone and rubbing it gently. They may say some words to the deceased. Now it is the *wairua* that receives and hears the message. But to the relatives the explanations do not matter. They speak to their relatives whenever they want to.
11. There is a *hākari* to complete the ceremony and it is handled very much like the *hākari* of the main *tangihanga* ceremony.
12. There may be *poroporoaki* (speeches of farewell) after the meal is over especially if there are representatives of other *iwi* present. This is a common factor in all *hākari*. 

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Links with the Student Text

**Something to Think About**
Here students are asked to reflect on whether they have ever been to a *tangihanga*, and if so, to recall their memories of it.

Answers will vary.

**Task Nineteen**
This task requires students to write their own summary of the main features of *tangihanga*. They should include as many of the following terms as they can in their summary. Students could write the summary individually or as members of a small group.

- marae
- tūpāpaku
- whare mate
- wharenui
- tūpuna
- manuhiri
- karanga
- mihi
- hongi
- poroporoaki
- pūriri
- wairua
- whakanoa
- whare kai
- whare karakia
- urupā
- wai
- hākari
- takahi whare
- haka

Summaries will vary.

**Something to Discuss**
Here students are asked to discuss:

- Those aspects of *tangihanga* that are most similar to other funerals they have been to.
- Those aspects of *tangihanga* that are most different from other funerals they have experienced.
- Those things about *tangihanga* that would most help the grieving process.

**Something to Do**
Here students are invited to find out from the teacher about the traditional Irish wake and consider how it is similar to / different from the *tangihanga*.

The account of a traditional Irish wake, which is printed on the following page, includes a number of points of comparison / contrast with *tangihanga*. 
An Irish Catholic Wake

Perhaps no other cultural tradition carries more mystique than the Irish wake. Although the tradition has changed somewhat, many Irish Catholic families still observe it. In the "old country" of Ireland, the wake took place between the time of death and the time the body was carried to the church, which was usually the evening before the day of burial. Neighbouring women gathered at the house, washed the body, and dressed it. They placed a crucifix on the breast and entwined rosary beads in the fingers of the dead one. They also tied the two big toes together, which they believed would prevent the deceased from returning as a ghost. They placed a pair of boots at the feet to help the deceased walk through purgatory. The deceased was laid out on a wooden slab supported by four kitchen chairs, and covered with a linen sheet, except for the face, hands, and toes. Candles were lighted and placed in candlestick holders around the body.

The women who prepared the body led the mourning. Muffled sobs or loud wailing, depending on the dimension of the loss, filled the house and could be heard outside as well. For example, a dead parent who left a large family might elicit more crying than the passing of an elderly person. Neighbours would arrive. Their task was to pull the mourners away from the deceased and console them.

In the meantime, men of the village would order the coffin and bring the supplies for the wake: bread, meat, all other types of food, whiskey, stout, wine, pipes, tobacco, and snuff. Once the house was full of visitors, a plate of snuff would be passed around for all to take a pinch. Pipes were filled with tobacco, and food and drinks were served. The clocks were stopped as a mark of respect. All mirrors were turned to the wall or covered. Salt was sprinkled around to ward off the evil spirits who, it was believed, might steal the soul of the dead. The bed of the deceased person was taken out immediately and burned.

A woman attended the corpse by sitting beside it all evening. As the neighbours entered, they made their way to the side of the body, knelt down to recite a few prayers, and expressed sympathy to the family. Guests exchanged remarks about the deceased, and then wandered into another room where food and drink was laid out. The men gathered in the kitchen or outside. The corpse was in the parlour, kept separate from the celebration that was going on. Visitation lasted until midnight. The rosary was recited several times, led by an important person in the community, a teacher, for example. Most of the visitors left at midnight. Close neighbours remained until morning drinking tea or whiskey and relating stories of times passed with the deceased.
The next morning as the body was lifted, the four supporting chairs were kicked over, and the body left the house feet first. The corpse was placed in a wooden box, shouldered by the men, and carried to the church. The family walked behind the pallbearers, behind them came the men carrying spades, and behind them followed the rest of the family and relatives. As they neared the church, the priest approached wearing special death vestments embroidered by the women. Chanting and sprinkling holy water, he turned, leading the way to the church.

After Mass, the coffin was carried to the graveyard and set down into the ground and covered. Mourners passed by, placing a stone on the casket. Relatives and a few neighbours returned to the house where things were put back in order.

Aspects of the traditional Irish wake have been adapted to the New Zealand context. Although there may be changes in how they are celebrated, wakes still provide opportunities for the community to gather and tell stories, and to pray traditional devotions such as the rosary before the body of the deceased is moved to the church for a funeral Mass and burial the next day.
PART ELEVEN: CATHOLIC FUNERAL RITES

Achievement Objective 5

Students will be able to develop an understanding of the Catholic Funeral Rites.

Church Teachings

Liturical Rites

• The liturgy of the Church presents death as the entrance into everlasting life.
• Through its funeral rites the Church commends the dead to Te Atua, raises the hope of its members, and witnesses to its own faith in the future resurrection of the baptised with Christ.
• The vigil is the first formal opportunity for the mourners to experience, within the context of the Christian community, the comfort of Te Kupu a Te Ariki (the Word of God) through reading of the scriptures and communal prayer.
• The Mass, the memorial of Christ's death and resurrection, is the principal celebration of the Christian funeral.
• The parish church is the usual place where the Christian community gathers to commend one of its deceased members to God.
• The rite of committal expresses the communion that exists between the Church on earth and the Church in heaven — the deceased passes with the farewell prayers of the community of believers into the welcoming company of those who need faith no longer but see Te Atua face to face.

Cremation

• The Church permits cremation as long as it does not represent a denial of faith in the resurrection of the body.

Learning Outcomes

At the end of this section of the topic students will:

• Recognise the purpose of the Catholic funeral rites.
• Describe important features of the funeral vigil, the funeral liturgy or Mass, and the rite of committal.
• Show how the various signs and actions of the funeral liturgy speak of resurrection and new life in Christ.
• List ways that family members and friends can contribute to a loved one’s funeral Mass or liturgy.
• Select and reflect on readings that are appropriate for use during a funeral liturgy.
Teacher Background

The Purpose of Christian Funeral Rites
The funeral rites celebrated by the Catholic Church are contained in the *Order of Christian Funerals*. These rites set out to do a number of things:

- To offer worship, praise and thanksgiving to God for the gift of a life that has now been returned to God.
- To affirm the Church's belief in the sacredness of the human body and the resurrection of the dead.
- To commend the dead to God's merciful love and to plead for the forgiveness of their sins.
- To bring hope and consolation to the living.
- To renew our awareness of God's mercy and judgement and to meet the human need to turn always to God in times of crisis.
- To support the Church's emphasis on the indispensable role of the wider community in the dying and death of a Christian.
- To affirm and express the union of the Church on earth with the Church in heaven in the one great Communion of Saints.

An Overview of the Christian Funeral Rites
The event unique to our Christian faith is the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. We first enter into this mystery in Baptism, when we die to our old selves and are born anew in Christ. Throughout our lives we die and rise in various ways, embodying the Paschal Mystery of the Lord. Our bodily death is not an end, but an ultimate passage to eternal life.

The Church celebrates the Christian life in her daughters and sons through rich signs and symbols in prayer and sacraments. These rituals express our beliefs. This is especially evident in the Order of Christian Funerals – the rites for the passage of believers from death to eternal life.

> By means of the funeral rites it has been the practice of the Church, as a tender mother, not simply to commend the dead to God but also to raise high the hope of its children and to give witness to its own faith in the future Resurrection of the baptised with Christ. (Decree for the Order of Funerals, Congregation for Divine Worship, 1969)

The *Order of Christian Funerals* provides three major liturgical celebrations where the Christian community gathers to pray for the deceased with their family and friends:

- The vigil
- The Mass of Christian burial or funeral liturgy
- The rite of committal

The three separate and ideally sequential rites celebrate the journey of the deceased from this life to the next. This movement or progression of rites
assists mourners going through this period of separation and letting go of their loved one.

Through the prayers and rituals, the community faithfully accompanies a believer from the moment of death to a final resting place. Through their presence and prayers, the community also supports the bereaved through the early stages of the grieving process.

The principal celebration of the Christian funeral rites is the funeral liturgy, which is typically, but not necessarily, a Mass. Two other celebrations also take place. The vigil for the deceased is a short prayer service during the time following death and before the funeral liturgy. It usually takes place at the parish church or sometimes at the deceased person’s home. The rite of committal is a short prayer service at the cemetery, ideally beside the open grave or place of interment. Both of these short services include Scripture, prayers and possibly songs. The ideal sequence of these three funeral rites is vigil, funeral Mass, then committal.

Acceptance, Belief and Journey

The celebration of the funeral rites expresses an acceptance, a belief and a journey. The rites accept human mortality and death in the midst of life, ultimately one’s own death. We let go, handing our dead and ourselves over to God.

The rites also declare our belief and our faith in Christ, the Risen One who put death to death by his dying and rising to new life. We believe Christ’s resurrection is our inheritance as his disciples. Finally, the rites comprise a movement – an earthly journey from the place of death to the home, to the church, to the cemetery.

This journey reminds the faithful of their own journey from grief and sorrow to hope and peace, from loss and sadness to gain and growth.

The Rites for the Dead – the Vigil

*Blessed are they who mourn; they shall be consoled.* (Matthew 5:5)

The place and manner of each death is so unique, so variable, and often brings a sense of bewilderment, loss and uncertainty, even despair. This part of the journey allows the family to experience the support, consolation and care of all who gather to share their loss.

*The vigil is the first gathering of family and friends with the faith community in the time immediately following the death of a loved one and is the first opportunity for the mourners to experience, within the context of the Christian community, the comfort of God’s word through reading of the scriptures and communal prayer.* (Order of Christian Funerals, 56)
After a death a family may wonder: “Who will come and see us? What does this death, so keenly felt by us, mean to others outside our family?” Most families are overwhelmed by the compassion and concern, faith and faithfulness of those who make the special effort to gather. Tears and smiles make the sharing of memories both bitter and sweet. Often mourners share the unknown or forgotten parts of the deceased's life. People come to truly pay respect, not only to the dead, but also to the living. Families may show significant objects or photographs that speak of their dear one.

The formal vigil of prayer usually takes place on the evening before the funeral. There are many ways the family can shape and participate in this service. The vigil prayer with its order of biblical readings, prayers and petitions, music and silence allows for a public sharing of stories, poignant memories or personal anecdotes making individual remembrances the property of the gathered community.

In times past the vigil took place in the home of the deceased. The family and others kept vigil by the deathbed, prepared the body for burial and then kept vigil through the many hours – day and night – until the funeral. Since the faith life of Christians centres on the parish church, it is now more common for vigils to be held there. It is best that the vigil takes place the night before the funeral liturgy.
OVERVIEW OF THE VIGIL FOR THE DECEASED

INTRODUCTORY RITES
Greeting
Opening Song
Invitation to Prayer
Opening Prayer

LITURGY OF THE WORD
Scripture Readings with Responsorial Psalm
Homily

PRAYER OF INTERCESSION
Litany
The Lord’s Prayer
Concluding Prayer (A family member or friend may speak in remembrance of the deceased.)

CONCLUDING RITE
Blessing
Song and / or a few minutes of silent prayer

N.B. In Aotearoa New Zealand, it has been and is still a custom among many Catholics to gather and pray the rosary on the evening before the funeral. This popular devotion can be included as part of the vigil.

The Rites for the Dead – The Mass of Christian Burial

*The Mass, the memorial of Christ’s death and Resurrection, is the principal celebration of the Christian Funeral.* (Order of Christian Funerals, 128)

The followers of Christ, while facing the reality of death and confronted with their own mortality, continue to proclaim their faith in the risen Christ. In the Mass of Christian Burial, the community is joined together in faith, as one Body in Christ to reaffirm that life is changed, not ended. We celebrate the Eucharistic banquet even in the face of human death. Jesus Christ promised that those who eat his body and drink his blood would have life everlasting and be raised up on the last day (see John 6:54). Shared belief is reflected through readings, prayers, music and silence. The symbols of the resurrection – holy water, the Easter Candle, and incense – remind the faithful that the Risen Christ is present bringing the promise of baptism to fulfilment. It is a celebration of Christ's paschal mystery – through death to new life.

The funeral Mass includes the reception of the body (if it is not already present in the church), the Liturgy of the Word, the Liturgy of the Eucharist and the final commendation and farewell. The funeral is a rite of the Church and the parish is responsible for co-ordinating and unifying the choices of liturgical preparation – readings, music, special actions and ministries.
The (parish) church is the place where the Christian life is begotten in baptism, nourished in the Eucharist, and where the community gathers to commend one of its deceased members to the Father. (Order of Christian Funerals, 131)

Family members are encouraged to suggest Scripture readings and appropriate musical selections, as well as be actively involved in the various ministries – as pallbearers, instrumental or vocal musicians, readers, gift bearers, extra-ordinary ministers of Holy Communion, greeters, and servers. Another special role is filled when family members or friends offer words of remembrance after communion;² this is a special opportunity to publicly remember a loved one. Sometimes two people together, one speaking and the other supporting, can effectively witness to their love for each other and the deceased. The gathered community expresses hope best by participating consciously, fully and actively in the worship at the Mass.

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OVERVIEW OF THE MASS OF CHRISTIAN BURIAL

INTRODUCTORY RITES
Greeting and Sprinkling with Holy Water
Entrance Procession
Song
Opening Prayer

LITURGY OF THE WORD
Scripture Readings with Responsorial Psalm and Gospel Acclamation
Homily
General Intercessions

LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST
Preparation of the Altar and the Gifts
Eucharistic Prayer
Communion Rite

FINAL COMMENDATION
Invitation to Prayer
Song of Farewell and Incense
Prayer of Commendation

The Rites for the Dead – The Funeral Liturgy without a Mass
Sometimes a family prefers a simple funeral service without a Mass, with readings from scripture, prayer and music and a final commendation. During the commendation the coffin is sprinkled with blessed water as a reminder of the dead person’s baptism. Incense symbolises the prayer surrounding the

² This is a contentious issue. Although not part of the official liturgy, this practice is often tolerated for the sake of the grieving family.
deceased person and rising to God. There is no Liturgy of the Eucharist or Holy Communion at this service.

The Rites for the Dead – The Committal Rite

_In committing the body to its resting place, the community expresses the hope that, with all those who have gone before marked with the sign of faith, the deceased awaits the glory of the Resurrection. The rite of committal is an expression of the communion that exists between the Church on earth and the Church in heaven — the deceased passes with the farewell prayers of the community of believers into the welcoming company of those who need faith no longer but see God face to face._ (Order of Christian Funerals, 206)

This part of the journey is a leave-taking. We acknowledge a change in the relationship with the deceased because of a physical separation, but we proclaim an unchanging bond in the Spirit who raised Jesus from the dead.

The journey to the cemetery brings the deceased to the final earthly destination and brings the funeral rites to full closure. It is not simply reciting the prayers of committal, but being in the place of committal that is important.

Here, the deceased wait for the second coming of Christ who will call us forth to rise to a glorious new life.

_[Jesus Christ] will give new form to this lowly body of ours and remake it according to the pattern of his glorified body._ (Philippians 3:21)

In some areas the practice of accompanying the deceased and the family to the cemetery for the rite of committal has become less common. Those ministering to the family and assisting in the funeral ritual preparation should be aware of the value of communal presence at the committal of the body and the potential for healing that being present for the burial may bring to the bereaved.

As the last rite of the public liturgy of the Church, the Committal is for all, not solely for family. During this time, short scripture passages and intercessions are read, music is encouraged and clear signs of leave-taking are displayed. Since we no longer can see or touch the deceased, gestures are directed toward the coffin.

Now the journey with the deceased is complete. Believers join their present sadness to the comforting strength of all those already buried at the cemetery who have gone before in hope of the resurrection. Cemeteries represent an unmistakable sign of the communion of saints – the unity of faith, the continuity of Christian discipleship in those who have died, in those who live and even in those yet to be born. This place proclaims God's inseparable love. As Saint Paul says, nothing can separate us from the love of God.
For I am convinced that neither death nor life . . . will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 8:38-39).

The Catholic Church and Cremation
The Catholic Church's practice of burial goes back to early Christian days. An understanding of the body as the temple of the Holy Spirit and a firm belief in the resurrection of the body were the basis of the Church's continued reverence for the human body after death. From early Christian days cremation was viewed as a pagan practice and a denial of the doctrine of the resurrection. For these reasons cremation was for many centuries expressly forbidden by the Catholic Church.

In 1963, an Instruction from the Holy Office (now the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith) lifted the ban on cremation by allowing it in certain circumstances provided that the reasons for choosing cremation were not contrary to Christian belief. However, burial of the body was clearly to be preferred and there were liturgical limitations resulting from the choice of cremation. No allowance was made for any prayer or ritual to be used with the cremated remains. All services were to be in the presence of the body of the deceased, with cremation allowed only afterwards.

In the revised funeral rites of 1969, Ordo Exsequiarum – Decree for the Order of Funerals, issued by the Congregation for Divine Worship and mandated by the Second Vatican Council, a further step was taken to allow for the committal rite to take place at the crematorium or grave where the cremated remains were buried:

Funeral rites are to be granted to those who have chosen cremation, unless there is evidence that their choice was dictated by anti-Christian motives . . . The funeral is to be celebrated . . . in a way that clearly expresses the Church’s preference for burying the dead . . . that forestalls any danger of scandalising or shocking the faithful. (Decree for the Order of Funerals, 15)
The presumption was that the funeral Mass would be celebrated in the presence of the body with cremation occurring later.

In the 1983 revision of the Code of Canon Law, the traditional practice was reinforced.

*The Church earnestly recommends that the pious custom of burying the bodies of the dead be observed; it does not, however, forbid cremation unless it has been chosen for reasons which are contrary to Christian teaching.* (Canon 1176)

The further revised funeral rites, *Order of Christian Funerals*, in use since 1989, maintain this tradition of preference for burial of the body:

*Since in Baptism the body was marked with the seal of the Trinity and became the temple of the Holy Spirit, Christians respect and honour the bodies of the dead and the places where they rest.* (Order of Christian Funerals, 19)

Up to the time the *Order of Christian Funerals* was issued, cremated remains were banned from church. The only way to solve the problems created by immediate cremation – cremation before the funeral – was to reverse the order of these rituals, that is, have the rite of committal and burial of the ashes at the cemetery first followed by a memorial Mass.

Although in some countries – the United States, for example – the celebration of a funeral Mass in the presence of cremated remains is now generally permitted by the bishops of some dioceses³, in other places it is only approved by the bishop when special circumstances warrant it. The reasoning is that the funeral rites are intended to honour the body of the dead person.

It was the body which felt the waters of baptism, was marked with the oil of salvation and nourished by the Eucharist. The sprinkling of the coffin with holy water is a reminder of baptism. The body is the incarnation of the presence of God in the world, the temple of the Holy Spirit.

The Church maintains there is a substantial difference between the body of the deceased and cremated remains. It holds that we cannot just substitute one for the other and expect our rituals and prayers to carry the same meaning.

N.B. There is no problem when cremation takes place after the funeral Mass. A rite of committal for cremated remains is provided as an alternative in the current funeral rite.

³ An indult to the *Order of Christian Funerals*, dated March 21, 1997 permits U.S. Roman-rite bishops to decide whether to allow a person's cremated remains at Catholic funeral Masses in their dioceses.
The Church insists that cremated remains should be treated with the same respect we give to the body of the deceased. They should be placed in a worthy vessel buried in a grave or entombed in a columbarium [a cemetery vault designed for urns containing ashes of the dead]. The practice of scattering cremated remains on the sea, from the air, or on the ground, or keeping cremated remains in the home of a relative or friend of the deceased is not supported by the Church.

Links with the Student Text

Something to Think About
Here students are asked to identify three things that the funeral rites of the Catholic Church set out to do. The following points should be included in students’ answers:

- The funeral rites commend the dead to God’s care.
- They remind Christ’s followers of their faith in the resurrection of the dead.
- They provide hope, support and consolation to the family and friends of the person who has died.

Task Twenty
Here students are asked to describe important features of each of the following funeral rites:

a) The vigil:

- Is usually the first gathering of family and friends with the wider Christian community following the death of a loved one.
- Usually takes place on the evening before the funeral liturgy.
- May be celebrated at the home of the deceased, in the church, or in a suitable room or chapel at the funeral director’s.
- The Word of God is the central prayer of the vigil which usually includes Scripture readings, intercessions, the Our Father, and concluding prayers and blessings. Depending on where and when the vigil occurs, adaptations to this basic format are made.

b) The funeral liturgy or Mass:

- Is the principal celebration of the Catholic funeral rites.
- The community gathers in the parish church with the family and friends of the dead person to take heart from the Word of God and to give thanks and praise to God for Christ’s victory over sin and death.
- It usually occurs as part of the Mass, but the funeral liturgy may be celebrated separate from it.
- The various signs and actions of the funeral liturgy or Mass – including the welcoming of the body, the presence of the Easter candle, the sprinkling of the coffin with water and the incensing of it – all speak of resurrection and of the new life we receive through Christ.
c) The rite of committal:

- Takes place at the graveside or crematorium and is also used for burials at sea.
- Gives people the courage and energy to say their final good-byes to the bodily remains of their loved one and reminds them of the dead person’s continuing spiritual presence.
- Commits the body to its final resting place.
- Asks that the dead be welcomed into the company of those in heaven.
- Includes a brief passage from Scripture, a prayer over the place of committal, intercessions, the Lord’s Prayer, a concluding prayer and a prayer over the people.
- Concludes with a sign of leave-taking – usually the sprinkling with holy water.

Something to Do

Here students are asked to design a picture glossary, combining illustration and text, to communicate how the various signs and actions of the funeral liturgy speak of resurrection and new life in Christ.

Explanations of the following could be included:

- The welcoming of the body into the Church.
- The placing of the Easter candle.
- The draping of a white cloth or pall.
- The use of Christian symbols, such as a Bible and a cross.
- The sprinkling of the coffin with water.
- The prayerful presence of the Christian community.
- The reading of the Word of God.
- The celebration of the Liturgy of the Eucharist.
- Words of remembrance.
- The final commendation.
- The incensing of the coffin.

Something to Discuss

Work in a pair or small group. List all the different ways that family members and friends can contribute to a loved one’s funeral Mass or liturgy.

These include:

- Choosing appropriate Scripture readings and musical selections.
- Being actively involved as pallbearers, instrumental or vocal musicians, readers, gift bearers, extra-ordinary ministers of Holy Communion, greeters, and servers.
- Offering words of remembrance.
- Participating, along with the rest of the congregation, consciously, fully and actively in the worship at the funeral Mass or liturgy.
**Task Twenty-One**
Here students are asked to use the Scripture references provided to choose two readings that they like – a Gospel and one other – from those recommended by the Church for use during a funeral liturgy.

**Old Testament**

*Isaiah 25:6-9*
*On this mountain, the Lord will provide. The Lord God will destroy death forever.*

*Daniel 12:1-3*
*Of those who lie sleeping in the dust of the earth many will awake.*

*2 Maccabees 12:43-45*
*It is good and holy to think of the dead rising again.*

**New Testament**

*Acts 10:34-43*
*God has appointed Jesus to judge everyone, alive and dead.*

*Romans 5:5-11*
*Hope does not disappoint; Having been justified by his blood, we will be saved from God's anger through him.*

*Romans 5:17-21*
*Where sin increased, there grace abounded all the more.*

*Romans 6:3-9*
*Let us walk in newness of life.*

*2 Corinthians 5:1, 6-10*
*We have an everlasting home in heaven.*

*1 John 3:1-2*
*We shall see God as he really is.*

*Revelation 21:1-5a, 6b-7*
*There will be no more death.*

**Gospel**

*Mathew 25:31-46*
*Come, you whom my Father has blessed.*

*Today you will be with me in paradise.*

*John 6:51-58*
*All who eat this bread will live for ever; and I will raise them up on the last day.*

*John 11:17-27*
*I am the resurrection and the life.*
John 14:1-6
There are many rooms in my Father's house.

Students should describe the message of each reading and explain why the reading is appropriate for a Christian funeral.

Answers will vary from student to student, as will the readings chosen.
PART TWELVE: DEATH AND AFTER – A CATHOLIC PERSPECTIVE

Achievement Objective 6

Students will be able to explain what the Catholic Church believes and teaches about life after death.

Church Teachings

Particular Judgement

- At the moment of death each person’s eternal destiny is determined by their acceptance or rejection of God’s aroha.

Heaven

- Those who die in God’s grace and friendship are destined for heaven – eternal life with Te Atua, the fulfilment of the deepest human longings and the source of all happiness.
- To live in heaven is to be with Christ in the company of Mary, the angels, and the saints.

Purgatory

- Purgatory is the name given by the Church to the purification that those who die in God’s grace and friendship may need to experience in order to achieve the holiness necessary to enter heaven.

Prayer for the Dead

- The Church encourages prayer, almsgiving and penance by the living on behalf of the dead to assist their purification and entrance into the glory of God.

Hell

- Hell is the name given to the state of freely chosen and permanent separation from God brought about by sin and the rejection of God’s merciful love.

Final Judgement

- At the end of time, following the resurrection of all the dead, Christ will return in glory and there will be a final judgement revealing God’s justice and great love and inaugurating the definitive triumph of good over evil.
Learning Outcomes

At the end of this section of the topic students will:

- Recognise what the Church teaches about judgement, heaven, purgatory and hell.
- Explore how these have been presented in Christian art.

Teacher Background

The ‘Last Things’ – Death, Judgement, Heaven and Hell

The Church teaches that those who have faithfully followed Christ in this life will, after death, experience the “beatific vision” – they will see God face-to-face and know the fullness of God’s life and love.

We have no “facts” about life after death, but eschatology, a branch of theology – the name of which is derived from the Greek word for “last” – searches Scripture, tradition and our understanding of the world for clues about what the Church refers to as the “last things”: death, judgement, heaven and hell.

Death – The Final Certainty

The astonishing variety of life that inhabits our planet – including human beings – has a limited span. Yet some men and women resist and deny the truth that everything that lives on earth must die.

Previous generations had a different concept of the physical reality of death than we do. When a person’s breath no longer clouded a mirror, when a heart no longer beat within a chest, death had arrived. In our era, death is judged to have occurred when brain activity ceases – an event which is often measured with high-tech machinery.

Christian philosophers have for centuries described death as the moment when the soul leaves the body – a way of thinking that the human Jesus, like his Jewish contemporaries, would have found unusual. While the Greeks argued that a human being is a spiritual essence inhabiting a physical body, Jewish thought maintained that a human being was an indivisible whole. However, although Christianity originated within Judaism, it soon spread beyond Jerusalem to the Greek world. The Greek idea that death freed a person’s soul from the prison of their body was soon adopted by Christian thinkers.

History has also shaped people’s concepts of life after death. What we believe today about heaven, hell and judgement has developed slowly over many centuries. Our beliefs about life after death not only reflect our understanding of physical reality, but also the varied concepts of God, of divine wrath and divine mercy.
The Constants of Belief
Two key beliefs shape the Christian approach to life after death. Firstly, faith in Jesus’ resurrection, and the conviction that we, like him, will rise again. Secondly, faith that Jesus will return to judge the world.

The belief in the resurrection of the dead, so central to Christian faith, developed slowly in Judaism in the centuries before Jesus’ birth. In Jesus’ day the resurrection of the dead was an idea that was hotly debated. Some Jews – the Pharisees – accepted it; others – the Sadducees – did not. The Gospels tell of the Sadducees’ attempt to make the idea look ridiculous by asking Jesus whose wife a woman widowed seven times would be in the next life. Jesus affirmed the resurrection, insisting that God is “God not of the dead but of the living” (see Mark 12:18-27).

The accounts of Jesus’ resurrection in the gospels make it clear that no one saw Jesus leave the tomb and provide no details about what actually happened on Easter morning. The gospels record two things:

1. The tomb was found empty.
2. The people who had loved and followed Jesus saw him alive after his burial.

The testimony of the gospels inspires a conviction about Jesus’ resurrection and ours: It is bodily. Like the Lord, we will rise not as disembodied souls, but as whole persons.

Scripture reveals that Jesus’ followers experienced the risen Lord as physically present. He ate (Luke 24:29-30, 41-43). He invited Thomas to touch the wounds he suffered during his crucifixion (John 20:27). Yet he moved without regard for physical limits, suddenly appearing in locked rooms (John 20:19, 26). His body was not the same as it had been.

Saint Paul, who never knew Jesus in his earthly life but encountered him in a very dramatic way on the road to Damascus, describes resurrection in this way:

“[The body] is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body.” (1 Corinthians 15:44)

We anticipate that our resurrection, like Jesus’ own, lies beyond the physical restraints of the world we know.

When the resurrection of the dead would take place was an issue for many centuries. The first Christians expected Jesus to come again to them some time soon. They thought that the dead simply slept, awaiting Jesus’ return.

As centuries went by without Jesus’ return in glory, believers began to debate the fate of the dead in the meantime. In 1336, Pope Benedict XII defined as dogma the long-growing conviction that people faced an individual judgement and entered heaven, hell or purgatory immediately after death. Our Christian
belief that our beloved dead are with God and therefore still close to us, within the reach of our prayers, reflects this doctrine.

At the time that Christian beliefs about heaven, hell, and purgatory, were first formulated they were thought of as places situated above the skies or beneath the earth. This understanding reflects the medieval view of the cosmos which located the earth as the centre around which the sun moved. Medieval theologians could not imagine anything like the vast universe filled with galaxies and solar systems that we know, much less a reality beyond space or time.

While bodily resurrection would seem to require some kind of a place, it may be more helpful to think of the “places” of the afterlife primarily as states of being.

**God’s Judgement**

The thought of God’s judgement causes fear among many Christians. Who of us dares to stand face-to-face with God? Who among us dares to own the darkness that lurks within us? The very word judgement becomes, in our minds, condemnation.

However, judgement more accurately implies an authoritative opinion, a formal court decision, discernment and comparison. In Old Testament times, Jewish people didn’t think of condemnation when they spoke of judgement. They didn’t see themselves as defendants in a criminal court, but as plaintiffs in a civil action, seeking redress from God for their suffering. Like their Jewish ancestors, Christians await vindication.

Speaking of the signs that announce his imminent return on the last day, Jesus told his followers to “stand up and raise your heads because your redemption is drawing near” (Luke 21:28). Nothing we do, nothing we are makes us worthy of God’s saving love.

> God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us. (Romans 5:8)

We cannot earn eternal life but, must accept with joy and gratitude everything God has lovingly given to us. We fear condemnation because we too easily focus on our own weaknesses and failures rather than on God’s goodness.

However, Jesus’ great desire is that we be with him in glory. He prayed that his disciples and all future believers “may be with me where I am” (John 17:24).

Saint Paul, when speaking of facing judgement, uses the following image:

> Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known. (1 Corinthians 13:12)
Paul is assuring us that God knows us completely, looking behind our masks and loving us as we really are. No one knows us so well and yet loves us with such enduring passion as God does.

The Last Judgement
Centuries of Christian art reflect many changes in our understanding of Christ’s triumphant return – the event so eagerly awaited by the first believers. Well into the early Middle Ages, works of art suggest joy rather than terror, as the faithful dead, wakening from death’s sleep, lift their arms to acclaim the returning Lord.

However, five hundred years later, depictions of the separation of the damned – the scene described by Jesus in Matthew 25:31-46 – begin to appear. As the centuries pass by, their misery becomes more dominant and more horribly detailed.

The reasons for the change in emphasis are complex, but are linked to the fact that the first Christian millennium ended without Jesus’ return on clouds of glory. The Dies Irae, a hymn describing the terrors of Judgement Day, became part of the funeral liturgy at this time and remained until the liturgical reforms following the Second Vatican Council.

Modern Scripture scholars and Pope John Paul II warn against taking biblical descriptions of judgement and punishment too literally. Jesus used the imagery of the last judgement to dramatise the urgency of his proclamation of the reign of God and the seriousness of our decisions for or against God’s kingdom.

Today we are returning to the positive aspects of Christ’s return as Judge. This is the hour when we should indeed “raise our heads”, when our troubled world will become a new creation – the “new heaven and new earth” described in Revelation 21:1 in which our risen bodies will dwell. God wants to save all God’s creation.

Heaven – A World Made New
How God will make all creation new is beyond our knowing. Our bodies will not simply be resuscitated or reconstructed. Neither is the physical construction of the new earth what really matters. What is important is the world’s transformation into the prophets’ vision of a world without suffering and death.

When Jesus depicted the judgement scene that inspired later Christian artists, he spoke of attention to others: “I was hungry and you gave me food...” (Matthew 25:35). Fittingly, the favourite image of biblical authors for a world without suffering and death is a banquet, a celebration with rich foods and choice wines (see Isaiah 25:6).

From the time God gave Moses commandments which held a people responsible to God for harming a neighbour, our relationship with God has
been intimately linked to our relationships with other people. In heaven we will, like God, be able to love perfectly.

Jesus rose with the scars of his crucifixion still apparent on his body. When we rise to new life it will be as individuals with a history, people scarred by our sinfulness and that of others, but also as people who, like Jesus, bear the marks of sacrifices made in the name of love.

Saint Paul named three things that last – faith, hope and love – and insisted that the greatest of these is love (see 1 Corinthians 13:13). The love we show now will endure forever.

In thinking of the life to come, it’s hard for us to imagine that we wouldn’t tire of anything that goes on forever. But the heavenly banquet takes place “beyond time”. Perhaps the closest we ever come to an understanding of this is through those moments when “time stands still”, when we were caught up in love, so absorbed in something outside ourselves that we are unaware of time passing. Such moments are a foretaste of heaven.

**Hell – The Demands of Justice**

Human beings seek justice and find the idea of an eternity in hell for people whom they regard as manifestly evil – Hitler, Ivan the Terrible, or Saddam Hussein – an attractive one. The best of us admit that we deserve some punishment, for wrongs that we have done or good things that we have failed to do. Our human concept of justice clearly includes punishment.

However, Jesus insisted that God’s justice is very different from human justice, having no edge of vindictiveness. Jesus constantly rebuked those who criticised him for keeping company with sinners, as can be seen, for example, in his call of Matthew (see Matthew 9:9-13) or his meeting with Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1-10). Everything Jesus said and did revealed God to be infinitely merciful.

However, human beings have the freedom to reject God and refuse God’s mercy. We become who we are by the many choices we make over a lifetime to either accept or decline God’s invitation to share in divine life. Each decision turns us towards God and neighbour or away from them.

Many preachers speak about the end of the world, interpreting the Scriptures in such a way as to emphasise the destruction God has planned for creation and the countless souls burning in hell. It is important to view the references to hell in Scripture and in the teaching of the Church as a call to responsibility so that we might use our human freedom in accord with our eternal destiny. They are an urgent call to conversion.

One day, when our life on earth ends, so will our ability to make further choices. The persons we are when we die – either loving or unloving – are the persons that we have become over the course of our lives through either our acceptance or rejection of God’s mercy and love. God condemns no one
to hell – people condemn themselves as a consequence of their own free choices.

Although the Church definitely teaches the existence and eternity of hell, the Church has never taught that anyone is actually in hell. The great theologian, Karl Rahner, once wrote:

*There is nothing to prevent a Christian’s hoping (not knowing) that in practice the final fate of every human being . . . by the power of God’s grace, which dwarfs and also redeems all evil, will be such that hell will not in the end exist.*

Christians may have this hope for others and for ourselves, but only if we take the possibility of hell seriously. Otherwise we would not do justice to the seriousness of life, to the importance of moral decisions and the weight of the individual’s responsibility.

**Purgatory – Purification for Heaven**

Catholic belief includes a concept of purgatory – some means of cleansing or purification for those of us whose lives are a mix of selfishness and generous love.

Most of us are neither great saints nor great sinners. We cannot stand before God without shame for our sins. Purgatory is not one of the “last things” but a state of transition that leads to heaven. As Rahner says, purgatory is “an element of the encounter with God; that is, the encounter of the unfinished person, still immature in his love, with the holy, infinite, loving God; an encounter which is profoundly humiliating, painful and therefore purifying.”

Prayer transcends time and space. Catholics pray for the dead and believe that their prayers can ease the process of purification. The prayer we offer today for a loved one powerfully places us with that person. Lifted beyond the reach of time, prayer can affect any moment in that person’s history – even the long-past moment of death when they came face-to-face with God.

**A Future in God’s Hands**

Cardinal Joseph Bernardin once described prayer as “relaxing in the hand of God.” In the long run, the “last things” are, like us, in God’s loving hands. It is a waste of time and energy fretting over details that no one can determine. We need only to trust Saint Paul’s assurance:

*What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the human heart conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him.* (1 Corinthians 2:9)

As Rahner says:

*Let us for the present simply have a little patience with history as it runs its course, with ourselves, and with God.*
Limbo
Over the centuries countless Christian parents, believing that baptism is necessary for a person to enter heaven, have worried greatly about the fate of their infants who have died before receiving this sacrament.

Limbo (from the Latin, *limbus*, meaning “hem” or “edge”) is the name given to the place or state of natural happiness that the non-baptised dead are said to experience. Those in limbo do not know God “face to face”.

Medieval theologians postulated the existence of limbo to mitigate the harshness of those – Saint Augustine among them – who held that all unbaptised children who die are condemned to hell, though they do not suffer all its pains because they are not guilty of personal sin.

The Catholic Church never officially adopted the teaching of limbo. Modern theology, while not rejecting the notion of limbo directly, questions the theological premises upon which limbo is based.

Since the Second Vatican Council, the Church has emphasised that God wishes to save all people.

*Those who, through no fault of their own, do not know the Gospel of Christ or his Church, but who nevertheless seek God with a sincere heart, and, moved by grace, try in their actions to do his will as they know it through the dictates of their consciences – those too may achieve eternal salvation.* (The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, 16)

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* makes no mention of limbo, but entrusts unbaptised children to the love and mercy of God:

*As regards children who have died without Baptism, the Church can only entrust them to the mercy of God, as she does in her funeral rites for them. Indeed, the great mercy of God who desires that all people should be saved, and Jesus' tenderness toward children which caused him to say: “Let the children come to me, do not hinder them,” allow us to hope that there is a way of salvation for children who have died without Baptism. All the more urgent is the Church’s call not to prevent little children coming to Christ through the gift of holy Baptism.* (CCC 1261)

The Order of Christian Funerals includes two prayers for children who die before baptism:

*O Lord, whose ways are beyond understanding, listen to the prayers of your faithful people: that those weighed down by grief at the loss of this child may find reassurance in your infinite goodness.*

*God of all consolation, searcher of mind and heart, the faith of these parents is known to you. Comfort them with the knowledge that the child for whom they grieve is entrusted now to your loving care.*
Links with the Student Text

**Task Twenty-Two**
This task asks students to study a list of terms which describe the experiences that lie beyond death – judgement, heaven, purgatory or hell.

a) Students are required to work out which terms belong with which of the four experiences.

Judgement
- Particular and general
- An indication of what we have made of our lives
- Christ returns to claim his own

Heaven
- The company of Mary and the saints
- Seeing God face to face
- The fullness of God’s life and love

Purgatory
- Purification of sins
- An opportunity to grow in love of God
- The support and assistance of prayer

Hell
- Deprived of all love and happiness
- A decision to refuse God’s mercy and love forever
- Described as eternal punishment

b) Students should then include the terms in a brief explanation of the experiences of judgement, heaven, purgatory and hell that they describe.

Answers will vary.

**Something to Discuss**
Pope John Paul II says that “the thought of hell and even less the improper use of biblical images must not create anxiety or despair, but is a necessary and healthy reminder of freedom . . . .”

Students are asked to consider the connection between hell and human freedom.

Hell is not a place, nor does God send anyone to hell as a punishment. Hell, rather, is the state freely chosen by those who refuse God’s mercy and separate themselves from God forever. Those who freely chose for all eternity to turn completely away from God, depriving themselves of all love and happiness, are said to be in hell.
**Something to Do**
Over the centuries many famous Christian artists have produced paintings or other images of what they imagine God’s judgement, heaven, purgatory or hell to be like.

This activity invites students to use the Internet or other resources to find examples of some of these images. They should choose one image that they find interesting or thought-provoking.

a) Students should describe how the image presents God’s judgement, heaven, purgatory or hell.
b) They should explain why they think the artist has chosen to present judgement, heaven, purgatory or hell in this way.
c) They should then state whether they identify with the way it has been presented, giving reasons why or why not.
Glossary of General Terms

The entries in this glossary are for words italicised in the text, and other useful definitions.

The references in the brackets, eg.N.2766 are to paragraphs in the Catechism of the Catholic Church.

There is a separate glossary of Māori terms.

**All Souls**
The feast of All Souls is celebrated on 2 November for all deceased Christians that ‘they may rest in peace’. Catholics are encouraged to pray on this feast day for their departed relatives and others.

**Anointing (N. 695, 1499-1532)**
To anoint someone is to pour or rub oil on them in a religious ceremony. In the Old Testament anointing is a sign of election by God. Thus priest, prophets, and kings were anointed.

The title Messiah, or Christ, means “the anointed one”. So Christ is the one, above all others, anointed by the Holy Spirit. This is the source of the Catholic understanding of anointing as a sign of the presence of the Holy Spirit. Anointing is used in this way in the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Orders. Holy oil is also used in the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick to heal or strengthen those ill or dying.

**Committal**
The rite of committal is the final part of the Christian funeral rites. As the body reaches its final resting place, the community expresses the hope that, with all those who have gone before marked with the sign of faith, the deceased awaits the glory of the resurrection. The rite of committal is an expression of the communion that exists between the Church on earth and the Church in heaven — the deceased passes with the farewell prayers of the community of believers into the welcoming company of those who need faith no longer but see God face to face.

**Communion of Saints (N. 946-959)**
This term has two closely linked meanings: communion ‘in holy things’ and ‘among holy people’. The first meaning refers to the ‘goods’ shared by all members of the Church. Such goods as the faith itself, the sacraments - especially the communion brought about by the Eucharist, the graces of all of its members are joined in one great unity (in Christ) of belief and worship of God. This includes those now living, those who have died and are undergoing purification and those already with God. Thus Catholics pray for the dead and to the saints for intercession.
Creed (N. 170-197)
A creed is a statement of belief. Many religions use creeds as concise, authoritative summaries of their essential beliefs, often in worship or initiation rites. These syntheses or formulae are also referred to as professions of faith.

In the Christian Church the two most important creeds are the Apostles’ Creed and the Nicene Creed.

Cremation (N. 2301)
Cremation is the reduction of a dead body to ashes by burning. It is a common form of funeral practice in many cultures. Christians traditionally shunned cremation. They followed the Jewish custom of burial which was also rich in the symbolism of rising to new life with Christ. Because some saw cremation as a denial of the resurrection of the body the Catholic Church for a long time condemned the practice. Today, however, the Church permits cremation unless it is chosen for reasons contrary to Catholic teaching.

Eternal Life (N. 1020, 1023)
This is participation in the life of God. (See John 17:3) It is not just unending existence but is the outcome of a supernatural gift. It begins in the present and reaches its fullness after death. Eternal life is living in a personal relationship with God through the work of Jesus Christ and the gift of the Holy Spirit. It is the culmination of Christian hope - “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.” (John 3:16)

Eternity
From a theological perspective eternity is an attribute of God who is timeless. Time is about change. God being perfect, does not change and therefore is beyond time. Eternity therefore is not time without a beginning or an end. It is rather the unchanging state of God which those who inherit eternal life will share.

Everlasting life (N. 1020, 1023)
Also translated as ‘eternal life’, this does not simply mean unending existence. Rather it means a new life in union with God. This eternal life is achieved in its fullness in heaven when we see God ‘face to face’, [1 Corinthians 13:12] but it begins in the graced activity of the present life. Everlasting life is in essence a life lived in a personal relationship with God through the saving work of Christ and the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Funeral (N. 1680-1690)
A funeral is simply the ceremony by which a dead person is buried or cremated. Catholic funerals have as a central theme life forever with Christ. The ‘Order of Christian Funerals’ recommends a variety of readings, hymns and prayers for the funeral rite which reflect this Christian hope in the resurrection of the dead, as well as the consolation of God in our sorrow.
Funeral Mass
This is the name for a Mass celebrated for the dead. It is also referred to as the Mass of Christian Burial or the Mass for the Dead. It was formerly referred to as a Requiem Mass.

Heaven (N. 1023-29)
Heaven is a state of being in blessed community and perfectly incorporated, eternally, with God. It is hard for us to conceive of heaven. As Saint Paul puts it:
“What we see now is like a dim image in a mirror: then we shall see face-to-face.” (1 Cor 13:12) Heaven, then, is being face-to-face with God. Or to put it another way, it is union with God. It is a state of literally unimaginable joy or bliss. “What no one ever saw or heard; what no one ever thought could happen, is the very thing prepared for those who love God.” (1 Corinthians 2:9)

Heaven is living on in love, eternally. Among the most vivid images of heaven are those found in the Book of Revelation, especially in Chapters 21 and 22. Heaven is the love of God enveloping all creation. It is ‘the ultimate end and fulfilment of the deepest longings, the state of supreme definitive happiness.’ Heaven is a communion not only with the Holy Trinity, but also with the Virgin Mary and ‘all the angels and saints’ including our loved ones who are with God.

Hell (N. 1033-41)
Hell is a state of being eternally self excluded from communion with God and the Blessed. Judgement is possible because human beings are essentially constituted in freedom, i.e. it is of the very nature of the human person to have free will, to have the freedom to choose. Freedom brings responsibility and responsibility inevitably implies judgement. So we can also say that hell is a consequence of God’s judgement on our unchanging condition of freely choosing to be ‘anti-God’ and ‘anti-Christ’. Because the Church takes human freedom seriously it teaches that eternal separation from God is a possibility. This separation is what is commonly called hell. The popular pictures of devils, fires, etc., which are based on Scripture, are figurative yet apt descriptions of the real pain of the loss of God. It should be noted that the Church strongly affirms the existence of heaven and all the saints who dwell in it.

Holy Souls (N. 1030-32)
The traditional term for the souls of those undergoing purgatory. Catholics are asked to pray for the Holy Souls especially on All Souls Day, 2 November, and indeed during the whole month of November.

Judgement (N. 677-682, 1021-1022, 1038-1041)
Judgement is a faculty that allows a person to make critical distinctions and so form balanced viewpoints or make good decisions. Judgement is also a verdict or formal decision made in a court of law or by a judge or panel of judges. Christians speak of God’s judgement of the individual after death as the particular judgement, while that at the end of time is known as the general judgement.
Kingdom or Reign of God (N.541ff, 671)
The Kingdom or Reign of God is a term used in both the Old and New Testaments to describe the saving and life-giving rule of God over creation and human history. The preface for the liturgy of the Feast of Christ the King describes it as "an eternal and universal Kingdom: a Kingdom of truth and life, a Kingdom of holiness and grace, a Kingdom of justice, love and peace". In the Lord’s Prayer Christians pray that this Kingdom may come “on earth as it is in Heaven”. On the one hand Jesus ushered in the Kingdom with his presence on earth (Mark 4:30-32) while on the other hand the Reign of God will not be experienced in all its fullness until Christ comes “again in glory to judge the living and the dead”. (Mark 13:26-27). Christians are called on to take responsibility, both in the personal and the public spheres, for trying to foster the reign of justice and peace in their own times and situations.

Last Judgement (N. 681-682, 1038-1041)
Also referred to as the General Judgement (see entry on Judgement).

Last Things
The “four last things” are death, judgement, heaven and hell. In Catholic theology, the doctrine of the “last things” brings theological reflection to bear on the ultimate finality of the human person. The consideration of the “last things” addresses the questions of death, the judgement of the person at the moment of death (particular judgement), the collective judgement of the human community at the Second Coming (general or final judgement), the resurrection of the body, and the Second Coming of Christ.

Paschal Candle
The Paschal or Easter Candle is a symbol of Christ’s resurrection from the dead for our salvation. It is usually a large candle. It is lit at a special ceremony at the start of the Easter Vigil and is marked with the signs for Alpha and Omega (Christ, the beginning and the end) and the numbers of the current year. The Paschal Candle is used throughout the year at baptisms and funerals for its Easter symbolism.

Perpetual Light
This well-known term from the traditional Catholic prayer for the dead – “and let perpetual light shine upon them” – is a metaphor for the light of Christ and life with God.

Pharisees
A sect or movement of lay people within Judaism noted for their strict observance of the Law of Moses. The Gospels record several incidents of mutual hostility between Jesus and the Pharisees whom he accused of hypocrisy. (Used as an adjective with a small ‘p’, the word pharisee in English means a hypocrite.) St Paul, before his conversion, and Nicodemus (Jn 3:1) are identified as being Pharisees.
Purgatory (N. 1030-1032)
The Church gives the name purgatory to the purification of those who have died and are not yet ready to enter heaven to be with God and the blessed for eternity. Based on a passage (2 Maccabees 12:45) in the Book of Maccabees the Church has long honoured the dead and prayed for those undergoing purification before entering heaven. These are remembered particularly on All Souls' Day.

Requiem
This is the traditional name for a Mass celebrated for the dead. It was the first word of the opening hymn in the Roman Rite Mass for the dead in Latin. It means rest. The official name for a Requiem Mass today is the Mass of Christian Burial or the Mass for the Dead, or simply the Funeral Mass.

Resurrection (N. 988-1004)
The term resurrection refers, in the first instance, to the central Christian belief that God raised Jesus to new life after his death on the cross and burial in the tomb. The New Testament describes a number of appearances of the Risen Christ to his disciples. Following St. Paul the Church teaches that Christ's resurrection is the 'first fruits' of many (see 1 Corinthians 15:20). All who die 'in Christ' will be raised to life with him and the Father through the power of the Holy Spirit. The Risen Lord appeared to the disciples as a glorified body. Those raised to life will also experience the resurrection of the body and not simply some spiritual or immaterial existence.

Rite (N. 1203)
In general this term refers to the formal procedure, the words and actions laid down, for a religious ceremony, e.g. the Rite of Baptism. It can also refer to the forms of worship of particular churches e.g. the Roman rite, the Byzantine rite, the Armenian rite. Some religious orders also have their own rites.

Rosary (N. 2678, 2708)
This is the most popular of all Catholic devotional prayers. Its name comes from the Latin 'rosarium' meaning a collection of devotional texts. Its origins are lost in the past though the Dominican Friars did much to popularise the prayer in the Middle Ages. Its present form dates from the 16th Century. The traditional rosary consists in the recitation of fifteen 'decades' (sets of ten) of the Hail Mary each introduced by the Lord’s Prayer and concluded with a Doxology. Each decade is accompanied by a meditation on some aspect of the life of Christ or the Virgin Mary. These are divided into three groups of five known as the Joyful, Sorrowful and Glorious Mysteries. However, in his Apostolic Letter on the “Rosary of the Virgin Mary” (Rosarium Virginis Mariae), published on Oct. 16, 2002, Pope John Paul II introduced a fourth set of Mysteries – the Luminous – that focus on Jesus' public life. These are also known as the Mysteries of Light. Usually only one set of Mysteries is recited at a time. To assist the memory, the prayers are usually counted on a string of beads.
Scribes
In ancient times scribes were simply a class of professional people who could read and write. In New Testament times the scribes are the professional lawyers i.e. experts in the Law of Moses. Many scribes appear to have been Pharisees (see entry). The Gospels portray the scribes as hostile to Jesus perhaps because he was a threat to their influence (eg Mt 5:20).

Second Coming (N. 668 –682)
This is the awaited return of Jesus ‘from the right hand of the Father’ to ‘judge the living and the dead’. This Last Judgement will announce the fulfilment of the Kingdom or Reign of God inaugurated by the first appearance of Jesus.

Soul (N. 362-368)
Soul is the spiritual principle of a human being. It is the innermost aspect, that which is of greatest value. The Church teaches that each person is a unity of body and soul, and not a soul trapped within a material body. We have only one soul created by God, and it is immortal. That is, it does not perish when separated from the body at death but will be re-united with the body in the final Resurrection.

Thurible
From the Latin for ‘censer’ or ‘incense’, a thurible is a vessel containing hot coals on which incense is burned. The thurible is suspended on a short chain and is swung backwards and forwards to create smoke. Incensing with a thurible is done to honour sacred objects such as the altar, the Gospel book and the bodies of Christians, living and dead.

Viaticum (N. 1524-5)
From the Latin meaning ‘food for the journey’, viaticum is the offering of Holy Communion to those soon to die. Not to be confused with the Sacrament of Anointing, viaticum may also include a Liturgy of the Word, a renewal of baptismal vows and a sign of peace. It may be celebrated within or outside Mass.

Vigil
From the Latin meaning ‘to keep watch’, a vigil in Church terms is a prayerful watch on the eve of an important solemnity in the liturgical year. The Easter Vigil Mass is the most important of these. As each Sunday is reminiscent of Easter Sunday, a parish Mass on Saturday evening is referred to as a vigil mass. The Order of Christian Funerals provides for a vigil of prayer on the evening before the funeral liturgy.
GLOSSARY OF MĀORI TERMS

This glossary gives explanation of Māori terms which are italicised in the text.

Pronunciation – correct pronunciation of Māori comes only with practice in listening to and speaking the language. The English phonetic equivalents provided under each Māori word are intended to give help, for teachers who need it, in providing reasonably accurate examples for students. If in doubt please seek assistance from someone practised in correct pronunciation of Te Reo Māori.

* indicates stressed syllable

Aroha (úh-raw-huh)
In general, means love and/or compassion. Note that the word is used in two senses:

1. A joyful relationship involving the expression of goodwill and the doing of good, empathy.

2. Sympathy, compassion towards those who are unhappy or suffering.

Atua (úh-too-uh)
The Māori word Atua has been used to describe God in the Christian sense since missionary times. Before the coming of Christianity, Māori used the word atua to describe many kinds of spiritual beings (in the way we now use the word “spirit”) and also unusual events. Only the priestly and aristocratic classes of Māori society (ariki, rangatira and tohunga) had access to knowledge of the Supreme Being, Io, also known as Io-matua, Io-matua-i-te-kore, Io-te-wananga, etc. It seems that many, but not all, tribes had this belief in Io before missionary times. Māori use several words to refer to God in the Christian sense:

Te Atua – God, the Supreme Being

Ihowa – Jehovah

Te Ariki – Lord, more correctly used of Jesus

Te Matua – the father (literally, parent)

Io – a term used for God in some, but not all Māori circles.
(Te Atua is acceptable in all circles).

Haka (húh-kuh)
Posture dance usually performed by males.

Hākari (húh-kuh-ree)
Ritual feast.
Hapū (huh-póo)
A sub-tribe – a collective of related families all with a common ancestor. The hapū, rather than the iwi, is the operational unit of Māori society.

He Tangata (heh túh-nguh-tuh)
Human beings, humankind.

Hehu Karaiti (héh-hoo kuh-rúh-ee-tee)
Jesus Christ.

Hongi (háw-nghee)
Touching of noses in greeting.

Iwi (ih-wee)
A tribe, a collective of hapū, all with a common ancestor. Can also mean a race of people, as in te iwi Māori (the Māori people), te iwi Pākehā (Pākehā people), etc. Negotiations with government are usually carried out at iwi level.

Karanga (kúh-ruh-nguh)
The call of welcome.

Karakia (kúh-ruh-kee-uh)
Prayer, ritual.

Kawe Mate (kúh-weh múh-teh)
Taking or carrying the death to other marae.

Kiri Mate (kée-ree múh-teh)
The bereaved family. Literally, skin of death.

Koha (káw-huh)
Gift, contribution.

Mana (múh-nuh)
Spiritual power and authority. Its sources are both divine and human, namely, God, one’s ancestors and one’s achievements in life. Mana comes to people in three ways: Mana tangata, from people, mana whenua, from the land, and mana atua, from the spiritual powers.

 Manaaki (muh-náh-kee)
Show kindness or hospitality.

Manuhiri (múh-noo-hee-ree)
Visitors and guests.

Marae (múh-ruh-ee)
Traditional meeting place, consisting of a meeting house (whare hui) and dining room (whare kai). Strictly speaking, the term refers to the marae atea, the courtyard in front of the meeting house.
Mauri (múh-oo-ree)
The life force or principle of all creation.

Mihi (mée-hee)
To greet; a greeting.

Noa (náw-uh)
Free from tapu restrictions, which have been lifted by ceremony or ritual. This form of noa is positive, it is the freedom to go on with life after being released from restricting factors, e.g. after a powhiri; on leaving a cemetery; after a reconciliation; etc. Noa can also be negative: a state of weakness and powerlessness which affects both people who have suffered violation or abuse and also those who have caused violation or abuse.

Pōhiri (páw-hee-ree) or Pōwhiri (páw-fee-ree)
To welcome. The process of welcoming.

Poroporoaki (páw-raw-paw-raw-uh-kee)
Leave taking, farewell.

Pūriri (póo-ree-ree)
A tree, the greenery of which is commonly carried or worn at tangihanga.

Ringa Wera (rée-nguh wéh-ruh)
Workers. Those who care for the marae and its visitors. Literally, hot hands.

Rongopai (ráw-ngaw-puh-ee)

Takahi Whare (túh-kuh-hee fúh-reh)
Part of the protocol for clearing a house of its deceased occupant. Literally, tramping the house.

Tangi (túh-nee)
A word meaning ‘cry’ and in particular the wailing or keening for the dead expressed by Maori women. Very often it is used as an abbreviation for tangihanga, meaning the customary form of Maori funeral - a hui involving a process of grieving.

Tapu (túh-poo)
This word is used in three senses:

1) restrictions or prohibitions which safeguard the dignity and survival of people and things

2) the value, dignity, or worth of someone or something, eg the holiness of God, human dignity, the value of the environment

3) the intrinsic being or essence of someone or something, eg tapu i Te Atua is the intrinsic being of God, the divine nature.
Please note: when tapu refers to the Tapu of God it is written as Tapu.

**Tautoko** (túh-oo-taw-kaw)
To support.

**Te Aranga** (teh úh-ruh-nguh)
The Resurrection.

**Te Kupu a Te Ariki** (teh kóo-poo uh teh úh-ree-kee)
The Word of God.

**Te Rangatiratanga** (teh ruh-nguh-tée-ruh-tuh-nguh)
The Kingdom or Reign of God.

**Te Wairua Tapu** (teh wúh-ee-roo-uh túh-poo)
The Holy Spirit.

**Tikanga** (tée-kuh-nguh)
Protocol, custom.

**Tohunga** (táw-hoo-nguh)
Expert.

**Tūmanako** (tóo-muh-nuh-kaw)
Hope.

**Tūpāpaku** (tóo-pah-puh-koo)
The body of the deceased. Literally, to stand shallow, rather than tall.

**Tūpuna** (tóo-poo-nuh)
Ancestors. Some areas use the term tīpuna.

**Urupā** (oo-roo-páh)
Cemetery.

**Wai** (wúh-ee)
Water.

**Waiata** (wúh-ee-uh-tuh)
Song. To sing.

**Wairua** (wúh-ee-roo-uh)
Spirit.

**Whaikōrero** (fúh-ee-kaw-reh-raw)
To speak, to orate. A speech.

**Whakanoa** (fúh-kuh-naw-uh)
To free from tapu restrictions.
**Whakapapa** (fūh-kuh-puh-puh)
Genealogy or family tree.

**Whakapono** (fūh-kuh-paw-naw)
Faith.

**Whānau** (fāh-nuh-oo)
Extended Family.

**Wharekai** (fūh-reh kūh-ee)
Dining hall or room.

**Whare karakia** (fūh-reh kūh-ruh-kee-uh)
Church.

**Whare mate** (fūh-reh múh-teh)
Place where the dead lie in state. Literally, house of death.

**Wharenui** (fūh-reh nóo-ee)
Meeting house. Literally, big house.

**Whenua** (féh-noo-uh)
Land, country. Also placenta, afterbirth.
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