Scheme of work

**Component 2: Religious, philosophical and ethical studies on the modern world: Theme G – St Mark’s Gospel and the life of Jesus**

**Introduction**

This SOW offers a route through the GCSE Religious Studies Specification A (8062) course. This is a sample scheme of work and is only one suggestion for how the delivery of the GCSE Religious Studies specification might be planned. It is not intended to be prescriptive or definitive and can be edited to suit your delivery model and the particular needs of your learners.

Teachers can use the ideas below to develop schemes which suit the arrangements and time allocations of their own schools and colleges.

Please remember that assessment is always based on the content of the [specification](https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/religious-studies/gcse/religious-studies-a-8062/specification-at-a-glance).

You can find past assessment materials on [Centre Services](https://onlineservices.aqa.org.uk/).

**General timings**

The scheme of work is based on a total of 120 teaching hours. Of these 120 hours, we suggest that:

* Each of the religions studied should be covered in approximately 30 hours.
* Teach alongside: The second religion studied for Component 1 and the four thematic studies from Component 2.

**Contents**

You can use the title links to jump directly to the different sections of this scheme of work (Use Ctrl and click to follow the link)

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Lesson 1

Topic title

Introduction to Mark’s Gospel/The early ministry of Jesus.

Specification content

* Mark’s Gospel as a source of authority: the significance, importance and influence of St Mark’s Gospel for individuals, communities and societies.
* John’s preparation for Jesus’ ministry: 1:1-8.
* Jesus’ baptism and temptation: 1:9-13.

Learning outcomes

The focus is on (a) establishing the importance of the text for study and (b) understanding of the meaning of events at the start of Jesus’ ministry.

Possible teaching and learning activities

* Introduce students to Mark’s Gospel: authorship, date, context. Note the early date (c70 CE), but later than Paul’s letters, and the context of the persecution of early Christianity. Most scholars view Mark as the first gospel to be written.
* Make a table showing qualities of Mark’s Gospel: early, association with Peter, persecution context etc and next to each indicate why this gives it authority/importance (a) for 1st century Christians and (b) for 21st century Christians.
* Read Mk 1:1-8. Highlight what the text indicates about Jesus.
* Start a ‘Person of Jesus’ table (**+PoJ**) to be continued across several lessons, with headings ‘Human’, ‘Divine’, ‘Wonder-worker/Healer’ and ‘Teacher’. Add in quotations/narratives from this passage that indicate Jesus Christ as (a) human and (b) divine.
* Read Mk 1:9-13. Draw attention to the coming together of Trinity: voice of the Father, Spirit descending, Son being baptised. Consider why this is an important part of the story for Christians?
* Add to the Person of Jesus table (referred to in bold as **+PoJ**).
* Discussion question: Why does Mark start his story with the baptism of Jesus rather than Jesus’ birth?

Differentiation and extension

* A simplified children’s Bible version may be beneficial as a basic tool, but check content is equivalent to the canonical gospel.
* Students can be encouraged to read the whole gospel from start to finish over a few weeks as a stretch activity.

**Resources**

* Copies of the Bible or Mark’s Gospel.
* Large sheets of paper to construct Person of Jesus tables. A3 sheets cut in two along the long axis would work well. These will be used for most lessons.

Lesson 2

Topic title

The early ministry of Jesus.

Specification content

* The paralysed man: 2:1-12.
* Jairus’ daughter: 5:21–24a, 35–43.
* The rejection at Nazareth: 6:1–6.

Learning outcomes

The focus is on reading narratives, extracting useful information about Jesus from them, and assessing them critically.

Possible teaching and learning activities

* Quick formative assessment: Question and answer (Q&A) review of the start of Jesus’ ministry. Flag up Jesus’ humanity and God-ness.
* Read Mk 2:1-12 Evaluate (a) the healing (1-5), (b) Jesus and the scribes.
* Note the title ‘Son of Man’ who has ‘authority on Earth’. **+PoJ.**
* Read Mk 5:21–24a, 35–43 Use internal evidence to decide if Jesus raised the child from death. Consider whether such stories need rationalising in 21st century scientific terms. **+PoJ.**
* In the light of these two healings, read Mk 6:1-6. Consider why Jesus was (a) rejected, and (b) unable to do ‘deeds of power’ there. **+PoJ.**
* Review PoJ table and consider how much of the evidence so far supports Mark’s assertion that Jesus Christ is the Son of God (1:1).

**Resources**

* Copies of the Bible or Mark’s Gospel.

Lesson 3

Topic title

The early ministry of Jesus.

Specification content

* The feeding of the five thousand: 6:30–44.
* Mark’s portrayal of Jesus as a miracle worker.

Learning outcomes

The focus is on the developing picture of Jesus as both human and divine.

Possible teaching and learning activities

* Ice-breaker: If appropriate, use one small bread roll to feed the whole class while they review Jesus’ previous works.
* Read Mk 6:30–44. List Jesus’ human qualities. **+PoJ.**
* Examine themultiplication itself: note ‘blessed and broke the loaves’ as a hint about later importance of Holy Communion to the church. Consider the significance of 12 baskets of broken pieces to church under persecution. **+PoJ.**
* Guided research exercise: investigate what Hume and Swinburne said about miracles, and apply their views to the feeding of the 5000.
* Review the PoJ table. Explore whether Mark is portraying Jesus as a human who can do miracles or as God doing what comes naturally.

**Resources**

* Copies of the Bible or Mark’s Gospel.
* Small bread roll.
* Appropriately simple resources for Key Stage 4 on Hume and Swinburne.

Lesson 4

Topic title

The early ministry of Jesus.

Specification content

Fundamentalist and liberal views on the historicity of the miracle stories.

Learning outcomes

The focus is on developing an understanding that different theological views lead to alternative explanations of the narratives.

Possible teaching and learning activities

* Starter question: Did a man really heal the sick and dead and make a small amount of food feed 5000? Ask students to find modern rational explanations for each of these events.
* Outline literal fundamentalist understanding of scripture and liberal approach (Bible is ‘true’, but the truth is sometimes conveyed by metaphor or story). Note both are concerned with what is ‘true’, but fundamentalists seek literal historical accuracy while liberals look for deep truths about God and the world.
* Discuss and note how each of the stories are ‘true’ for fundamentalists and how they are ‘true’ for liberal Christians.
* Creative exercise: individual students to re-write or re-tell one of the stories either with a clear fundamentalist agenda or with a clear liberal agenda. Then pair up and compare stories.
* Discussion: Which understanding works best for early Christians under persecution and why? Which works best for 21st century Christians and why?

**Resources**

Copies of the Bible or Mark’s Gospel.

Lesson 5

Topic title

The later ministry of Jesus.

Specification content

* The conversation at Caesarea Philippi: 8:27–33.
* The transfiguration of Jesus: 9:2–9.

Learning outcomes

The focus is on the developing picture of Jesus’ role in salvation history.

Possible teaching and learning activities

* Starter: For the 1st century Jew, who is Jesus? Use the PoJ table as the starting point for creative thinking.
* Outline the historical context of Jesus and the Jews, and describe Messianic expectations.
* Read Mk 8:27–33 and **+PoJ.**
* Use the PoJ table to examine the evidence for and against each of the three options that the disciples cite.
* Explain the meaning of the term ‘Messiah’ (Hebrew = Christ in Greek). Consider the magnitude of the claim made by Peter and examine how far it is reasonable based on the information in the PoJ table. Discuss why this claim is important to 1st century persecuted Christians.
* Read Mk 9:2–9. Highlight parts of the narrative that link to other passages studied, eg Elijah and Moses 🡪 Elijah and the prophets in 8:28; voice 🡪 voice at baptism. **+PoJ.**
* Consider fundamentalist and liberal interpretations of the story.
* Look at some images that artists have made of the transfiguration and then, as a creative exercise, write an eyewitness account of the transfiguration as an undercover reporter. Answer three questions:
1. what did the disciples learn from the event?
2. what did the Early Church get from the story?
3. what does the narrative mean to Christians today?
* Formative Assessment Point:Test or Q&A on passages studied and their meaning for 1st century and 21st century Christians.

**Resources**

* Copies of the Bible or Mark’s Gospel.
* Famous artworks which depict the Transfiguration, eg Fra Angelico, Perugino, Raphael etc. Selection available at [Transfiguration images on Pinterest](https://www.pinterest.co.uk/stmarksbalto/transfiguration/)

Lesson 6

Topic title

The later ministry of Jesus.

Specification content

* Jesus’ passion prediction: 10:32–34.
* The request of James and John: 10:35–45.
* Mark’s portrayal of Jesus as a teacher.

Learning outcomes

The focus is on the developing picture of Jesus as teacher of the disciples.

Possible teaching and learning activities

* Starter: School style report: What has Jesus achieved so far?
* Read Mk 10:32-34. Note how Jesus changes the focus to his future suffering and death. Make links with other narratives – scribes (2:6), Son of Man (2:10) etc. **+PoJ.**
* Read Mk 10:35–45, cross-reference with other narratives and **+PoJ.**
* Turn 10:35-40 into modern English, expand the meaning of Jesus’ replies and act out as a playlet. Note James and John seem to believe that Jesus will live on in glory. Consider if this is genuine or if they might be joking? Is Jesus irritated or sorrowful?
* Answer the questions:
1. what do the disciples learn from 10:42-45?
2. what did those verses mean to persecuted early Christians?
3. what might they say to Christians today?
* Plenary discussion point: Is Mark’s aim to tell the reader about Jesus or to provide encouragement and comfort for his Christian readers?

**Resources**

Copies of the Bible or Mark’s Gospel.

Lesson 7

Topic title

The later ministry of Jesus.

Specification content

* Bartimaeus: 10:46–52.
* The titles Son of Man, Son of God, Christ (Messiah) and Son of David, including their meaning for 1st century Jews and Jesus.

Learning outcomes

The focus is on developing an understanding of the way titles are used by Mark to describe aspects of the person of Jesus.

Possible teaching and learning activities

* Review PoJ table. Use it to decide whether Jesus is so far more of a teacher, or more of a wonder-worker/healer.
* Read Mk 10:46–52. On the face of it, this is another healing. Explain that the faith of the healed person figures in several healing narratives. Note the names applied to Jesus: Jesus of Nazareth, Son of David, Teacher/Rabbouni. Analyse the story for evidence about the person of Jesus and **+PoJ**.
* Use the PoJ table to make a list or spider diagram of the titles and descriptions used about Jesus. For each title, write down what they mean in the context of the story and to Jesus, and explain why it might be meaningful to 1st century persecuted Christians.
* Formative Assessment Point: Q&A, test or exam style questions on Jesus’ ministry.

**Resources**

Copies of the Bible or Mark’s Gospel.

Lesson 8

Topic title

The later ministry of Jesus.

Specification content

* The entry into Jerusalem: 11:1–11.
* The significance for 21st century Christians of Jesus’ understanding of the titles Son of Man, Son of God, Christ (Messiah) and Son of David.

Learning outcomes

The focus is on developing an understanding of the way titles are used by Mark to describe aspects of the person of Jesus.

Possible teaching and learning activities

* Review Jesus’ ministry so far and speculate. Describe the state of Jerusalem during Passover (people from the provinces, crowded, Romans alert for problems, Jewish authorities fearing Roman clampdown) Consider (a) how Jesus might choose to enter the city, and (b) how different parties (disciples, crowds, Jewish authorities, Romans) might expect him to enter.
* Read Mk 11:1-11 and then watch [video of The Triumphant Entry](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IOEQSE7FbJE). Use a map to plot the route Jesus took, and note that the prophet Zechariah associated the Mount of Olives with the coming of the Messiah. Speculate on the reason for the colt story (1-6). Note that Matthew references Zechariah 9:9, but Mark does not offer an explanation. Use a commentary to unpack the reasons for these details. **+PoJ.**
* Write in parallel columns the details of the entry of a King and the entry of Jesus: War horse/colt; red carpet/branches; trumpets/ people shouting. Explain that the Messiah was expected to be a king and priest, and help students conclude that Jesus’ “kingship” is a radically alternative view.
* Add titles ‘the Lord’ and ‘the one who comes in the name of the Lord’ to the list/diagram of Jesus’ titles from lesson 7. Note which titles Jesus uses about himself and which are used by others. Look through worship songs, hymns and prayers and identify how these titles are used by Christians today. **+PoJ.**
* Ideastorm titles used to describe people today: professional and academic titles, titles of respect, descriptive titles etc.
* Consider why, in the 21st century, Christians choose to use 1st century titles of Jesus. Lead back to the idea that Jesus’ understanding of the titles is important to Mark’s narrative, because they identify him as human and divine.

**Resources**

* Copies of the Bible or Mark’s Gospel.
* Clip of entry into Jerusalem from film, eg Jesus of Nazareth: [video of The Triumphant Entry](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IOEQSE7FbJE).
* Map of 1st century Jerusalem and surroundings.
* Commentary on Mark 11:1-6.
* Prayers/hymns/worship songs that use various titles for Jesus.

Lesson 9

Review and assessment of Jesus’ ministry.

Possible teaching and learning activities

Summative Assessment Point on Jesus’ Ministry: Exam style questions and/or test on knowledge, understanding and vocabulary.

**Resources**

Copies of the Bible or Mark’s Gospel.

Lesson 10

Topic title

The final days in Jerusalem.

Specification content

* The Last Supper: 14:12–26.
* Differing beliefs about the meaning of Jesus’ words and actions at the Last Supper.

Learning outcomes

The focus is on understanding the lasting influence of the Last Supper on Christianity.

Possible teaching and learning activities

* Review PoJ table. Assess how far Mark presents Jesus as a human being, as divine, as a wonder-worker/healer and as a teacher. Consider whether Mark presents a balanced picture.
* Read Mark 14:12–26. Written exercise: students compare Mark’s story with 1Cor 11:23-26 (which was written circa 25 years earlier) and with the liturgy used today for Holy Communion. Note that ‘Do this…’ is missing from Mark.
* Read Exodus 24:3-8 and explain that Moses ‘sealed’ – that is, confirmed the covenant with blood, and Jesus is quite consciously referring to this and doing the same.
* Research activity: Find out the rituals of the Passover Seder in Judaism today. Identify the aspects which, even today, show evidence that Jesus’ last supper was a Passover meal.
* Refer to work from Christianity module or introduce different understandings of Holy Communion (sacramental, memorialist) and explore how different understandings may be drawn from Mark’s text.
* Creative exercise in groups: write a Holy Communion prayer in modern language based only on Mark’s Gospel.

**Resources**

* Copies of the Bible or Mark’s Gospel and printed copies of 1Cor 11:23-26 and Exodus 24:3-8.
* Printout of a liturgy for Holy Communion/Mass, eg [The Church of England - Holy Communion - Prayer B](https://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-and-worship/worship-texts-and-resources/common-worship/holy-communion-service#mm7c5).

Lesson 11

Topic title

The final days in Jerusalem.

Specification content

Jesus in Gethsemane: 14:32-52.

The trial before the Jewish authorities: 14:53, 57–65.

Learning outcomes

The focus is on understanding the events of Maundy Thursday night as narrated by Mark.

Possible teaching and learning activities

* Read Mk 14:32-51 and construct an annotated cast of characters and a timeline of events. Note how much happens and how it involves a lot of different people. Consider what evidence there is that Mark’s account may depend on an eyewitness report.
* Examine Jesus’ prayer and consider what it says about his human and divine natures. **+PoJ.**
* Consider why Mark includes the story of the sleeping disciples, and discuss how Mark knows what Jesus prayed.
* Creative exercise: Using Mark’s account, write an eyewitness account of the arrest of Jesus from the point of view of someone in the crowd.
* Read vs 51-52, but avoid temptation to believe those who assert that the naked escapee was the writer of the Gospel.
* Read Mk 14:53, 57–65. Note additional title used for Jesus (add to the list from Lessons 7 and 8).
* Research exercise: Explore what the Jewish leaders meant by ‘blasphemy’ and why it was a crime worthy of death.
* Students analyse the account of the trial for evidence to add to PoJ table **(+PoJ)**. They then use the PoJ table to consider how far the charges against Jesus, and his claims about himself, are justified.
* Formative Assessment Point: Q&A review all the events of Maundy Thursday.

**Resources**

Copies of the Bible or Mark’s Gospel.

Lesson 12

Topic title

The final days in Jerusalem.

Specification content

* The trial before Pilate: 15:1–15.
* The crucifixion and burial: 15:21–47.

Learning outcomes

The focus is on contextualising the trial and death of Jesus between a Jewish past, Roman contemporary context and the historical impact afterwards.

Possible teaching and learning activities

* Read Mk 15:1-15.
* Add ‘King of the Jews’ to the list of Jesus’ titles from Lesson 7. Clarify the importance of this term in the context: a rival claim to the throne of Herod which was a threat of revolution, and it was Pilate’s job to keep peace. Consider whether or not Pilate thinks Jesus is guilty of a capital crime.
* Re-read vs 6-15. This transfers some responsibility for the death of Jesus over to the Jewish crowd.
* Students should think about the context of the first century church and suggest reasons why Mark includes this detail.
* Point out that Mark (and Matthew) blaming the Jews for Jesus’ death has led to centuries of persecution of Jews by Christians.
* Discussion topic: should this story be removed from the Bible?
* Read Mk 15:21–47.
* Highlight interesting details: names of Simon of Cyrene’s sons, wine mixed with myrrh, time of day, names of women present etc.
* Students should identify that these details may point to eyewitness testimony.
* Read Psalm 22 and compare it to Mark’s account. Students should also consider the significance of the tearing of the temple curtain. They should evaluate whether Mark has consciously used the Psalm as the basis for his story or whether Jesus is fulfilling prophecy. Students work through the story and **+PoJ.**
* Look at the picture of a 1st century tomb. Explain that Mark’s account of the burial of Jesus is consistent with other evidence of first century Jewish burial customs.
* Topic for discussion: Did Jesus die on the cross?

Differentiation and extension

Find out from the internet about the discovery made in archaeological excavations at Giv’at ha-Mivtar of a crucified man. What does this suggest about Mark’s account of Jesus’ crucifixion?

**Resources**

* Copies of the Bible or Mark’s Gospel and printed copies of Psalm 22.
* Internet research on the archaeological discovery at Giv’at ha Mivtar.
* Pictures of 1st century tomb eg the Garden Tomb in Jerusalem.

Lesson 13

Topic title

The final days in Jerusalem.

Specification content

* The empty tomb: 16:1–8.
* Beliefs about the significance of Jesus’ death and resurrection
* fundamentalist and liberal views
* different explanations for the empty tomb.

Learning outcomes

The focus is (a) to clarify understanding of Mark’s account of the empty tomb separate from the other gospel accounts, and (b) to further develop understanding of different theological views.

Possible teaching and learning activities

* Explain that most scholars believe that Mark’s gospel ends at v8, and that the remainder of the narrative was added later by the church.
* Read Mk 16:1–8. Explain details: Sabbath is Saturday and ends at sunset, so the women go on Sunday morning at dawn. Note they are women – no male witnesses. Allow students to realise that there are no resurrection appearances and that the women do not tell anyone.
* Consider the empty tomb as a crime scene. Look for clues in the stories of crucifixion and the empty tomb. Students suggest alternative explanations for the empty tomb.
* Poll: Based on Mark’s Gospel, did Jesus rise physically from the dead?
* Divide the class. Half assume the views of fundamentalist literalists who disregard science. They write a number of arguments on individual cards. The others assume the view of modern liberals who use science, metaphor and symbolism. They write the same number of single arguments on cards. Appoint a panel of three to adjudicate, then play the argument cards like a whist game. The panel decides which of each pair of arguments is stronger.
* Formative Assessment Point: Test or exam style questions on trial, death and resurrection.

**Resources**

* Copies of the Bible or Mark’s Gospel.
* Index cards.

Lesson 14

Topic title

Overview.

Specification content

Differing Christian views on the authority of Mark’s Gospel relating to the life of Jesus in relation to the challenges posed by secular sources of contemporary authority.

Learning outcomes

The focus is on understanding and evaluating challenges to the authority of Mark’s Gospel that are posed by 21st century secular sources of authority.

Possible teaching and learning activities

* Starter: each student to choose their favourite passage from the ones they studied. Nominate and vote to find the class’ number one gospel story. Discuss why some stories are more popular than others.
* Produce three posters, PowerPoint or Prezi slides:
1. Students should evaluate Mark’s gospel as a factual narrative in the context of a fundamentalist understanding. If Mark’s Gospel is 100% accurate, what aspects of secular science and history are compromised?
2. Then evaluate the gospel’s accuracy and authority from the point of view of secular scientific knowledge and historical facts. Which parts of the gospel lose credibility/authority?
3. Finally, evaluate the gospel as a document of faith and theology, which does not need to fit exactly with secular sources of authority or be factually inerrant. How can Christians today reconcile this with contemporary life and social attitudes?
* Review the PoJ table and Jesus’ titles list. Use their contents as evidence to decide whether Mark’s claim that Jesus is “Son of God” is a reasonable idea (a) for Christian believers, and (b) for those without a Christian faith.

**Resources**

* Copies of the Bible or Mark’s Gospel.
* Poster materials or presentation software.

Lesson 15

Topic title

Review and assessment.

Possible teaching and learning activities

Summative Assessment Point on the life of Jesus: Exam style questions and/or test on knowledge, understanding and vocabulary.

**Resources**

Copies of the Bible or Mark’s Gospel.