

PART FOUR: RELIGION AND THE EMERGENCE OF VALUES

Topic: 4.1 Religion as a source of communal values

Procedure

the relationship between the concept of God or understanding of the transcendent, and the concept of the person in religious traditions

Research Assignment: Compare the concept of God in the three classical monotheistic religions, Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

Or Review course content covered in relation to creation stories i.e.

- Leaving Certificate Religious Education Syllabus Sections A Part 2 or F Part 2
- Junior Certificate Religious Education Syllabus Section D Part 5

Storyboard Assignment: Read the creation account of each chosen religious tradition.

Divide the chalkboard into two / three columns.

<p>In the first column write the names of the chosen religious traditions and ask students to outline in words or pictures the key points of each creation story. Or read Student Work: Story of Creation Genesis1-2: 4 & Islamic Creation Stories in Section J Part 2 Topic 2.4</p>	<p>In the second column ask students to state what each account shows about the understanding of the human person in its tradition?</p>	<p>In the third column ask students to state what each account shows about the understanding of the transcendent / God in its tradition?</p>
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Or *Poster Assignment:*

Give students time to gather resources and prepare a collage of stories / quotes / pictures / songs / music / sacred text etc. from each of the chosen religious traditions.

When finished have each student present their completed collage to the rest of the class, identifying and explaining the different images on display.

Discuss:

- What do the religious traditions have in common in terms of their understanding of the human person?
- How do the religious traditions differ in their understanding of the human person?
- What is the relationship between the transcendent / God and the human person in each of the religious traditions?
- What do the religious traditions have in common in terms of their understanding of the transcendent / God and the human person?
- How do the religious traditions differ in their understanding of the transcendent / God and the human person?
- compile a profile of ‘the human person’ as presented in each tradition.

Present overhead of a religious code that expresses the behavioural norms of a world religion

e.g. The Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:1-17; Deuteronomy 5:1-21) etc.

Read the code / charter and summarising its main points on the chalkboard.

Discuss the following questions noting feedback on the chalkboard:

- What concept of God / the transcendent in seen in this code of behaviour?
- What concept of the person in seen in this code of behaviour?

Name of code / charter:	Concept of God / the transcendent	Concept of the person

Give students time to complete the assignment by noting where the understanding of the person or transcendent / God are expressed in the behavioural norms of the religion. Take feedback from the written assignment asking students to explain how concepts of God / the transcendent / the person have implications for the behavioural norms in the religion.

Discuss: How is the understanding of God / person connected with the behavioural norms of this religion?

Outcomes:

- Outline the relationship between the understanding of the transcendent/God and the concept of the human person in two religious traditions
- Give two examples of how these connections determine behavioural norms in religious traditions

Topic: 4.2 Secular sources of communal values

the emergence of an independent secular world with its own value system and norms of behaviour

Present students with the following definition:

*A value is a desired quality or characteristic of thought and behaviour
which is considered good, important and worthwhile.*

Buzz: What are your values?
What quality or characteristic of thought / behaviour do you desire?
What do you consider good, important and worthwhile for yourself and others?

Take feedback from students and note their answers on the chalkboard.

Or *Personal Assignment:* Finish the following sentences:

What's most important to me is

In 10 years time I hope to

Everyone should

I'm against

I'm all for

I'm convinced that

With a gift of €1000 I would

If I could have three wishes I'd like

Take feedback from students.

Present students with the following statements:

PERSONAL VALUES
*are those that influence
the morality of the individual*
e.g. loyalty to friends;
the pursuit of excellence;
compassion etc.

COMMUNITY VALUES
*are those that influence the moral attitudes and conduct
of communities*
such as religious groups, families, societies
e.g. the promotion of education; the protection of a
clean and safe environment; care for the marginalised,
equality etc.

Review what students have written in the assignments above.

Discuss: Which of these are personal values?
Which of these are community values?
Are any of my personal values different to those of the communities to which I belong?
e.g. if one of my personal values is securing a healthy and happy life for myself and some of my
friends value going out on a Saturday night and getting drunk, there may be conflict between
personal values and peer group/community values.

Auction Game: Divide the class into groups

Brief: Imagine each group is setting up a new community (e.g. class; club; neighbourhood; etc.) Each group can decide what values there will be in their community so that it will be a good place for them. The difficulty is that only 12 different values are available and no two groups can have the same values. The problem of dividing up the values is to be solved by holding a values auction, with each of the 12 values being sold to the highest bidder. Each group has €1000 to be used in purchasing the values. During the auction each group can buy as many values as it can afford until its funds are gone, at which point the group must withdraw from the auction.

Display the following value cards for all groups to see and give students time to plan a strategy for the auction.

Value Cards:

HONESTY	POWER
WEALTH	FREEDOM
HAPPINESS	RESPECT
PEACE	LOVE
HEALTH	JUSTICE
BEAUTY	WISDOM

To start the auction choose one of the above value cards and ask:

Who will give me €10 for this value? Who will give me €20? Keep the price going up until the bidding stops. Then close the auction saying sold and give the highest bidder the value card. Keep the auction going until all the values are sold or the groups have run out of funds.

Debriefing - Ask each group to report on the following questions:

- What values did you end up with?
- Are these the values you wanted to have in your community?
- How did you decide on the values you wanted in your community?
- What type of community do you think you will have with the values you have bought?
- Would you like to be in such a community? Why? Why not?

Present overhead of a charter that expresses values e.g.

- The United Nations Declaration on Human Rights (www.un.org)
- Declaration Toward A Global Ethic (www.uni-tuebingen.de)
- Etc.

Written Assignment: Values

Name of Charter:

PERSONAL VALUES	COMMUNITY VALUES

Give students time to complete the assignment by noting where personal and community values are expressed in the charter.

Take feedback from the written assignment asking students to explain how personal and community values are in the parts of the charter they identified.

Discuss:

- Do we need to consider the values of the community when stating our personal values?
- Do we need to consider personal values when stating the values of the community?
- How does this charter show the connection between personal and community values?

Or Case study 1: Profile an example of Irish civil law

- e.g.
- Laws relating to driving - speed limits, limits on drinking and driving etc.
 - Laws relating to the sale of alcohol
 - Law banning smoking in places of work etc.

Discuss: What values are these laws designed to safeguard?

Or Case study 2: Tolerance

Explain that tolerating differences within certain limits depends upon two other core values, namely the freedom and equality of all citizens. These values normally find expression under the umbrella of a commitment to some form of a human rights culture. Invite students to research examples of communal values at work, e.g. the value of equality as evidenced in equality legislation etc.

Take feedback and conclude that communal values can be shaped by sources other than religion.

Brainstorm the student's understanding of secularism.

Take feedback and conclude that secularisation is the process by which culture defines itself in a 'this-worldly' context, one that excludes any reference to a religious, sacred or transcendent horizon of meaning.

Present students with a brief description of three key moments in the emergence of a secular value system e.g.

<p>The rise of secular humanism that has its origins in the Renaissance of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The development of a secularist outlook is closely associated with the rise of the modern scientific disciplines in subsequent centuries.</p>	<p>The emergence of a 'Human Rights' culture in the wake of the French Revolution.</p>	<p>The development of Existentialism during the twentieth century with a value system centred upon an expose of human freedom. Associated with the French philosophers Jean Paul Sartre and Albert Camus.</p>
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Discuss: How have any of these key moments contributed to the development of secular humanism? Are there any ways in which concepts such as human rights and / or the freedom and equality of all human beings are related to core religious beliefs?

Outcomes:

- identify three key moments in the emergence of an independent secular value system

- show how communal values can be shaped by sources other than religion
- describe three different ways in which religions relate to secular culture

Assessment Questions

- (a.) Explain the difference between secular and religious values.
- (b.) All societies have values. Some values are secular and some religious. Of the following list which are secular, which are religious and which are both. Explain why in each case.

Underage drinking is wrong.

Life is sacred

Speeding on the roads is wrong

People have a right to a decent wage.

Competition in business is a good thing.