

Tales from the Madhouse

A 1A Productions/BBC Manchester co-production

**A POWERFUL AND
CHALLENGING VIDEO
RESOURCE TO
SUPPORT EFFECTIVE
AND ENRICHING
A LEVEL AND POST-16
RELIGIOUS STUDIES/
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION
AND MEDIA STUDIES**

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TEACHERS' NOTES



bible society making the bible heard

BACKGROUND

Tales from the Madhouse is a challenging, powerful and flexible resource consisting of **eight programmes** which can support work within the context of **A level RS** or **General post-16 RE**. The **support materials** provide a variety of activities from which the teacher can select according to students' needs, courses followed and other constraints such as curriculum time.

The activities are aimed at **building on previous knowledge and understanding** gained through Agreed Syllabus work up to KS4. With A Level candidates in particular, where there may be a more substantial background, then the more challenging activities can be selected.

The activities also place **emphasis on individual and group contribution/research**, are suited to specialist and non-specialist teachers, and are relevant for a variety of models of curriculum delivery. The materials also support Key Skills delivery, aid Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development and provide resources for **Collective Worship**.

CURRICULUM ISSUES

The **pathway** through the activities will depend on a variety of factors, e.g.

- The **course** students are following
- **Frequency** and **length** of lessons
- **Homework** – whether an expectation
- **Specialist or non-specialist** teachers
- **Resources** available, e.g. ICT
- **Accreditation** – whether post-16 General RE is accredited, e.g. via Key Skills or VCE/AVCE

CHOICE OF ACTIVITIES AND TIMING

A variety of activities are presented, many of which can be readily adapted for use with any of the programmes in *Tales from the Madhouse*. Aspects of activities can be tailored to meet constraints of specifications and timetabling, without jeopardising the integrity and rigour of the activity.

AUDIENCE FOR RESULTS

Providing an **audience** for the results of activities can do a great deal to focus thought and planning, and raise the quality of what is produced. Potential audiences could include:

- **Peer group** (presentation and evaluation)
- **Collective Worship** (own year group or other)
- Article for the **school magazine**
- Presentation on school **website**
- Class **wall display**, e.g. of mind maps
- Resource centre, e.g. **briefing folder** (see below)
- **Key Skills portfolio**

BRIEFING FOLDER

Students produce a particular piece of work relevant to their course in the knowledge that each submission will be evaluated against commonly agreed criteria by a panel chosen from the group. The panel will select the three pieces which best meet the agreed criteria and these are placed in the briefing folder. Any student can then access the best quality work (e.g. by photocopying or downloading).

Over a period of time, the teacher can arrange for **each student** to be a member of the panel, and for each to have a contribution in the folder.

The briefing folder can be **paper-based** (e.g. folder in a central location) or **electronic** (e.g. pages on a school or department website).

THE VALUE OF VIDEO/DVD

Video/DVD is a medium which offers RE/RS a **wide range of opportunities** to explore key religious, philosophical, spiritual, social and moral issues. For example:

Video/DVD allows students to **gain insights** into beliefs and values through real or fictitious stories. They can be prompted from a safe distance to question, explore, investigate and reflect.

Video/DVD can present information and insights in a **readily accessible and already familiar format**, and so be a stimulus to effective learning.

Use of the **imagination** can be stimulated through the dramatic telling of story and personal experience, leading the student on to work creatively in a variety of ways.

Students can also be led to **think critically** about what is presented via video/DVD – to distinguish between fact, opinion and belief, for example, or to appreciate how a combination of graphics and sound can present information, experience and ideas in an objective or subjective way.

USING VIDEO/DVD – METHODOLOGY

- **Carefully select the section** of a video/DVD which best serves your purpose. A programme in *Tales from the Madhouse* series (length: 15 minutes) could be shown in its entirety in a lesson but a 2/3 minute clip would be more appropriate in Collective Worship.
- **Plan the focus** for students. What do you want them to concentrate on and understand? Important data given in a programme could be supplied on OHP or task sheet, leaving students free to concentrate on the main focus, e.g. the line of reasoning used by a character, or emotions expressed. Aim for two or three focus points.
- If possible, **make the video/DVD available** outside of the lesson (lunchtime, resource centre). Some students will benefit from watching the clip again, or want to watch the remainder.
- **Before students view** the clip, outline the type of activity the video/DVD is a stimulus for, to inform their viewing.

USE

Use selected episodes from the video/DVD within a work module which explores **the role and influence of Jesus** on his contemporaries and leads on to discussion of his relevance and influence in the twenty-first century.

The **two introductory activities** and **discussion prompt** given here offer ways of engaging student interest and indicate the direction the learning will take.

JESUS IN ART – A PROMPT FOR DISCUSSION

The statue of Jesus by Mark Wallinger, shown above, caused a stir when it was displayed on a plinth in Trafalgar Square, London. Passers-by of many faiths and none confidently declared that this was **not** Jesus – he didn't look like this – and some went on to describe Jesus as they thought he looked.

Setting the scene

Set the scene for the module by provoking a response from your students to the way Jesus is portrayed in art:

- Mount a **wall display** of contemporary and traditional images – which one is Jesus? (see Resources) and/or
- Download images from the internet and, using a data projector linked to your computer, **display** these onto a whiteboard
- If students are presented with the display as they enter the room, **discussion** will flow naturally and can then be directed to key areas such as:
 - Was Jesus a **historical** person – how do we know?
 - Why is it that **we don't seem to know** what he looked like?
 - Is the **diversity of images** an advantage or disadvantage?
 - Is Jesus' (or anybody's) **physical appearance** really very important?
 - **What else** is it important to know about someone? What else do people claim to know about Jesus? (**facts/beliefs/opinions**)
 - What **sources** are used? What gives a source **authority**, and for whom?

INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITY 1: PEOPLE OF INFLUENCE – A SMALL GROUP ACTIVITY

Introduction

This activity could be developed over two lessons. Alternatively, key elements could be completed within one lesson (with ICT access). Written tasks could be set as homework if appropriate; group presentations (possibly using a presentational tool such as PowerPoint) are an alternative to formal written assignments.

Students could:

- **Agree and justify** a set of criteria by which people should be included among those who had most influence on the last 100 years. Some of the **qualities assigned to Jesus** in the discussion prompt activity could be considered here.
- **Brainstorm people** who have had such an influence. Aim for 10. **Apply** own criteria and agree the final list.
- **Study** the choices of other groups – have they selected people from a broad range of fields of experience, e.g. religion, science, medicine, media, or is their selection quite

narrow? Does their choice include figures from other nationalities and religions to their own? Do selections match **that group's** criteria? Do they match the **investigating group's** criteria? **Feedback** to the whole group.

- **Study** the "Thinkquest" 2000 internet challenge results – <http://library.thinkquest.org/C005803F>.

Identify the **criteria** applied by the students who entered the challenge. **Select** one person from the list (Albert Einstein, Mahatma Gandhi, Adolf Hitler, Helen Keller, Nelson Mandela and Omm Kolthoum) with whom the group is unfamiliar and **investigate** the reasons for inclusion. Would this person meet the group's own criteria? Give **reasons**. **Identify** which figures had a religious motivation and **assess** the importance this played.

Personal reflection 1

Watch an episode of the BBC's video/DVD *Son of God* which investigates the life of Jesus. Identify examples of **fact, opinion and belief**.

Identify how what is presented on the video/DVD a) supports your own beliefs and opinions and/or challenges them. Your response may take any suitable format.

Extension to personal reflection 1

Develop a class resource for a lesson with Year 8 or 9 students. Deliver the lesson and evaluate the resource in light of students' response to it.

Personal reflection 2

Study the poem "One solitary life" (page 13) and write a personal response to the poet. You may wish to ask questions, agree or disagree, or challenge. Your response may take any suitable format.

INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITY 2: SURVEYING ATTITUDES AND BELIEFS – A SMALL GROUP ACTIVITY

Introduction

This activity is suitable for all students, and is an excellent way into a first AS module where studying religion and human experience is required.

Careful thought needs to be given to the amount of class time allocated, (perhaps restricting it to the stimulus, initial discussion and planning and then presentation of conclusions). Constructing, conducting and analysing the survey could take place in homework time with accreditation being offered within Key Skills as a valid incentive.

If only one lesson is available, you might concentrate on discussion arising from the stimulus and a personal response/reflection to one piece of data. A summary of data on a task sheet would be essential in this scenario.

Students could:

- **Study** some of the questions asked in the chosen survey – and **speculate** briefly on likely outcome.
- **View/read** the stimulus selected and discuss in small groups responses to the actual results.
- **Identify and justify** a hypothesis to test out.
- **Demonstrate** an understanding of how the task contributes to their work in RE/RS and **which learning objectives** they are seeking to develop.
- **Plan** questions for a survey of their own. This could include a) several of the questions from the stimulus incorporated entirely into their survey, or partially (e.g. by concentrating on a particular age range), b) an angle the stimulus did not cover, c) just two world faiths to explore.
- Agree the **audience** to receive the results and plan to present the results appropriately for that audience.
- **Carry out** the survey among a minimum of 100 people in the target groups, demonstrating how ICT can facilitate and speed up this element of conducting a survey. **Analyse and present** the results.
- Complete a **personal reflection and evaluation** of the activity, which is separate to and distinct from the group's presentation to the audience.

SOUL OF BRITAIN – WHAT DO PEOPLE BELIEVE?

Soul of Britain, written and presented by Michael Buerk, was broadcast in June and July 2000. This BBC TV series explored what people in Britain today really believe.

What is their attitude to moral issues? What do they think about Christianity?

The first episode of *Soul of Britain*, called "The State of Faith", looked at what's happening to our religious beliefs. It showed:

- A sharp decline in church attendance
- A loss of confidence in traditional Christian beliefs
- A continued place for religious rituals (e.g. marriage)
- Increased commitment among the church-going minority
- A rise in new forms of spirituality

Details of the statistics can be found on the *Soul of Britain* video/DVD (see Resources) and <http://www.facingthechallenge.org/soul.htm>

THE VALUE OF STATISTICAL DATA FOR RE/RS

Grounding work in appropriate and rigorous research can be a **productive and challenging** point of entry to a wide variety of issues in RE/RS.

Use of research statistics can foster **debate and challenge**. It places the **onus on the student** to articulate where a challenge might be raised and to outline ways in which any hypothesis can be evaluated. It is also helpful to **illustrate** that some elements of religious life and belief can be recorded and represented in such a way, and be open to scrutiny.

A survey published in March 2001 by Professor Leslie Francis of the University of Wales, Bangor, interviewed **33,000 young people aged 13–15 years**. Statistically significant evidence was produced to suggest that the faith position a person affiliates to (e.g. Christian, Muslim, Sikh) **does** have an effect on a wide range of moral and religious beliefs and attitudes, which can assist the prediction of certain things about behaviour.

An article in the *Church Times* newspaper on **16 March 2001** gave some of the statistics and indicated the type of questions asked. This article can be found in the "search our archive/past issues" area of The *Church Times* website (<http://www.churchtimes.net/front.asp>).

Ways of using statistical data

- **Aim** to let students get as close as they can to the original data, including a clear summary of the findings by the researcher. **Contact** the researcher.
- **Select** the most suitable format (and length) of the chosen data to present to a group – e.g. text, web page, video/DVD.
- **Encourage** students to identify the original hypothesis – and the conclusion drawn by the research. They may speculate whether further or alternative areas of enquiry would have been fruitful, and **challenge** the method.
- **Enable** students to conduct some research of their own into religious beliefs and attitudes (see Introductory Activity 2). Draw on their conclusions in future work in their course.
- **Explore** the software packages available to students to help them handle the data, and so maximise time spent on the RE element of the activity. Microsoft Excel, Lotus 123 and Pinpoint are generally available and easy to use resources.

WHERE DOES “THE CENTURION” FIT INTO MY SPECIFICATION/AGREED SYLLABUS?

- New Testament Studies
- Religion and human experience
- Effect of personal encounter/religious experience
- Religious, social and political background to the New Testament
- Post-16/Agreed Syllabus
- Key Skills
- Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

Biblical references:

- Matthew 8.5–13; 27.35–54
- Mark 15.37–39
- Luke 7.1–10; 23.44–47

HOW CAN I INTRODUCE “THE CENTURION”?

Ask students to watch the video/DVD without knowing who is featured – can they work it out? What are the clues? How might this cameo be relevant to their course?

Or

Ask students to brainstorm the word “soldier”. Gather their thoughts on the necessary qualities, potential skills and sacrifices which may be required. This can be done for a modern context. Then play the video/DVD as in (1).

Or

Be explicit that the video/DVD is about a Roman centurion who plays an important part in the gospel narrative. It will help them understand something of the political background to the texts they are studying.

“NO ORDINARY MAN”?

These points are based on *The Daily Study Bible: Gospel of Luke* by William Barclay

- The nearest modern equivalent to a centurion is to think of a regimental sergeant major, a role crucial to the success of the army “machine”.
Centurions needed to be “men who can command, steady in action, and reliable; not over-anxious to rush into the fight; but when hard-pressed they must be ready to hold their ground and die at their posts.” [Polybius : historian]
- The centurion’s attitude to his slave was far from the norm. He loved him, and would go to any length to save him. Roman law said a slave was a living tool, with no rights, and a master had power of life or death over him. When a slave could no longer work, he was thrown out to die.
- What can we learn from the fact that this centurion had built a synagogue? Is this the action of a cynical man, following the Roman pattern of encouraging religion if it kept order? Or is this a man who was aware of more than the superficiality of human experience – a deeply religious man?
- His attitude to the Jews was far removed from that of the Romans of his time. They called the Jews a filthy race, and thought of Judaism as a barbarous superstition. Yet this account implies a close bond of friendship between this centurion and the Jews.
- The centurion would have been aware that a strict Jew was forbidden by law to allow a Gentile into his house or to

have any communication with him. Not only was he aware, but he was prepared to respect the custom. So we see him not thinking to go to Jesus himself. He persuaded Jewish friends to approach him. The man who used to giving commands, shows humility.

- In the centurion can be seen well-reasoned faith. If his authority produced the results it did, how much more must that of Jesus? His own experience was his starting point.

WHAT TYPE OF EXAM QUESTIONS DOES “THE CENTURION” SUPPORT?

The video/DVD material provides specific examples for use in some questions, and significant background information for others.

- 1 With reference to Luke’s crucifixion account, **how and why** is Luke’s presentation of the person of Jesus different from that of Mark? (AOA Specimen – AS).
- 2 **Explain** the main differences between the accounts of the crucifixion in the Gospels of Mark and John. (OCR Specimen – AS)
- 3 “The Gospel was written to help believers to understand the nature of the love of God for all people.” **Discuss and assess** this view of the purpose of Luke’s Gospel. (EDEXCEL Specimen – A2)

CENTURION IN THE HOT SEAT

In a “hot seat” activity one member of the group sits centrally and can be asked any question from the floor which they answer from the perspective of the specified role, in this case the centurion. Students should not be required to answer for themselves.

In terms of audience, the activity could be video-recorded, or written up as an article for the school magazine. Timing can be flexible, with 20 to 45 minutes being viable, depending on the group.

All in the group need to prepare if this is to be successful. Questions should be based on the video/DVD, the biblical text being studied and the class text books to which all have access. Questions could cover:

- Life of a centurion – expectations, training, obligations, sanctions, duty, punishment.
- Role of Roman army in Palestine at this time and feelings about it. Was the presence justified? Are there modern equivalents – would the centurion support them?
- Personal background/beliefs/attitudes on a variety of issues which may include race, religion, justice.
- Anthony – the nature of the relationship – crossing religious/social/cultural boundaries. (See Letter from Anthony activity, p.7.)
- Reasons for keeping silence as Jesus was crucified – his feelings afterwards.
- How he sees his future – physically, emotionally and spiritually.

ROLE PLAY

Role play is useful in a learning situation because it:

- Helps students **analyse** a problem, **draw out** important points and **consider** details carefully.
- Helps students **understand** the position and feelings of others and to **reflect** on them in a safe environment.

The **context** of the role play within the lesson's wider learning objectives needs to be made clear. Include a **de-briefing** at its conclusion and consider presentation to a **wider audience**.

Timing: the video/DVD viewing, initial preparation and conclusion could take place within two lessons. Research, planning and rehearsal might be done as homework and private study time.

The Centurion – Madhouse inmate seeks release

There is to be a meeting to decide whether the centurion's request for release can be granted.

Discuss with students who would be present at the meeting. Allocate roles accordingly. Suggestions might include:

- The Centurion and his family (mixed feelings?)
- Anthony (and other soldiers?)
- Manager of *Tales from the Madhouse* (who may remind of the reasons for admission – the group might need to discuss/clarify these first)
- Medical/psychiatric/religious/legal representatives



ACTIVITIES

Brainstorm

Students brainstorm the word "soldier", bringing to bear understanding from other curriculum areas, e.g. history and English literature, together with images and awareness from TV and cinema. This short activity serves to focus sharply on the area to be explored.

If completed before seeing the video/DVD, areas could include:

- Soldiers – then and now; reasons for change
- Duty and commitment – what it means to students – what it means to a soldier

If completed or added to **after** the video/DVD, areas could include:

- Emotions – identify the actions/words which indicate the strength and types of emotion shown by this specific soldier
- What surprises? What shocks?
- Was the centurion in fact "no ordinary man"?

Diamond ranking

This is a useful activity, particularly if there has been a break between lessons. It takes minimum preparation and class time, but can place sharp focus on key concepts and is a stimulating link to the next major activity.

Having seen the programme, students and/or teacher identify **nine key words/concepts** express the essence of the centurion's situation. Write them on cards, then "diamond rank" them with the most important at the top, and the least important at the bottom. Decisions should be justified. The display of cards should look like this:

	1st	
	2nd	3rd
4th	5th	6th
	7th	8th
	9th	

Letter from Anthony

Letters from Anthony were a source of strength to the centurion, and he was distressed when they ceased. Students compose a letter from Anthony – the first for a long time. The group could first brainstorm reasons why the letters stopped, what the contents of this unexpected communication might be. This could be completed for homework.

The activity can be completed in pairs, but more powerful and reflective outcomes will be found in individual work.

Centurion in the hot seat (p.6)

Role play (see left)

PERSONAL REFLECTION 1

"I think of the – Jew – the time we spoke . . . wishing I could speak to him again. Of all the people, he would be the one to understand."

What is it that the centurion wants Jesus to understand? What things are there in your own life which you would like someone to really understand?

PERSONAL REFLECTION 2

Identify what it was that gave Jesus so much influence over the centurion. What, if anything, would have that much influence over you?

EXTENDED WRITING (750 words)

Imagine that all a person knows about the character of Jesus is what they have gleaned from the video/DVD "The Centurion" (one further programme could be added from *Tales from the Madhouse*).

Write an account of what you think they would understand, and include questions which they would need to ask to obtain clarification. Support your answer with evidence from the video/DVD.

WHERE DOES "THE SERVANT GIRL" FIT INTO MY SPECIFICATION/AGREED SYLLABUS?

- New Testament Studies
- Religion and human experience
- Effect of personal encounter/religious experience
- Religious, social and political background to the New Testament
- Post-16/Agreed Syllabus
- Key Skills
- Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

Biblical references:

- Matthew 26.47–58, 69–75
- Mark 14.66–72
- Luke 22.54–62
- John 18.1–11, 15–18, 25–27

HOW CAN I INTRODUCE "THE SERVANT GIRL"?

Ask students to **watch the video/DVD without knowing** who is featured – can they work it out? What are the clues? How might this cameo be relevant to their course?

Or

Ask students to **brainstorm** the word "servant" and/or "marginalised" – **engage** their thoughts on this type of life in a modern context, then play the video/DVD as above.

Or

Be **explicit** that the video/DVD is about a servant girl who plays an important part in the gospel narrative. It will help them understand something of the social background to the texts they are studying.

I could walk away from all the mess and rubbish I have made of my life.

It was like his voice was strumming at my soul, and it said "You are beautiful. In my eyes you are precious."

It was as if he was looking into this dark little cave and saying "Be free – leave – live."

I could fly – but I didn't. Maybe it's safer in the cage.

WHO ARE THE MARGINALISED?

- People with learning and/or physical disabilities
- Indigenous peoples
- People with mental health illnesses
- Elderly people
- Homeless people

- Women
- People living in poverty
- The unemployed
- Racial and ethnic minorities

WHAT TYPE OF EXAM QUESTIONS DOES "THE SERVANT GIRL" SUPPORT?

The video/DVD material provides specific examples for use in some questions, and significant background information for others.

- 1 With reference to TWO different incidents, examine the attitude of Jesus towards women in Luke's Gospel. How far does a study of these incidents contribute to an understanding of the person of Jesus and the nature of his ministry? (EDEXCEL – Specimen AS)
- 2 How useful is religious experience as evidence for the existence of God? (OCR – Specimen – AS)

TALES FROM THE MADHOUSE – THE CONCEPT

What does this literary device of a Victorian asylum represent? The producer (Norman Stone) suggests two reasons:

- A **dislocated time-frame** allows contemporary viewers to tune into these tales without being troubled by modern "baggage"
- On a **symbolic level**, if the world is a madhouse and we are all trapped within our private worlds within it, the viewer will be able to empathise with the truths, dreams and regrets of the inmates as they look back to an encounter which could have changed their lives.

After viewing at least one programme from the series, students could discuss the effectiveness, or otherwise, of the device.

DEVELOPING THE IMAGE OF A "CAGE"

This is a powerful image to explore with students, but much care is needed to protect their integrity and privacy. Students can be asked to make general suggestions about the cages people in their age group find themselves in, for example:

- Family expectation/responsibilities
- Peer group pressure/relationships
- Personality/lack of confidence/ill health
- Finance/education difficulties

To **engage more deeply** with these issues – and the fact that the servant girl had the opportunity to leave the cage but didn't take it – try **Distancing activity (p.9)**.

RESEARCH 1

Choose one of the marginalised groups identified in "How Can I introduce The Servant Girl?" Produce a well-researched one-page article for a magazine like the *New Internationalist* or *The Big Issue* in which you aim to inform people of the facts of the situation, and indicate how they can act to improve the situation.

Or

RESEARCH 2

Choose one of the marginalised groups identified in "How Can I introduce The Servant Girl?"

Look at the website "What Would Jesus Do?" (see Resources) and then write a paragraph outlining how you think Jesus would respond if "face-to-face" with the marginalised group you have selected.

Consider what he would say a) to the group chosen, b) the church, c) society at large.

ACTIVITIES

Mind Map

Construct a mind map entitled "Cages". Show the "cages" which yourself and others might find themselves in, the advantages and disadvantages of staying in that cage. Use colour and graphics to help express these ideas.

Distancing

Students write on a piece of paper one of the cages which they find themselves in, and one sentence of comment. They then walk around the room making six exchanges of paper. With a partner they then talk about/discuss/confide the scenario they have on the paper they end up with. Class discussion could follow, with all students confident of anonymity.

E-mail

Write an e-mail from Malchus to a friend in which he talks about the change in his girl friend, how he feels about it, and what he thinks is the cause.

Messages in the text

Take key passages from the video/DVD and biblical text of this incident and write them in the left hand of two columns. In the right-hand column note what this tells us about the religious, political and social life of the time.

Hot seat

See p.6 for details of organising this activity. The servant girl or Malchus could be in the "hot seat" – and so bring into debate the expectations, role, assumptions of ordinary people, and Jesus' effect upon them.

Writing a text book

Take the usual text book you use in your course – and identify the format of that text for setting out text/material/ideas.

Compose a one-page entry for that book on the incidents concerning the centurion or servant girl – as your chosen text book would express it.

Remember that you need **biblical and scholarly accuracy**, but can ask questions and offer challenge.

Fact, belief, opinion

Watch the video/DVD with the brief to find examples of fact, belief and opinion. Express your findings in two columns and be prepared to justify your selection.

Stuck in a lift

Imagine that the servant girl finds herself stuck in a lift with Peter. Check the video/DVD account and biblical text to clarify the background of their first meeting, some time previously. Script the dialogue between the two.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

"Loving the unlovely" – who do you regard as "unlovely" in today's society? How might you overcome such feelings – and what might be the benefits to yourself and others?

EXTENDED WRITING (750 words)

In what sense is it true to say that the role of women in the modern world is any more free than that of first-century Palestine?

Or

To what extent was Jesus a "man of his time" or "ahead of his time"?

**ACTIVITIES AND SYLLABUS LINKS
FOR OTHER PROGRAMMES**

PROGRAMME	SPECIFICATIONS	THEMES, QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES
<p>THE THIEF “When iron rips through flesh there is nowhere to hide ... I screamed, I cursed, I opened my bowels. He cried out once – for his murderers to be forgiven, and I knew, then, with terrifying certainty, that I had no certainties.”</p>	<p>AQA AS Module 3 New Testament OCR AS Module 2764 New Testament Route T – NT with Islam (Connections) EDEXCEL A2 Module 9 (Luke) WJEC RS4 and preparation for RS9 (Synoptic)</p>	<p>Themes and questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How is “The Thief” different from the other characters? Why the last episode? • The thief speaks about the masks he wears. Why was he afraid/reluctant to remove them? What masks do you wear? What might persuade you to remove them? What effect did Jesus have on the thief? • The thief said Jesus was doing “scary” things – what was he referring to? What language might you use to describe Jesus’ actions? • Assess the evidence for and against Jesus being a “charlatan”. • Is there anything of which we can be certain? Or is the thief correct? • What do you imagine Jesus whispered to the thief on the cross? What words might you want to hear in a similar situation? <p>Activity About the crucifixion the thief says “<i>Now we’ll see what he really was</i>”. How would the four people below respond to this statement? Write a 20-word text message or e-mail from each person to a friend reflecting their view. a) The thief, b) The high priest, c) a Gospel writer, d) Muhammad.</p>
<p>BARABBAS “The world had to be brought down; we had to start from scratch again, from scratch.”</p>	<p>OCR AS Module 2764 New Testament EDEXCEL A2 Module 9 (Luke) WJEC RS4 and preparation for RS9 (Synoptic)</p>	<p>Themes and questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summarise the vision which Barabbas dreamed of in six key words/concepts. • Barabbas spoke with great anger – what, if anything, might arouse in you such strength of feeling? In terms of the twenty-first century, what might be the most effective means of achieving change? <p>Activity Produce a mind map outlining the way in which the term “Kingdom of God” is represented in the Gospels. Include supporting references. Or Script a conversation between Jesus and Barabbas on the question of whether violent and subversive action could ever be justified.</p>
<p>THE BEST FRIEND “I saw him because he saw me. He threw me a lifeline into the centre of my being and I swallowed it hook, line, sinker, fishing rod, fisherman and fishing boat.”</p>	<p>EDEXCEL A2 Module 9 (Luke) WJEC RS4 and preparation for RS9 (Synoptic)</p>	<p>Themes and questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the origin and meaning of the word “cynic”? How appropriate is it as a description of Judas? • In what sense was Judas a “best friend” to Jesus? How much did they need each other? • Is Judas’ reputation as a traitor justified? <p>Activity Prepare two obituaries for Judas, one by “The Department” and one by Jesus. Aim for 250 words for each.</p>
<p>PILATE’S WIFE “I’m an idle woman. I’ve been pampered . . . but I am not stupid. That sad figure in a grubby robe had stepped, pure, from my dream into such wickedness as stopped my breath. And I knew I must not be part of it.”</p>	<p>AQA A2 Module 8 New Testament (John) OCR AS Module 2764 New Testament WJEC RS4 and preparation for RS9 (Synoptic)</p>	<p>Themes and questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jesus “<i>stepped ... into such wickedness</i>”. What was the nature of the wickedness to which Pilate’s wife referred? • What opportunities have you missed? With what consequences? • In what situation might you say “It wasn’t my place” or “What could I have done”? How would you feel about yourself as you said the words? • Do those in positions of authority (e.g. politicians, police, teachers, doctors) have greater responsibility than other people? Find examples in the media where it was felt that the person had failed in their responsibilities. Do you agree with what they did? If not, how should they have reacted and why? <p>Activity Prepare and conduct a TV studio debate in which Pilate’s wife, Joseph (Jesus’ earthly father), Sigmund Freud and one other person of your choice discuss the place and significance of dreams in human experience.</p>
<p>THE MOURNER “I wanted to hurt him so badly. I wanted to make him bleed this time. I wanted to break that man. I wanted to smash him down. I wanted to break his bones.”</p>	<p>EDEXCEL AS Unit 4 (Luke) WJEC RS4 and Preparation for RS9 (Synoptic)</p>	<p>Themes and questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How important is “hope” to human survival? Find examples of individuals who have maintained a sense of hope when all seemed lost. Identify the cause of optimism. • What did the mourner believe about prayer? • Think of occasions when you have wanted to seek revenge or vent your anger on someone. Who was the loser in this situation? What was lost? • If the mourner had “waited”, as the whisper suggested, what would she have “seen”? <p>Activity Role play a meeting between the mourner and Jesus’ mother, Mary.</p>
<p>THE RICH MAN “After a time alone you slowly come to realise the most important truth of all. It’s a secret from most people because they don’t have the money to make the discovery. But I’m going to tell you about it now. You’ll be amazed!”</p>	<p>WJEC RS4 and Preparation for RS9 (Synoptic)</p>	<p>Themes and questions</p> <p>What do you think the rich man really wanted Jesus to say to him? Was Jesus’ response to wealth always to give it away? (e.g. Zacchaeus)? Connections: a) between liberty and money, b) between wealth and selfishness. The rich man went and found another rabbi – a Greek – someone who didn’t make him feel uncomfortable. What do you think he meant? “The world is an illusion and I am all there is.” How would you prove that the world is a reality and that you exist? Could you ever be certain?</p> <p>Activity Debate: “This house believes that the creation of wealth is a prerequisite for all good action.” Or Debate: “This house believes that the only safe thing to do with your money is to give away a bit more than you can afford.” (C S Lewis, Christian)</p>

THE POST-16 CURRICULUM

Post-16 RE entitlement can be delivered in a **variety of ways**, e.g. • discrete lessons, • carousel, • conference days

Tales from the Madhouse offers a **flexible resource** which can be used in any curriculum model to support effective and affective RE.

Although not **formally accredited** through the A level RS route, it is worth considering whether some elements of Post-16 RE can be **accredited** in other ways, for example through Key Skills or some VCE/AVCE courses.

What is the conference model?

In this model, several days in the academic year are set aside for a whole year group to attend a conference rather than timetabled lessons. This an opportunity both to deliver the RE curriculum and to develop the skills base of students.

Issues to consider in this model include:

- **Venue** – in school, or elsewhere
- **Focus** – consistent with the Agreed Syllabus with clear RE learning objectives
- **Organisers** – students and/or staff
- **Teaching and learning opportunities** – involving mixed ability. Varied motivation/rigour and relevance need to be evident
- **Budget** – from school or external agency which supports educational initiatives. Student organisers could be given responsibility for managing the budget
- **External resources** – local community, visiting speakers, visits
- **Staffing** – specialist and non specialist staff
- **Preparation and debrief** – time needs to be allocated for these activities, before or during the conference
- **Accreditation opportunities** – formal and/or informal

Ideas for a Post-16 RE focus using *Tales from the Madhouse*

- Justice – being counted (*Pilate's Wife*)
- Political action (*Barabbas and The Best Friend*)
- Jesus in the media (*Tales from the Madhouse*)
- Religion and wealth (*The Rich Man*)
- Religious symbolism – how religious meaning is conveyed in film, drama, art (*Tales from the Madhouse*)
- Developing an inclusive society (*The Servant Girl*)
- Jesus in/for the twenty-first century (*The Best Friend and The Thief*)
- How religious beliefs and attitudes shape behaviour (*Tales from the Madhouse*)

Ideas given throughout this resource can be used in General Post-16 RE. Two ideas are considered on the right with suggestions for how they may be developed for a conference model of delivery.

IDEA 1 DEVELOPING AN INCLUSIVE SOCIETY

- **Watch** "The Servant Girl" – see suggestions for use/activities with this episode. Then **research/brainstorm** groups who may also be considered marginalised/ excluded in society (see internet resources as stimulus).
- **Identify** the meaning of the term "inclusive society" as used in government documentation; identify positive and negative aspects of the policy. Focus locally and nationally, and reflect on your own role in the process.

- **Identify** some fears of those in an "exclusion" cage – and of those who are on the other side. **Discuss** how such fears may be allayed, by individuals and society collectively.
- **Personal reflection** on the "cage" the student is in. A "distancing" activity could facilitate discussion (see The Servant Girl Activity 2).
- **Research two groups** which work with the marginalised/excluded – one Christian and one non-religious. **Compare** them in terms of a) motivation b) sources of support c) effectiveness. Work in a small group and **report findings** formally to the whole class.

Conference development

Invite into school representatives of groups who are not fully included in society – or those who work for/with them. Careful and sensitive choice of visitors is essential.

Students rotate around seminars (e.g. 3) each of which is taken by a different visitor. The final session can take a variety of forms, with an *Any Questions* style session being very effective. Students could be asked for a commitment to write to a local MP outlining some local concerns raised during the day.

IDEA 2 JESUS IN THE MEDIA

Students work in small groups. Each group **reviews** a recent portrayal of Jesus (see Resources). Areas to investigate could include: **a)** faithfulness to biblical text and reasons for any difference, **b)** identification of what is fact, belief and opinion, **c)** the difference between the Jesus of history and the Christ of faith, **d)** how a member of a different faith tradition might regard Jesus – how would the film differ if made from a Muslim perspective of Jesus, for example? **e)** the perceived audience, **f)** student's personal reaction.

Following **formal presentation** of findings to the whole group, students **identify** questions about Jesus they would like to put to practising Christians and professional theologians. There is potential for inviting **speakers** into lessons at a later date. Further understanding could be gained by completing the **surveying beliefs** activity outlined in the role and influence of Jesus.

Conference development

Develop opportunities for students to see clips of recent media presentations of Jesus as part of Collective Worship before the conference. Displays of other materials (e.g. posters) can be made available in the week prior to the conference. Aim to work with other departments, for example, Media Studies, English, Art, Business Studies, IT.

Invite a speaker who has been involved in some way with a media production to open the conference. They may address practical issues, as well as those of the sensitivities of the faith community most affected (Christianity) and marketing issues.

Students work in option groups to **develop a resource** for the classroom for younger students, for example, video/DVD, sculpture, drama, animated cartoon, computer game.

At the final plenary, the visitor could offer an evaluation of work in progress from a commercial, technical and faith perspective. Students may be given opportunity for personal reflection.

INTERNET

General resource gateways

RE-XS <http://re-xs.ucsm.ac.uk>
 The RE Site <http://resite.org.uk>
 Bible Society <http://www.biblesociety.org.uk>
 Culham College – Easter <http://www.culham.ac.uk>
 BBC Religion and Ethics
http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/christianity/christ_beliefs.shtml

Revision and study sites for A Level RS students

RS Web <http://www.reweb.org.uk>
 ISTC Site <http://istc-rs.freesevers.com>
 The NT Gateway <http://www.ntgateway.com>
 A Synoptic Gospels Primer
<http://religion.rutgers.edu/nt/primer>
 The Synoptic Problem Home Page
<http://www.mindspring.com/~scarlson/synopt>
 Dialogue Magazine <http://www.dialogue.org.uk>

Surveys and statistics

"Thinkquest 2000" internet challenge
<http://library.thinkquest.org/C005803F>
 The Soul of Britain
<http://www.facingthechallenge.org/soul.htm>
 National Statistics <http://www.statistics.gov.uk>

Images of Jesus

Images of Jesus in Art
<http://www.clark.net/pub/webbge/jesus.htm>
 Son of God (BBC series 2001)
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/sog>
 What Would Jesus Do? (WWJD) <http://www.wwjd.com>

Issues

Alternative Voices/Alternative Perspectives:
<http://www.info.library.yorku.ca/internet/alternative.htm>
 Christian Aid <http://www.christian-aid.org.uk>
 Tear Fund <http://www.tearfund.org>
 CAFOD <http://www.cafod.org.uk>
 Amnesty International <http://www.amnesty.org.uk>
 Jubilee Campaign <http://www.jubileecampaign.co.uk>
 Movement for Christian Democracy
<http://www.mcdpolitics.org>
 Shelter (Homelessness) <http://www.shelter.org.uk>
 Refugee Council <http://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk>
 Society of Friends (Quakers) <http://www.quaker.org.uk>
 Inclusion <http://inclusion.ngfl.gov.uk>

Newspapers and magazines

The Church Times <http://www.churchtimes.net/front/asp>
 The Big Issue <http://www.bigissue.co.uk>
 New Internationalist
<http://www.oneworld.org/ni/index4.html>

Music – Lyrics

Website dedicated to Jackson Browne
http://www.jrp-graphics.com/jackson_browne.html

Examination boards

AQA <http://www.aqa.org.uk>
 OCR <http://www.ocr.org.uk>
 EXEDCEL <http://www.edexcel.org.uk>
 WJEC <http://www.wjec.co.uk>

FILM, VIDEO/DVD AND MUSIC

Tales from the Madhouse (video/DVD, Bible Society
 ISBN 0 564 03176 3)

The Soul of Britain – Programme 1 "The State of Faith"
 (BBC, from CTVC, Hillside, Merry Hill Road, Bushey, Herts,
 WD23 1DR)

Images of Jesus in Art – based on "Seeing Salvation"
 (BBC ISBN 1 901 71024 6) BBC order line: 0 870 830800 0

The Test of Time Video and teachers' book
 (BBC Education/Bible Society ISBN 0564 01176 2; video
 ISBN 0 564 03166 6) Resources @ Bible Society order line
 0 870 74767 6

The Miracle Maker Video (Icon/Warner
 ISBN 0 564 04275 7) Resources @ Bible Society order line
 0 870 74767 6

Son of God Video pack (BBC Education/Jerusalem Trust)

Jesus of Nazareth Video (Carlton)

BOOKS AND OHT

The Test of Time Teachers' book (BBC Education/
 Bible Society ISBN 0 564 04156 4) Resources @ Bible Society
 order line 0 870 74767 6

The Fourth R for the Third Millennium (Lindisfarne Books
 ISBN 1 853 90507 0)

Christ on Trial by Archbishop Rowan Williams (Fount
 ISBN 0 007 10791 9)

(Your) Agreed Syllabus for RE

A to Z – Active Learning Strategies to support Spiritual
 and Moral Development by Joyce Mackley and Pamela
 Draycott (CEM ISBN 1 851 00138 7)

The Mind Map Book by Tony Buzan (BBC
 ISBN 0 563 37101 3)

What about Jesus? by Terence Copley and Karen Walshe
 (Outcome of the "Teaching about Jesus" research project)
 University of Exeter School of Education, Heavitree Road,
 Exeter EX1 2LU

The Daily Study Bible: Gospel of Luke by William Barclay
 (Saint Andrew Press ISBN 0 715 20273 1)

The Christ We Share (card and OHT pack showing Jesus
 from different ethnic perspectives) Church Mission Society,
 Partnership House, 157 Waterloo Road, London SE1 8XA.

Assemblies from the Gallery Resource pack including OHTs
 by Margaret Cooling (RMEP ISBN 1 851 75216 1)

INTRODUCTION

Many of this pack's activities can result in work which could be included in the context of Collective Worship. This could be identified as an "audience" at the outset or emerge during the course of work.

The two ideas below could be used in Collective Worship independently of any class work, and be presented by students and/or teachers. Although the characters in *Tales from the Madhouse* all feature in the Christian Easter Story, universal themes are explored, giving the resource a value in Collective Worship at any point in the year.

A combination of **music, role play, OHP or data projector** to present an interplay of text and graphics, together with **pauses** for reflection will stimulate students to think through the issues presented. At some point (not necessarily at the end) students can be **invited to listen to and reflect on** the words of an appropriate prayer, poem or other brief text.

HOW COULD THE CENTURION BE USED IN COLLECTIVE WORSHIP?

Themes which could be explored:

- Duty and responsibility
- Attitude to authority
- Taking risks – breaking the mould
- Commitment and sacrifice
- Is violent action ever justified?
- Protest versus inactivity
- Religions working together – some common goals?

Time:

One or two consecutive assemblies – 15/20 minutes

Key resources:

- **Video/DVD:** The Centurion (*Tales from the Madhouse*)
- **Video:** Commitment (*The Test of Time* – James Mawdsley)
- **Teacher resource** (*The Test of Time* teachers' book)

Other resources:

- **Work of Amnesty International and The Jubilee Campaign** on human rights issues
- **Song:** Mothers of the Disappeared (U2)
- **Movement for Christian Democracy**
- **Pacifism** – e.g. Society of Friends perspective

Ideas:

- **Play music** as students enter/leave (have lyrics on OHP).
- Raise **key questions** (appropriate to chosen theme) – spoken/OHP/dialogue – consider displaying these afterwards in a central place.
- Use the chosen **video/DVD** stimulus – 2/3 minute clip
- Pose **further questions** for personal reflection which arise from the clip – spoken /text/graphics on OHP – focus on the rationale the person in the clip articulated, especially where this relates to beliefs/faith. Did their religious faith make a significant difference to the decisions they made (especially James Mawdsley's)? Does Mawdsley's story shed light on the demands Jesus made of his disciples? What does this tell us about the nature and cost of Christian discipleship?
- **Relate** to students' own questions, situations and decision making. Which of the featured people would they most

want to emulate? What barriers might there be? What sacrifices might have to be made?

- Close with a **moment of reflection** – a prayer/poem.

HOW COULD THE SERVANT GIRL BE USED IN COLLECTIVE WORSHIP?

Themes which could be explored:

- Value of the individual to themselves, to society and to God – affirming worth
- Hating the sin but loving the sinner
- Becoming an "inclusive" society
- What it means to be human

Time:

- One assembly – 15/20 minutes suggested

Key Resource:

- **Video/DVD:** The Servant Girl (*Tales from the Madhouse*)

Other Resources:

- **Alternative Voices/Alternative Perspectives** – website giving links to marginalised groups
- **Literature** from a range of "marginalised/excluded" groups – e.g. *The Big Issue*
- **Song:** I still haven't found what I'm looking for (U2)
- **Poem:** Outcast (written about an AIDS victim)

Ideas:

- **Play Music** as students enter/leave (have lyrics on OHP).
- Use the chosen **video/DVD** stimulus – 2/3 minute clip.
- **Invite speculation** – Who is she? Where is her story originally told? What has it to say to us today?
- **Identify** other marginalised groups – OHP/PowerPoint to visualise words and graphics.
- **Invite personal thought** – How do you feel about the groups identified? Can you think of others? How does society at large regard them? Do you belong to such a group? What does that feel like?
- **What did Jesus say** to her – show words from the video on screen – and **why** did she remember the words?
- **Ask** – why did she glow at his words – yet decide to stay where she was? Suggest possibilities.
- **Comment** – UK Government wants us to develop a more **inclusive** society – research and name some of the documentation about this (see Resources) – ask, what would Jesus say to this idea? What **should** it mean to the servant girl, and other marginalised groups? What **does** it mean for those who are not excluded? Is there a cost?
- Close with a **moment of reflection** – a prayer/poem.

ONE SOLITARY LIFE

Here is a man who was born in an obscure village, the child of a peasant woman. He grew up in another village, and that a despised one. He worked in a carpenter shop for thirty years, and then for three years he was an itinerant preacher.

He never wrote a book.
He never held an office.
He never owned a home.
He never had a family.
He never went to college.
He never put his foot inside a really big city.

He never travelled, except in his infancy,
more than two hundred miles from the place where he was
born.

He had no credentials but himself.
While still a young man,
The tide of popular opinion turned against him.

His friends ran away.
One of them betrayed him.
He was turned over to his enemies.
He went through the mockery of a trial.
He was nailed upon a cross between two thieves.

His executors gambled for the only piece of property he had
on earth,
His seamless robe.
When he was dead,
He was taken down from the cross
and laid in a borrowed grave through the courtesy of a
friend.

Nineteen wide centuries have come and gone,
and today Jesus is the centrepiece of the human race,
and the leader of all human progress.

I am well within the mark when I say that
all the armies that ever marched,
all the navies that were ever built,
all the parliaments that have ever sat, and
all the kings that have ever ruled put together
have not affected the life of man upon this earth
like this one solitary personality.

All time dates from his birth,
and it is impossible to understand or interpret
the progress of human civilisation in any nation on earth
apart from his influence.
Slowly through the ages man is coming to realise that
the greatest necessity in the world is not
water, iron, gold, food and clothing, or even nitrate in the
soil;
but rather Christ enshrined in human hearts, thoughts and
motives.

More poems have been written,
more stories told,
more pictures painted, and
more songs sung about Christ
than any other person in human history,
because through such avenues as these
the deepest appreciation of the human heart
can be more adequately expressed.

Bishop Phillips Brooks (19th century American preacher)

OUTCAST

Unclean
Unseen
The least of the lowly I lie
And slowly I die
Without trace
On the face
Of the earth

Spurned by your judgement
Voided of mercy
Shunned by your rigorous code
Of acceptable death.

You have not the stomach for me.
And even your pity
Is gagged by revulsion and fear.

I stand at a distance and call:
Do you weep?
And for me, or for you?
Your backs give no clue.

Yet one in your midst has a face.
He does not recoil
But stoops,
For he knows where I lie.
He
Remembers.

And hands that were scarred
For the least of the lowly
Reach down
To enfold me in love.

Unclean
Unseen
Despised and rejected
By men,
Raised from the dust
By the Father of mercies,
Crowned with compassion
I stand.

Mike Hollow

JESUS THROUGH DIFFERENT EYES

Islam: Jesus appears in the Qur'an as "Isa, one of the line of prophets beginning with Prophet Adam and ending with Prophet Muhammad. Muhammad, not Jesus, is the "Seal of the Prophets".

Hinduism: Some Hindus include Jesus in their list of avatars (divine incarnations) and so a picture of Jesus, alongside other avatars, can be found in some mandirs (Temples).

Judaism: Jesus was Jewish by birth, upbringing and practice. He worshipped in synagogue and Temple. He never abandoned his faith or told his followers to abandon Judaism.

Buddhism: Within Buddhism Jesus may be identified as a Buddha or enlightened one.

Terence Copley and Karen Walshe, *What about Jesus?*

USING THE RESOURCE

The *Tales from the Madhouse* collection raises many challenging points of debate for Media Studies. The questions that follow will introduce you to a few of them but you may find that as you answer each one others will spring to mind.

Because each story is in the same format – a monologue – and takes place in the same setting, the questions can be applied equally well to any one episode or to a group of them. Questions are arranged roughly in topic groups but look out for some overlap between categories.

The focus in this resource is on areas such as **representation** and **narrative** which are especially relevant to the underlying subject matter (the message of Christianity and how it is interpreted). These are suggested as the most fruitful starting points. However, other, more technical, questions could be asked, e.g. about **production styles**, or the effective use of the **monologue technique**, if time allows.

The materials can be used in a variety of ways, e.g. for **discussion in groups**, as pieces of **individual research** or as titles for **analytical essays**. In order to cover all the material, students could be divided into groups so that each looks at one or two episodes (each group should look at more than one even if it concentrates on only one). Each group could then share its experience with the class, or be asked to answer one of the questions below in relation to its own episode.

Students might also be asked to look at another piece of **Bible narrative** relating to a character and consider how that character could be portrayed using monologue. What would be his/her message? What setting would be suitable for the character?

TARGET AUDIENCE includes

- A Level (AS and A2) Media Studies
- Advanced VCE in Media Studies
- BTEC courses
- City and Guilds courses
- Also suitable for sixth form and undergraduate general discussion groups.

REPRESENTATION

- 1 *Tales from the Madhouse* deals with two areas which are often the victims of negative stereotyping: **madness** and **religion**. So looking at the way in which the subject matter is represented is particularly important here.
 - How are **a)** Christians, **b)** “mad” people usually represented in the various media? Write a list of words to describe each category and give any examples you can think of from the media.
 - Do the programmes reinforce/contradict these presentations? How? Give three examples that make your case. These might be found in, for example, the overall concept of the programmes or in details of character portrayal, sets or story ideas.
- 2 What **cultural codes** are used in the production?
- 3 What difference would it make to your understanding of the way the characters are portrayed if you knew that the producer was
 - Christian
 - not Christian?

What **points** is the production trying to make? What is being implied to the viewer about the characters’ experience and choices?

- 4 How far do the characters represent **stereotypes of gender**?
 - Think of the characters such as the ex-soldier, the maid, the rich man, Pilate’s wife. Would the characters work equally well if they were portrayed as being of the opposite sex?
 - Discuss whether there are any risks/potential advantages in using gender stereotypes.
- 5 If you read other versions of these stories (e.g. the ones in the Bible – see brochure), do you consider that the characters are faithfully portrayed?

Whether or not they are, does it matter? Is the same message being conveyed? Are the characters represented faithfully in terms of their background and experience? Is their current situation believable?

RESOURCE

The *Tales from the Madhouse* resource is given an extra dimension with a “Souvenir Brochure” (free download). There is a further strand of complexity in that the original source material for the stories comes from a 2,000-year-old book which has passed into popular knowledge, although in an often only very partially understood or misunderstood form. The viewer is invited to refer back to these original stories as part of the experience and to discuss/reflect on the questions in the brochure. There are, therefore, several strands of editorial and artistic influence in the resource.



- 1 The booklet of notes is referred to as a “Souvenir Brochure”.
 - What do you think “souvenir” means in this context? How does your answer affect your understanding of/attitude towards the purpose of the stories?
 - The word “souvenir” in French means “to remember”. Could this be seen as a pun in the context of the programmes? Why might the producers have called the notes by this name?
- 2 What level of awareness of **a)** Christianity, **b)** madness does the booklet seem to assume people have? Is it a different level from the one in the stories?
- 3 Are there any points in **a)** the television programmes, **b)** the booklet where you are aware that a “message” is being communicated? How much of each would you need to see or read before you realised that it related to Christianity?

Oral storytelling

The gospel stories on which the plays are based are themselves two thousand years old. At the time they were first heard, the oral narrative tradition was the main way of transmitting information to a wide audience.

Can monologues be considered a modern form of oral storytelling tradition? If so, do you think that film enhances the original message or adds unhelpful layers of meaning? What is it doing that straight storytelling does not do?

SEMIOTICS AND STRUCTURALISM

Conveying meaning by **signs, icons and other language tools** are important ways in which any medium communicates its message. It is also central to many faith traditions to use symbolic language and to tell stories with hidden and deeper meaning.

1 What would you choose as the most important, significant signs in the episode you are studying?

Think about the language, facial expressions, body movement, settings, props in the episode.

2 Thinking about the introduction to the series, what elements of the opening passage are most significant in setting up the context of the madhouse? Which “**denote**” the madhouse? Which have “**connotations**” of madness?

3 Christianity, in common with many religions, uses **dual oppositions** (in the sense of Levi-Strauss’s theory of structuring oppositions). These are organised round the idea of good and evil.

- Make a list of the **oppositions, or conflicts**, that appear in these episodes and give meaning to the stories.
- How many of these oppositions also appear in the gospel stories?

There are examples in every story (e.g. friend/traitor, young soldier/old disabled) but the whole concept of the programmes can also be explored in this light (madhouse-unbelief-no/outside world-belief-yes, etc).

4 Thinking about the Madhouse image used in these programmes:

- Is it “**iconic**”? Does it physically resemble the real world it represents?
- Is it in the traditions of “**historical realism**”? Or is it out of time?

NARRATIVE

This series of monologues could be said to be a narrative of narratives. Each character tells his or her own story, but there is another story that comes from them all being together.

1 Thinking of the ideas of **plot** (*syuzhet*) and **story** (*fabula*).

- What is the plot in these stories?
- What is the story? How far into the narrative are we before we realise what is really going on?

2 Thinking of Todorov’s theory of **equilibrium** in narrative, these stories already begin with broken equilibrium. That is why the characters are living where they are and in the way that they are.

- How, where and when else could the stories have begun?
- What does each episode portray as the “status quo” that was challenged? What is the current “status quo”?

3 Thinking about “**utopian pleasures**” (Bloch and Bakhtin’s terms describing the way in which a certain moment or quality makes us recognise or feel that things “could be better”):

- What is the particular moment that each character describes in his or her narrative? Note the way it relates to the “madness” the character is now experiencing.
- If good feelings can be characterised by “energy, abundance, intensity, transparency and community” (Dyer) how does the producer/author portray the lack of them?

Look at this in relation to the whole series as well as individual episodes.

4 Narratives in films are sometimes interpreted as either

- propaganda carriers or
- escapist attempt to trivialise or warp a story that is already effectively told.

How might – or might not – the producers of this material answer such a charge?

5 This set of stories is produced as distinctively suitable for television. What other ways might it have been produced? Discuss the possibilities for each medium.