

## FOCUS SECTION

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# NARRATIVE THEOLOGY IN THE HIGH SCHOOL CLASSROOM: TEACHING THEOLOGY THROUGH LITERATURE

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*If Jesus taught most frequently through symbol and story, and the early Church passed on his teachings primarily through story, especially the four Gospels, why is today's catechesis and theological pedagogy not more informed by "narrative theology" – theology which focuses on the narratives told by Jesus and the Gospels precisely as narratives? This article provides some basic foundations for the discipline of narrative theology, argues for a more narrative approach to theological instruction, and, by way of application, proposes a full-year curriculum for high-school students that enables teachers to teach theology through the narratives of both the Bible and secular literature.*

But wishing to justify himself, the man said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" And Jesus replied, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among robbers." (Lk 10:29-30)

To what shall we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable can we use for it? It is like... (Mk 4:30-31)

The Pharisees began to grumble, saying, "This man receives sinners and eats with them."... So Jesus said to them, "A man had two sons. The younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me my share of the estate.'" (Lk 15:2, 11)

On the night before he died, Jesus took bread. (Words of Consecration, Eucharistic Prayer of the Roman Rite)

## INTRODUCTION

The epigraphs to this paper, which are but a small selection from many similar sayings of Jesus in the Gospels, point to a basic reality about Jesus' teaching and pedagogical method: He taught by stories. This is well-known. Yet, one might press further. Specifically, two further reflections on

Jesus' penchant for story-telling seem compelling. First, as the epigraphs suggest, Jesus most frequently told stories in response to questions that sought propositional answers: "Who is my neighbor?"; "What is the kingdom of God?"; "Why do you eat with sinners?"

Why did not Jesus answer such questions straightforwardly: "Your neighbor is..."; "The kingdom of God is..."; "I eat with sinners because..." Propositional answers, apparently, were not, in Jesus' view, always useful or, often, even possible. Building upon this insight, this essay argues that Jesus' story-telling is not only a useful pedagogical method, but also a necessary one. That is, Jesus did not tell stories merely because they provided effective illustrations of what he was really hoping to say more plainly, if only people would better understand him, though Jesus' images and parables do often serve the useful pedagogical purpose of elucidating difficult or hard-to-grasp concepts. Rather, Jesus told stories because the subject matter with which he was dealing – "The kingdom of God is at hand. Repent and believe in the Gospel" (Mk 1: 15) – could often only be revealed in its fullness through image and narrative.

A second significant observation is this: when the early Christian church sought to communicate the message and person of Jesus, perhaps the primary vehicle for this communication eventually took the form specifically of a written narrative, the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. These Gospels, while often communicating "propositional" knowledge about Jesus' person – for example, he was born in Bethlehem to Mary and Joseph – and message – for example, the Beatitudes, or his teachings on fasting or divorce – such knowledge is inextricably embedded in a larger narrative structure. Though this structure does not fit neatly into any one literary genre, the Gospels are unmistakably narrative in their overall structure (Meier, 1987); that is, all that is contained in the Gospels is presented specifically within the unfolding story of the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. Thus, one might say that, when the early Church sought to catechize others about their faith, one of the fundamental ways in which the Church did so was through stories of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, and stories about Jesus telling stories. Again, this is not merely a matter of pedagogical utility or methodological preference, but because the faith itself was communicated by an unfolding event, a life – starting in Bethlehem, continuing through Jerusalem, and culminating beyond the empty tomb – that unfolded precisely as a narrative. The Christian faith cannot be taught apart from this unfolding event of Christ, and therefore, in a certain sense, cannot be taught apart from the narrative in which that event was revealed.

This project proposes one way in which catechesis of the Catholic-Christian faith might effectively and compellingly occur; namely, through a more intentional retrieval of the essential narrative quality of the communi-

cation of the faith. Specifically, this paper proposes a curriculum that teaches theology through literature, both sacred and non-sacred. That is, the Bible, and particularly the Gospels, is examined as revelatory precisely in its narrative structures. The narrative itself, and not merely the propositions that can be derived from it, is revelatory. Meanwhile, non-sacred literature is used to augment the Christian revelation and cultivate students' minds and imaginations to engage with narrative toward an explicitly catechetical end.

It is important to articulate with ever better clarity and deeper comprehension this theological justification for using narrative as a catechetical tool. Clearly, since Vatican II and its call for updated catechetical methods, especially through *Gravissimum Educationis* (Vatican Council II, 1975), many educators and catechists in the Church have heard and responded to the Holy Spirit's call to evangelize the modern world through fresh, updated, and innovative means of catechesis. Yet, as the Church has also experienced, especially in the years immediately preceding and following Vatican II, not all catechetical innovation is equally effective or even valid. As was sometimes experienced before Vatican II, catechesis can become overly propositional. See, for example, the tendency in the *Baltimore Catechism* (O'Brien, 1955) toward propositional definitions of theological realities such as grace and sin: "Grace is..."; "Sin is...." Or, contrast, for example, Jesus' narrative exegesis of the second great commandment through the parable of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10:25-37 with the propositional treatment of "The Two Great Commandments" in the *Baltimore Catechism* (O'Brien, 1955). To the other extreme, many post-Vatican II catechetical innovations have been heavy on the innovative side, without a corresponding theological depth or even catechetical effectiveness. So, when introducing a catechetical method or tool, it is essential frequently to ask the question: "Is this a theologically valid and catechetically effective way of teaching the faith?" One does not need an absolutely affirmative answer to begin an innovative project, but the question should inform the development of the project along the way. The curriculum presented here has tried to allow this question of theological validity to guide its development.

## WHAT IS NARRATIVE THEOLOGY?

Narrative theology is a branch of theology that began to be more richly explored and developed in the 1970s and 1980s, through the work of theologians involved in Scripture, Christology, ethics, and other theological branches. Theologians such as Schillebeeckx (1981), Navone (1984), Boff (1987), and Hauerwas and Jones (1989) are just a few of the more well-known contributors to the increasing body of narrative approaches to theology. Rocchetta defines narrative theology in the *Dictionary of Fundamental Theology*:

The expression “narrative theology” does not mean simply having recourse to a theology composed of stories but recovering a way of practicing theology in constant attention to the original narration of the event of Jesus of Nazareth and retransmitting it in narrative style. It reflects a theology skilled in analyzing the salvific narratives and the way they used to be presented and were charged with keeping alive the ecclesial community’s narrative memory. (Rocchetta, 1994, p. 1084)

Narrative theology is a way of seeing the Gospels, as a whole and in their parts, as an unfolding story. Through such a way of perceiving, one seeks not for theological facts or propositions to be extricated from the story and analyzed apart from it, but one tries to reflect upon the unfolding events themselves, as “remembered experiences” (Rocchetta, 1994, p. 1085) of Jesus, which bring back to life the person of Jesus, in the midst of one’s present life and circumstances.

The unique ability of narrative, the organization of the objects, images, events, and experiences of one’s finite life, to make sense of one’s personal life and circumstances and more specifically, the unique power of theological narrative (such as the Gospels, or secular literature that treats of humans’ theological dimension) to help one gain a deeper insight into God and one’s self continues to be argued persuasively by several contemporary scholars. In the early 1960s, Lynch made a landmark argument in the development of the link between the literary and theological dimensions of human experience. In *Christ and Apollo: The Dimensions of Literary Imagination*, Lynch (1960) recognizes the fundamental human dynamic that whenever humans seek to perceive something (an object, an image, another person, God), they spontaneously bring certain attitudes to, and form certain judgments about, the things they encounter. Such a dynamic indicates that “there is more in ourselves and in our images than meets the eye. These attitudes penetrate the images themselves, and the two are always mutually forming, creating, sometimes distorting one another” (Lynch, 1960, p. 7). Finite images, argues Lynch, can become gateways to insight into what is beyond the finite.

When seeking theological insight – insight into the infinite – human beings, because of their finitude, must begin by peering into the finite symbols of their concrete world and existence. For Lynch, the crucial and inescapable step is that, “We must go through the finite, the limited, the definite,” so that, “in taking this narrow path, we shall be using our...experience of things seen...to create hope in the things that are not yet seen” (p. 7). One of the primary ways humans do this is by organizing their finite experiences and symbols into narratives, which then, through the analogical power of symbols, can become gateways into theological insight. Persuasive examples of this kind of theology, in which both canonical and secular literature

is used to gain insight into God and into humans' theological dimensions, can be seen in contemporary narrative theological works such as Coles' *The Call of Stories: Teaching and the Moral Imagination* (1989), Booth's *The Company We Keep: An Ethics of Fiction* (1988), and Dunne's *The Road of the Heart's Desire: An Essay on the Cycles of Story and Song* (2002).

As Rocchetta summarizes, perception of "narrative truth," the insight into truth that we gain from the organization of the objects, images, events, and experiences of one's finite life into the symbolic forms of narrative, involves at least two preconditions: first, discernment of the kind of story – is this narrative a historical account, a parable, a myth?; and second, the identification of its purpose – what is the author trying to tell us in this story? The Gospels beg readers to ask these questions, for they present Jesus precisely through various types of narratives, and Jesus himself frequently teaches precisely through narratives. A pedagogical style that seeks only to convey facts or propositions from the Gospel, and to deduce logical, and often abstract, conclusions from them and thus develop a "theology," does so only by disregarding the primary structure of revelation itself, the unfolding narrative of the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Narrative theology, by contrast, seeks to invite people to reflect theologially on the stories of Jesus, develop implications and conclusions based on these reflections, and over time, organize these ever-deepening reflections into an increasingly fuller vision of the person of Jesus, even as one alive in one's present life and leading one to a concrete way of living and responding to the world.

Thus, finally, a narrative approach to theology and catechesis can be seen as a typical and accessible, and not merely a specialized, method of teaching and reflecting upon the faith. That is, because Jesus often taught through story, and because the early Church received and organized the Gospels in the form of a narrative, catechesis through narrative need not be cordoned off for the "literature people." While literary teachers may have a more informed or nuanced insight into the stories of Jesus as stories, this obviously does not mean that literature specialists have any privileged access to revelation. Rather, the narrative structure of the Gospels suggests that all catechists should engage at some level with the narratives of the Gospels, or at least not completely ignore them and teach the faith as if it were merely a set of straightforward propositions.

## **CATECHESIS THROUGH "NARRATIVE FAITH"**

More specifically, then, one might ask "To what effect and for what reasons did Jesus use story when 'catechizing' the first disciples?" "To what effect and for what reasons has the Church used the narrative form of the Gospels as a primary way of 'catechizing' its members?" Several answers could be

given. Five answers are highlighted here that are particularly relevant for catechesis in the contemporary world and for a reinvigoration of the Catholic faith in response to five specific tendencies to the contrary in the contemporary world. This curriculum seeks particularly to respond to these five (see Table 1).

Table 1

*Five Characteristics of "Narrative Faith"*

A "Narrative Faith" is:	A "Narrative Faith" is not:
Holistic	Exclusively rational
Existential	Abstract or irrelevant
Applicable	Disconnected from one's actions
Builds inclusive community	Overly individualistic or exclusively personal
Unites objective and subjective dimensions	Fundamentalist or non-transcendental

Specifically, a narrative approach to catechesis emphasizes an encounter with Jesus that is: holistic; existential; praxis-oriented and applicable to students' daily decisions and actions; conducive to the building of inclusive community; and a fruitful union of the objective and subjective dimensions of revelation. First, narrative faith is holistic. Students will encounter Christ not only through their intellect, but also through their imagination and emotions. Narrative is particularly suited to evoking emotive response in students in ways that propositional catechesis is not. This characteristic specifically counters the contemporary tendency toward over-rationalization.

Second, narrative faith is existential. Students will continually be moving among, and being encouraged to integrate, personal experience, literary experience, and their encounter with Jesus in the Gospels. This "back-and-forth" movement between students' experience and others' experience, as articulated in literature and the Scriptures, while sometimes complicated, challenges students not to disconnect their faith from their lived experience. It also seeks to encourage the development of a faith that is in meaningful conversation with, though always transcendent of, their lived experience. This characteristic counters the contemporary tendency to abstract and separate faith from the realities of one's existential, daily life.

Third, narrative faith is praxis-oriented and applicable. Closely aligned with the second characteristic, the criterion of applicability encourages stu-

dents to apply their faith to their own lives and to contemporary issues and decisions. It continually invites the translation and application of faith into action. The narratives and literature in this course continually present articles of faith in the context of characters' actions, and consistently encourage the application of faith principles to personal and contemporary issues. Each unit invites students at a certain point to apply imaginatively the theological theme of the unit to a contemporary issue. This characteristic of applicability counters the tendency to disconnect one's faith from one's actions.

Fourth, narrative faith is conducive to the building of inclusive community. Narrative can be particularly effective at "giving voice" to diverse and marginalized peoples. Literature often articulates experiences of the world that counter the mainstream and dominant culture. For example, in this course, students will often encounter the voices of women, children and adolescents, Negro slaves, an impoverished Brazilian family, and others, whose voices are often ignored or silenced by mainstream culture. The Gospels will be intentionally juxtaposed with such voices, in order to stimulate diverse, alternative, and non-traditional interpretations. Furthermore, open-ended reflection on literature invites a multiplicity of interpretations and tends to resist univocal meaning. Listening to diverse interpretations steadily becomes a part of students' learning process. Individual interpretations are challenged to enter into dialogue with divergent interpretations. Thus, a catechetical program that relies heavily on narrative, and the Gospels as narrative, can more consistently seek to build inclusive community. This course could easily accommodate, for example, Monday-morning faith sharing groups, in which the students break into groups of 4-5 students for the first 15 minutes of each week, in order to learn how to faith share about relevant Gospel passages for that week. This characteristic of narrative faith counters the tendency to individualize and overly-personalize one's faith.

Finally, narrative faith can achieve a fruitful union of the objective and subjective dimensions of revelation, as argued most persuasively and systematically in von Balthasar's *The Glory of the Lord: A Theological Aesthetics* (1982). In general terms, this course is structured on an understanding of revelation as a union between an objective revelation – transcendent of, and irreducible to, human subjectivity – and an individual's subjective existence, without which objective revelation is rendered impotent. More specifically, this project holds forth the Scriptures, and the life and person of Christ, as the privileged locus of divine revelation. This life reveals dimensions of experience that humans would not be able to discern from their own lives. At the same time, it acknowledges the Scriptures as communicating revelation always through human mediation, and thus demanding continual interpretation. It thus understands revelation as always demanding integration with one's subjective experience. Narrative,

and the Gospels specifically as narratives, again provides a useful tool for approaching this view of revelation. The Gospels present an objective person who must be encountered in his teachings and actions, but the narrative structure in which this person is encountered also readily invites, indeed, demands, diverse and multiple interpretations. This characteristic counters the two contemporary tendencies towards fundamentalism, the over-objectification of revelation and an overly anthropological view of revelation, which denies it of any transcendent dimension.

## **A CURRICULUM FOR TEACHERS: OVERVIEW**

This curriculum is designed for 12th-grade teachers of religion or English. It is a year-long curriculum. It is heavily inter-disciplinary, drawing on core principles from both theology and English, and presumes of entering students an 11th grade level of competence in both subjects. That is, students taking this class are presumed to have completed high school-level work in grammar and composition, and 2 years of literature, usually some combination of American, British, and world literature. The course also presumes 3 years of high school theology, generally, Old Testament, New Testament, Church history, Christian ethics, and social justice. Of course, a thorough mastery of each of these fields is not required; however, the course does presume some basic familiarity with the major Scriptural passages regarding Jesus' life, death, and resurrection; basic familiarity with, and ability to analyze, selections from the major genres of literature, and basic composition skills in both discursive and creative writing. The course content, lesson objectives, and modes of assessment draw significantly from both disciplines. For example, this curriculum's Unit 1, on "The Birth of Jesus," requires students to read and analyze Old and New Testament selections, infancy narratives from Roman and Greek mythology, and a modern short story on birth from a mother's perspective, as well as to compose five diverse writing samples: one informal journal entry, one autobiographical story, two creative writing pieces, and one analytic essay.

The course is structured primarily on Scriptural and Christological grounds, with particular attention to how both the Scriptures and the story of Christ are presented as a narrative whole. The nine major units of the course correspond to eight major events, or groups of events, in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, as narrated by the four Gospels. There is also a final synthetic unit on the narrative whole of the Gospels, which will also serve as a final assessment piece. Each of the units explores a central narrative moment or theme in the Gospels, using both Scripture and other related literary works to stimulate imaginative engagement with the person and "event" of Christ, as revealed in the narratives of the Gospels. These units are organized and ordered according to the basic narrative development of

the Gospels. They are listed in Table 2 under dual headings that reflect both their theological and narrative/literary focus. Also included in the Appendix as an aid for teachers, is a select theological bibliography for each unit, specifically of narrative-theological treatments of each of the eight main events in Jesus' life treated in this course. These selections were chosen for their accessibility and usefulness in clearly delineating theological issues that emerge specifically from a narrative reading of the life of Jesus, and can be helpful to teachers in the identification of theological themes for each unit. Suggestions for literary and visual works to be used in conjunction with the Gospels are also included in the Appendix.

Table 2

*The Nine Units*

Unit	Theological Heading	Literary Heading
1	The Birth of Jesus	Hints and Shadows
2	The Baptism of Jesus	Coming-of-Age
3	The Temptation of Jesus	Obstacles and the Problem of Evil
4	The Parables of Jesus	The Power of Story
5	The Miracles of Jesus	The Power of Action
6	The Last Supper	Making the Body of Christ
7	The Death of Jesus	Tragedy or Comedy?
8	The Resurrection	The End or the Beginning?
9	A Life of Jesus	Final Assessment

These nine units are presented in the Appendix in a dual structure. First, the overall, approximately month-long unit plan of each of the nine units is summarized, which provides teachers with: the overall rationale of each unit, including theological and literary focus topics; presumed prior knowledge of the students; the major student outcome; and the culminating unit assessment.

Second, each unit is broken into its major lessons, using a two-place decimal numbering system. The first number indicates a major "Lesson Objective," and there are 3 to 5 major lessons per unit. The second number indicates individual "Student Tasks" that lead to each major lesson objective. These lesson numbers do not correspond to single classroom periods; in fact,

the majority of the student tasks in this curriculum will take longer than one class period to accomplish. There are an average of 13 student tasks for each unit. Assuming 2 class days for the majority of tasks, each unit could be completed in about 1 month. Both the overall unit and individual lesson plans frequently utilize the acronym “SWBAT,” which stands for “Students will be able to.” This SWBAT formulation, along with the organization of units according to student performance objectives and student tasks, helps to maintain an appropriate focus on student output. This is particularly important in this course, as the goal is to achieve a balance between the objective content of the revelation of the Gospels and the subjective experience of that revelation by the students (see Appendix).

Finally, the general method of each unit intentionally and consistently follows a similar, five-step method. This method is designed for a specific catechetical purpose. Namely, each unit seeks to catechize through an encounter of the students’ personal, lived experience with similar experiences in the life of Jesus. The method encourages imaginative reflection by the students on personal experiences as well as Jesus’ experiences, and seeks to re-imagine their personal experiences in light of the Kingdom of God proclaimed by Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection.

With this general method in mind, each unit basically follows a five-step pattern. First, each unit begins with students’ reflection on their experiences of the main narrative theme of the unit, either in their own life or in film or fiction – for example, birth, death, coming-of-age, evil, the miraculous. Second, the unit attempts to juxtapose that experience with biblical and secular literary treatments of the same theme. It is during this stage that students are encouraged to reflect upon the significance of their experience in light of others’ experience of the same theme as expressed in literature. Third, the theme as it emerges in the life of Jesus is then examined closely. It is usually here that the major catechetical themes of the unit emerge most explicitly. Fourth, some related topic is examined – a secondary character in the Gospels, such as Mary, John the Baptist, Judas, the Pharisees, or the apostles, and/or a secondary theological topic, such as the lives of the saints, the Holy Spirit, or liberation theology. These lesson objectives encourage imaginative engagement with the central theme, as well as application of the central theme to the life circumstances of themselves or another person, or to the contemporary Church. Finally, each unit ends with a comprehensive unit assessment, usually a longer, analytical writing piece that seeks to assess the students’ ability both to engage the revelatory aspects of the life of Jesus being studied, and to apply this revelation to a non-Scriptural setting. For example, the assessment may ask a student to compare and contrast a given Scriptural theme with a non-Scriptural work, or to apply the Scriptural theme to a contemporary issue. This five-stage catechetical process can be seen in

each of the eight major units.

Certainly, units, procedures, methods, and reading selections will need to be continually revisited and revised as this course is implemented. The course outline that follows, therefore, must be seen as an organic work-in-progress. It hardly need be mentioned that the number of literary works that can be used in such a course is vast, much vaster than the few selections included as literary suggestions for each unit in the appendix. Moreover, following its own guideline of integrating objective revelation with subjective experience, the objectives of this course will need to mature and be refined as they encounter students in the classroom. And, hopefully, the students too will mature and have their theological and literary skills refined and deepened as they encounter Jesus in the narratives of this course – the narratives of the Gospels, of literature, of their own lives, and the lives of their fellow students.

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## Appendix

## Lesson Plans with Select Theological and Literary Bibliographies

Table A1

*The Birth of Jesus/Hints and Shadows: Unit 1 Overview*

Aspect of Unit	Description
Duration	Unit 1 will take approximately 25 classes.
Rationale	This unit introduces students to how the stories of Jesus' birth foreshadow character traits and major events in his later life. Theological foci are Jesus as Messiah, liberator and source of division; Mary, continuity between Old Testament and New Testament. Literary foci are character development, foreshadowing, point of view, and use of secondary characters.
Goal	S/WB/AT identify characteristics of Jesus (as priest, prophet, and king) and future events in his life foreshadowed by the Infancy Narratives.
Prior knowledge	S/WB/AT relate some events of Jesus' birth; personal Christmas stories; and some personal experiences with birth.
Assessment	Students will write an essay comparing and contrasting the birth of Jesus with the birth of another mythological/heroic figure, and highlighting main characteristics of Jesus foreshadowed in the Infancy Narratives.

**Theological Suggestions**Bligh, J. (1975). *The infancy narratives*. Staten Island, NY: Alba House.Daniélou, J. (1968). *The infancy narratives*. New York: Herder and Herder.Freed, E. (2001). *The stories of Jesus' birth*. Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press.Hendriks, H. (1984). *Infancy narratives: Studies in the synoptic gospels*. London: Geoffrey Chapman.**Biblical Suggestions**

Stories of David from Hebrew scriptures (1 Sam 16-24).

The Birth of Moses (Exodus 2:1-10) and John the Baptist (Lk 1).

The Infancy Narratives of Jesus (Mt 1-2; Lk 1-2).

**Literary Suggestions**Hamilton, E. (1969). *Mythology*. New York: New American Library.Julian of Norwich. (1998). *Revelations of divine love*. Rochester, NY: D.S. Brewer.Maitland, S. (1996). Blessed are those who mourn. In *Angel maker: The short stories of Sara Maitland* (pp. 279-289). New York: Henry Holt and Company.Peters, J., Guber, P. (Producers), & Burton, T. (Director). (1989). *Batman* [Motion picture]. United States: Warner Bros.

Table A2

*The Birth of Jesus/Hints and Shadows: Unit 1 Lesson Plans*

Lesson	Objective	Student Task
1.1	SWBAT relate the importance of genealogies, and interpret birth stories.	Compose family genealogy in journal. Compose character sketches of family members in genealogy.
1.2		Read Jesus' genealogy and David's stories from Old Testament. Identify similarities between David and Jesus.
1.3		Discuss "infancy narrative" present in <i>Batman</i> (Batman, Joker, Penguin).
1.4		Compose fictional account of birth of their favorite hero or celebrity.
1.5		Compose story, based on parental interview, of uniqueness of their birth. Story includes real or fictitious event(s) that prefigures trait or event in students' later life.
2.1	SWBAT compare and contrast scriptural versus non-scriptural infancy narratives.	Read 2-3 Synoptic Infancy Narratives and identify potential traits and events in Jesus' life prefigured.
2.2		Read selected infancy narratives from Greek and Roman mythology. Small groups report on mythological figures.
2.3		Read Synoptic Infancy Narratives, and indicate main traits highlighted re: Jesus.
3.1	SWBAT identify the role of secondary characters, especially Mary, in the Infancy Narratives.	Identify the secondary characters in the Infancy Narratives (Mary, Joseph, Herod, etc.) and what roles they play in scriptural "drama."
3.2		Read "Blessed Are Those Who Mournt." Watch birth video. Discuss birth from mother's point of view.
3.3		Re-write an Infancy Narrative from Mary's point of view.
4.1	Assessment: Students write an essay comparing the birth of Jesus with the birth of another mythological/heroic figure.	Review Infancy Narratives as literary whole.
4.2		Compose an essay comparing and contrasting one scriptural and one non-scriptural infancy narrative.

Table A3

*The Baptism of Jesus/Coming of Age: Unit 2 Overview*

Aspect of Unit	Description
Duration	Unit 2 will take approximately 20 classes.
Rationale	This unit focuses on Jesus' baptism as the moment in which his adult mission and ministry is crystallized, and engages the general theme of "coming-of-age." Theological foci are Jesus' relationship with/mentorship by/difference from John the Baptist, and Jesus' process of self-discovery. Literary foci are character analysis, voice/dialogue, and plot development through creation and relief of tension within and among characters.
Goal	SWBAT identify the similarities and differences between John the Baptist's and Jesus' message, and describe Jesus' baptism as a moment of self-discovery, (as the "beloved" of God) and commissioning to public ministry.
Prior knowledge	SWBAT relate some personal experiences of "coming-of-age" and some sense of how sacraments and other rituals are used to mark important moments of growth or self-discovery.
Assessment	Students will compose a dialogue between the Baptist and Jesus on the night before Jesus' baptism. Dialogue should reflect similarities and differences in their teachings, as well as their personalities as students imagine them.

**Theological Suggestions**

Cantalunna, R. (1994). *The holy spirit in the life of Jesus: The mystery of Christ's baptism*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press.

Chilton, B. (1998). *Jesus' baptism and Jesus' healing*. Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International.

McDonnell, K. (1996). *The baptism of Jesus in the Jordan*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press.

**Biblical Suggestion**

Jesus' Baptism (Mt 3:1-17; Mk 1:1-11; Lk 3:1-22; Jn 1:19-34).

**Literary Suggestions**

Augustine. (1961). Books III and VIII. In *Confessions* (R. S. Pine-Coffin, Trans.). London: Penguin Books.

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Joyce, J. (2000). *Portrait of an artist as a young man*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Kazantzakis, N. (1960). *The last temptation of Christ*. New York: Simon and Schuster.

Knowles, J. (1960). *A separate peace*. New York: Macmillan.

O'Connor, F. (1988). The river. In *Collected works* (pp. 154-171). New York: Library of America.

Perugia, L. (Producer), & Zeffirelli, F. (Director). (1972). *Brother sun, sister moon*. [Motion picture]. United States: Paramount Pictures.

Salinger, J. D. (1951). *The catcher in the rye*. Boston: Little Brown.

Table A4

*The Baptism of Jesus/Coming of Age: Unit 2 Lesson Plans*

Lesson	Objective	Student Task
1.1	SWBAT relate some experience(s) of self-discovery and if or how such were ritualized.	Journal entry on experience of self-discovery and growing-up and if or how such was ritualized.
1.2		Read "The River" and watch conversion in <i>Brother Sun, Sister Moon</i> . Identify self-discoveries, tensions, and accompanying rituals.
1.3		Compare several vocation stories in Scripture (e.g., Moses, Mary, Paul, disciples, etc). Small groups report on tensions and self-discoveries.
1.4		Compose fictional account of moment of self-discovery of hero or celebrity.
2.1	SWBAT report on the similarities and differences between John the Baptist and Jesus, and describe and interpret their relationship.	Watch <i>The Power of One</i> . Identify role of mentor, and discuss how main character both follows and departs from mentor.
2.2		Read Scriptural accounts of Visitation, John the Baptist's preaching, his encounters with Jesus, and his beheading. Identify key themes in their relationship.
2.3		Read Jesus – John the Baptist scenes from <i>Last Temptation</i> . Identify similarities and differences between Jesus and John the Baptist.
2.4		Compose draft dialogue between Jesus and John the Baptist on night before Jesus' baptism: should John baptize Jesus?
3.1	SWBAT describe how events in John the Baptist's life effect or move forward the plot of Jesus' life in Gospels.	Read extended sections of Luke's Gospel following scenes involving Baptist. Identify Jesus' activity in these scenes. Also, read beginning chapters of Endo, <i>Life of Jesus</i> . What connections are possible?
3.2	Assessment.	Re-write dialogue from step 2.4.

Table A5

*The Temptation of Jesus/Obstacles and the Problem of Evil: Unit 3 Overview*

Aspect of Unit	Description
Duration	Unit 3 will take approximately 25 classes.
Rationale	This unit introduces students to the central “protagonist-antagonist” tensions in the Gospels – those between Jesus, Satan, Pharisees and Judas. Theological foci are the temptation scenes, Jesus’ relationship with the Pharisees, and the character of Judas. Literary focus is role of the antagonist in plot development.
Goal	SWBAT identify the major temptations in Jesus’ life (glory, self-service, lack of trust in God) and his response in overcoming them. Also, to articulate an understanding of Jesus’ relationship with the Pharisees and Judas.
Prior knowledge	SWBAT articulate instances of evil in the world; instances of temptation in their lives; and instances of antagonism between good and evil.
Assessment	Students will be given 3 passages from Gospel (1 will include Pharisees and 1 Judas) and write an essay on how 3 main temptations could have tempted Jesus to act differently, and how Jesus actually responded.

**Theological Suggestions**

Calloud, J. (1976). *Structural analysis of narrative*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press.

Gazett, S. (1998). *The temptations of Jesus in Mark's gospel*. Grand Rapids, MI: W. B. Eerdmans.

Vann, G., & Mesinger, P. E. (1957). *The temptations of Christ*. New York: Sheed and Ward.

**Biblical Suggestions**

The fall of humans from the Garden of Eden (Gen 3).

Jesus’ temptation (Lk 4:1-13; Mt 4:1-11; Mk 1:12-13).

Jesus’ betrayal by Judas in the gospels (Mt 26; Jn 13:21-30).

**Literary Suggestions**

Alighieri, D. (2003). *Inferno*. New York: Modern Library.

Augustine. (1961). Book II. In *Confessions* (R. S. Pine-Coffin, Trans.). London: Penguin Books.

Dostoevsky, F. (1991). The grand inquisitor. In *The brothers Karamazov* (R. Pevear & L. Volokhonsky, Trans., pp. 246-264). New York: Vintage Books.

Greene, G. (1986). The destructor. In *Collected short stories* (pp. 9-22). New York: Penguin Books.

Hamilton, E. (1969). How the world and mankind were created. In *Mythology* (pp. 63-74). New York: New American Library.

Jaffe, S. R., Lansing, S. (Producers), & Mandel, R. (Director). (1992). *School ties* [Motion picture]. United States: Paramount.

Kazantzakis, N. (1960). *The last temptation of Christ*. New York: Simon and Schuster.

Lewis, C. S. (1961). *The seven storey letters*. New York: First Touchstone.

Table A6

*The Temptation of Jesus/Obstacles and the Problem of Evil: Unit 3 Lesson Plans*

Lesson	Objective	Student Task
1.1	SWBAT compose anecdotes that exemplify antagonism between good and evil in their world.	Journal entries on instances of evil, and of temptation, in their world and lives.
1.2		Read Genesis account of Fall and story of Cain and Abel, and Augustine's pear tree. Discuss and identify how evil is literally depicted in each.
1.3		Read "The Destroyers" and watch <i>School Ties</i> . Discern Biblical/Augustinian notion of evil.
1.4		Choose a biblical figure we have encountered. Imagine his or her main temptation and antagonist. Compose a short story or dialogue depicting this.
2.1	SWBAT analyze temptation scene to discern Jesus' main temptations and Jesus' response.	Read temptation scene and "Grand Inquisitor." Three small groups report on three main temptations.
2.2		Read selections from <i>Last Temptation</i> . Analyze scenes to discern temptation and Jesus' struggle.
2.3		Choose a Gospel scene. Write an imaginative account of the story, showing how Jesus may have been tempted to act differently.
3.1	SWBAT analyze the relationship between Jesus and Pharisees/Judas, and how this relationship develops plot of Gospels.	Read Gospel scenes on Pharisees. Small groups identify main points of disagreement/tension.
3.2		Expand one of the Gospel scenes with imaginative dialogue between Jesus and one of the Pharisees.
3.3		Read Judas sections in <i>Last Temptation</i> and <i>Life of Jesus</i> . Identify similarities and differences in their hopes for Messiah.
3.4		Re-write a Gospel story, replacing Jesus' role with Judas, and giving Judas Jesus' powers.
4.1	Assessment: Students write essay on given Gospel passages, analyzing three forces that tempted Jesus to act differently and how Jesus actually responded.	Review temptation, Pharisee, and Judas scenes.
4.2		Compose essay.

Table A7

*The Parables of Jesus/The Power of Story: Unit 4 Overview*

Aspect of Unit	Description
Duration	Unit 4 will take approximately 20 classes.
Rationale	This unit invites students into the imaginative world of Jesus' parables and examines their use both in terms of their form/content (how is the kingdom of God symbolized?) and their effectiveness in building community identity. Theological foci are the kingdom of God, ethics, and Christian community. Literary foci are simile/metaphor, sign/symbol, hyperbole and effect of story in building community.
Goal	§ WHAT identify central characteristics of the kingdom of God as imaged by Jesus' parables, and evaluate how the Church has appropriated these characteristics into its own identity as a community.
Prior knowledge	§ WHAT relate some foundational stories of their family, school, country, etc., and identify the expectations these stories place on them as members.
Assessment	Students analyze a given parable of Jesus for symbolic content, the traits of the Kingdom of God encouraged and discouraged, and how Church is called to witness for or against such traits in light of current issue.

**Theological Suggestions**

Perkins, P. (1981). *Hearing the parables of Jesus*. New York: Paulist Press.

Scott, B. B. (1989). *Hear them: a parable: A commentary on the parables of Jesus*. Indianapolis, IN: Fortress Press.

Stein, R. (1981). *An introduction to the parables of Jesus*. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press.

**Biblical Suggestions**

The parable of the sower; and Jesus' explanation of purpose of parables (Mt 13).

The Good Samaritan (Lk 10:25-37)

The Prodigal Son (Lk 15:11-32)

The Last Judgment (Mt 25:31-46).

**Literary Suggestions**

Adams, R. (1974). *Watership down*. New York: Macmillan.

*Aesop's fables* (L. Gibbs, Trans.). (2002). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Grimm, J., & Grimm, W. (1972). *The complete Grimm's fairy tales*. New York: Pantheon Books.

Harris, J. C. (2000). *Uncle Remus selections, Tar baby: Tales of Brer Rabbit*. London: Creation Books.

Hemingway, E. (1974). The old man and the sea. In *The enduring Hemingway* (pp. 693-752). New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.

Nouwen, H. (1992). *The return of the prodigal son*. New York: Doubleday.

O'Connor, F. (1988). The artificial nigger. In *Collected works* (pp. 210-231). New York: Library of America.

Plato. (1992). *Republic* (G. M. A. Grube, Trans.). Indianapolis, IN: Hackett.

Table A8

*The Parables of Jesus/The Power of Story: Unit 4 Lesson Plans*

Lesson	Objective	Student Task
1.1	SWBAT interpret and utilize simile/metaphor/symbol and analyze short stories for their symbolic content.	Read selected Aesop's fables and Grimm's fairy tales. Analyze use of simile, metaphor, and symbol.
1.2		Read Plato's "Myth of Cave." Discuss use of symbol and image.
1.3		Compose family or school story in which humans are replaced by animals. Identify five major symbols.
2.1	SWBAT relate foundational stories of their communities and identify expectations these stories place on their membership.	Read selections from <i>Watership Down</i> . Sketch summaries of foundational tales and identify traits of rabbits that are encouraged and discouraged.
2.2		Journal on foundational stories of students' family, school, country, and other communities. Identify traits and actions that are encouraged and discouraged.
2.3		Read selections from Uncle Remus and Negro spirituals. Identify literary techniques used to encourage and discourage certain traits and actions.
2.4		Compose a fable or fairy tale to encourage and discourage certain activity of family or school.
3.1	SWBAT analyze Jesus' central parables and identify traits of Kingdom that are encouraged and discouraged.	Read selected parables of Jesus. Compile list of traits of Kingdom that are encouraged and discouraged and current issues to which they apply.
3.2		Divide class into sub-genres of parables. Small groups report on how current Church can embody espoused traits of Kingdom of God in sub-genre.
3.3		Choose a current issue in world. Using an existing parable as a model, adapt imagery to advocate how Church should respond.
4.1	Assessment: Students analyze a given parable for symbolic content, traits of Kingdom of God, and how Church is called to embody in present.	Review parables from each sub-genre.
4.2		Compose essay.

Table A9

*The Miracles of Jesus/The Power of Action: Unit 5 Overview*

Aspect of Unit	Description
Duration	Unit 5 will take approximately 20 classes.
Rationale	This unit introduces students to the three major types of Jesus' miracles (healings, transformations, nature) and how to discern traits of the Kingdom of God in them. Theological foci are revelation, the Kingdom of God, saints, and faith in action. Literary foci are symbolism and interpretation of text into ethical action.
Goal	SWBAT identify three types of Jesus' miracles and central traits of Kingdom of God revealed by each, and translate these traits into modern ethical guidelines.
Prior knowledge	SWBAT relate some experience with the miraculous, mysterious, and supernatural, in personal life as well as fiction and film.
Assessment	Students analyze a given miracle of Jesus for its type, traits of Kingdom of God revealed by it, and how Church is called to embody in present in light of current issue.

**Theological Suggestions**

Fuller, R. H. (1963). *Interpreting the miracles*. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press.

Latozelle, R. (1988). *The miracles of Jesus and the theology of miracles*. New York: Paulist Press.

Reznas, H. (1997). *Jesus as healer*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Richardson, A. (1941). *The miracles: Stories of the gospels*. London: SCM Press.

**Biblical Suggestions**

The Wedding at Cana (Jn 2:1-12) and other transformation miracles.

Walking on the Water (Mt 14:22-33; Jn 6:16-21) and other nature miracles.

The Healing of the Blind Man (Jn 9) and other healing miracles.

**Literary Suggestions**

Butler, A. (2003). *The lives of the saints* (P. Burns, Ed.). Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press.

Hamilton, E. (1969). Daedalus. In *Mythology* (pp. 139-140). New York: New American Library.

Hopkins, G. M. (1984). As kingfishers catch fire. In *Gerard Manley Hopkins: Poems and prose* (p. 51). New York: Penguin Books.

O'Connor, F. (1988). Revelation. In *Collected works* (pp. 633-654). New York: Library of America.

Ovid. (1954). Pygmalion. In *Metamorphoses*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Rowling, J. K. (1998). *Harry Potter and the sorcerer's stone*. New York: A. A. Levine Books.

Tolkien, J. R. R. (1991). *Lord of the rings*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Table A10

*The Miracles of Jesus/The Power of Action: Unit 3 Lesson Plans*

Lesson	Objective	Student Task
1.1	\$WBAT relate some experience(s) of miraculous or supernatural, either in real life or fiction and movies.	Journal entry and presentation on experience of use of supernatural power in film or fiction, and what good or bad effects are accomplished.
1.2		Journal entry on personal life experience with "miraculous" and what hidden power is revealed.
1.3		Read selections from mythology, Exodus, and <i>Lord of the Rings</i> . Compare and contrast use of miracles.
2.1	\$WBAT identify three types of Jesus' miracles and central traits of Kingdom of God revealed.	Read selected miracle stories from Gospels. Students identify major sub-groups and classify miracles into sub-groups.
2.2		Small groups for each miracle-type locate and report other miracles that belong in group.
2.3		Based on experience of Jesus so far, compose imaginative miracle story that fits in your sub-group.
3.1	\$WBAT analyze miracles in selected lives of saints, and translate Jesus' miracles into modern ethical guidelines for Christians.	Student presentations on use of miracles in selected lives of saints and parallels with Jesus' miracles.
3.2		Read selected parables of Jesus and works of mercy. Analyze for what moral guidelines miracles give to current Church.
4.1	Assessment: Students analyze a given miracle for type of miracle, traits of Kingdom of God, and how Church is called to embody in present.	Choose a current issue in world. Using an existing miracle as a model, discuss how Jesus might expect current Church to respond in his name.
4.2		Review miracles from each sub-group and major traits of Kingdom of God highlighted.
4.3		Compose essay.

Table A11

*The Last Supper/Making the Body of Christ: Unit 6 Overview*

Aspects of Unit	Description
Duration	Unit 6 will take approximately 20 classes.
Rationale	This unit examines and interprets the Last Supper narratives as both the beginning of the narrative climax of the Triduum, and as Jesus' gift for the future nourishment of his friends. Theological foci are sacramentality, the Eucharist, and the Body of Christ. Literary foci are sign, symbol, plot development, and suspense.
Goal	SWBAT explain connection between sign, symbol and sacrament in Jesus' use of bread and wine; analyze the function of the Last Supper accounts in larger Gospel narrative; and identify two functions of Body of Christ: nourishment and community.
Prior knowledge	SWBAT identify signs and symbols of God in their life and in fiction/film; and have some concept of events of Last Supper (bread/wine, Judas, arrest).
Assessments	Students identify four Gospel events (two pre- and two post-Last Supper) and compose essays showing their narrative connection to Last Supper.

**Theological Suggestions**

Maxwell, I. H. (1981). *Last supper and Lord's supper*. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans.

Mauriac, F. (1991). *Holy Thursday: An intimate remembrance*. Manchester, NH: Sophia Institute Press.

Smith, B. D. (1993). *Jesus' last Pass over meal*. Lewiston, NY: Mellen Biblical Press.

**Biblical Suggestions**

The Feeding of the Multitudes (Mt 14:13-21; Lk 9:10-17; Jn 6:1-15).

The Last Supper Narratives (Mt 26; Mk 14; Lk 22; Jn 13:1-20).

On the Road to Emmaus (Lk 24:13-35).

**Literary Suggestions**

Bernanos, G. (1983). *Diary of a country priest*. Chicago: Thomas More Press.

Betker, J., Christense, B., (Producers), & Axel, G. (Director). (1988). *Babette's feast* [Motion picture] United States: Orion Home Video.

de Jesus, C. R. (1962). *Child of the dark: The diary of Carolina Maria de Jesus*. New York: Dutton.

Dineen, I. (1993). Babette's feast. In *Anecdotes of destiny and Elysengard* (pp. 19-59). New York: Vintage Books.

Greene, G. (1986). The hint of an explanation. In *Collected short stories* (pp. 32-41). New York: Penguin Books.

Greene, G. (2003). *The power and the glory*. New York: Penguin Books.

Silove, I. (1937). *Bread and wine*. New York: Harper and Brothers.

Tolkien, J. R. R. (1991). *Lord of the rings*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Table A12

*The Last Supper/Making the Body of Christ: Unit & Lesson Plans*

Lesson	Objective	Student Task
1.1	SMB AT differentiate between signs of God and symbols of God and identify sacrament as connected to symbol.	Journal entry on different types of signs. Identify anything and anyone that represents God. Distinguish between signs and symbols of God.
1.2		Identify signs and symbols from earlier literary works and films.
1.3		Read <i>manna</i> story from Exodus and multiplication of loaves. Distinguish sacrament as type of symbol.
2.1	SMB AT identify and interpret Eucharistic imagery in several literary works, Scripture, and Church documents.	Read selections from, e.g., <i>Power and Glory</i> , <i>Bread and Wine</i> , and <i>Lord of the Rings</i> . Compare and contrast use of bread and wine as symbols in each.
2.2		Read Synoptic Last Supper Narratives and selections from Eucharistic prayers. Analyze sacramental content.
2.3		Celebrate "teaching Mass" in meal setting. Journal entry on experience.
3.1	SMB AT identify two main functions of meal (nourishment and community) and analyze literature for two functions.	Read and watch <i>Babette's Feast</i> . Discuss two functions of meal: nourishment and community.
3.2		Re-read Synoptic Last Supper and John's Last Supper; analyze for nourishment and community imagery.
3.3		Compose re-writing of Last Supper from point of view of one of the disciples. Class reflections on which and how meal functions are emphasized.
4.1	Assessment: Students identify four Gospel events (two pre- and two post-Last Supper) and compose essays showing their narrative connection to Last Supper.	Review Last Supper Narratives in context of larger Gospel narrative.
4.2		Compose essay.

Table A13

*The Death of Jesus/Tragedy or Comedy: Unit 7 Overview*

Aspect of Unit	Description
Duration	Unit 7 will take approximately 30 classes.
Rationale	This unit focuses on the spectre of death and how humans seek meaningful responses to it. Theological focus is the way in which Jesus, and later Church tradition, interpreted his crucifixion. Literary foci are allegory, tragedy and comedy, and theme analysis.
Goal	✓ WHAT identify two main interpretive frameworks of Jesus' death (expiation and self-gift) and identify them in Gospels, Church tradition, and literary works and contemporary media.
Prior Knowledge	✓ WHAT to relate some of the events of Jesus' death, some ideas of why he died, and some personal/familial experiences with death.
Assessment	✓ students will analyze two given passages (one Gospel, one literature) for its depiction of death, in light of the two interpretive frameworks.

**Theological Suggestions**

Heil, J. P. (1991). *The death and resurrection of Jesus: A narrative-critical reading of Matthew 26-28*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press.

Hooker, D. H. (1995). *Not ashamed of the gospel: New testament interpretations of the death of Christ*. Grand Rapids, MI: W. B. Eerdmans.

Nicholson, G. C. (1983). *Death as departure: The Johannine descent-ascent schema*. Chico, CA: Scholars Press.

✓ myth, D. B. (1999). *The trauma of the cross: How the followers of Jesus came to understand the crucifixion*. New York: Paulist Press.

**Biblical Suggestions**

The Anointing at Bethany (Jn 12:1-11).

Gospel Accounts of Jesus' Death (Mt 27; Mk 15; Lk 23; Jn 18-19).

The ✓ sacrifice of Isaac (Gen 21-22).

**Literary Suggestions**

Aristotle. (2002). *On poetics*. ✓OUTH BEND, IN: ✓t. Augustine Publishers.

Bolt, R. (1960). *A man for all seasons, A play of St. Thomas More*. London: Methuen Drama.

Butler, Alban. (2003). The life of Maximilian Kolbe. In P. Burns (Ed.), *The lives of the saints* (pp. 571-573). Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press.

Endo, ✓. (1980). *Silence*. New York: Twayne.

Fineman, W., Radcliffe, M., Barnathan, M. (Producers), & Columbus, C. (Director). (1998). *Stepmom* [Motion picture]. United ✓tates: Columbia Pictures.

Kieser, E. E. (Producer), & Duigan, J. (Director). (1989). *Romeo* [Motion picture]. United ✓tates: Vidmark Entertainment.

Lewis, C. ✓. (1950). *The lion, the witch, and the wardrobe*. London: G. Bles.

Passio ✓ ✓. Perpetuae et Felicitatis. (1996). *The martyrdom of Perpetua*. Evesham: Arthur James.

✓ophocles. (2000). *Oedipus the king* (H. Rudall, Trans.). Chicago: Ivan R. Dee.

Tolstoy, L. (1999). The death of Ivan Ilyich. In C. Heider (Ed.), *Tolstoy: Tales of courage and conflict* (pp. 368-410). New York: Cooper's Quare Press.

Wiesel, E. (1976). The sacrifice of Isaac. In *Songs of God* (pp. 69-97). New York: Touchstone.

Wiesel, E. (1982). *Night*. Toronto: Bantam, 1982.

Zimmerman, F. (Producer & Director). (1966). *A man for all seasons* [Motion picture]. United ✓tates: Columbia Pictures.

Table A14

*The Death of Jesus/Tragedy or Comedy: Unit 7 Lesson Plans*

Lesson	Objective	Student Task
1.1	§ WBA AT discuss personal and scriptural encounters with suffering and death, and examine models to find meaning in death.	Compose journal account of a personal experience with suffering and death. Include how you and your family made sense of death (found comfort, etc.).
1.2		Read and discuss the sacrifice of Isaac, and Midrashic commentaries. Identify principles of sacrificial and expiatory death.
1.3		Watch film <i>Stepmom</i> . Identify principles of death as self-gift.
1.4		Compose essay evaluating strengths and weaknesses of each model.
2.1	§ WBA AT identify two main interpretive frameworks regarding Jesus' death.	Read scriptural accounts of Jesus' predictions of death and crucifixion scenes, and identify instances of both frameworks.
2.2		§ small groups report on selections from Church documents and liturgies. Which models are used?
2.3		Read selections from epistles and Revelation. Analyze authors' interpretation of Jesus' death.
3.1	§ WBA AT identify major criteria of classic tragedy and comedy, and use them to interpret literary pieces.	Identify major criteria of classic tragedy and comedy. Compose short examples of each.
3.2		Read <i>Oedipus Rex</i> . Analyze as tragedy.
3.3		Read selections from three parts of <i>Divine Comedy</i> . Analyze as comedy.
4.1	§ WBA AT analyze several literary pieces for their portrayal of Christian death, and evaluate for tragic and comic content.	§ students construct allegorical chart for, e.g., <i>Lion, Witch, and Wardrobe</i> , showing correspondence between Lewis' characters and scriptural figures.
4.2		Read and discuss several martyr stories, e.g., Perpetua, Kolbe, Romero.
4.3		Choose one literary piece. Take secondary character's point of view and write account of protagonist's death. What model of Christian death is prevalent?
5.1	Assessment: § students will analyze two given passages (1 scriptural, 1 literary) for depiction of death, in light of the two interpretive models.	Review crucifixion narrative and two models.
5.2		Compose essay comparing two given passages for their interpretation of Christian death as tragic and/or comic.

Table A15

*Jesus' Resurrection/End or Beginning?: Unit 8 Overview*

Aspect of Unit	Description
Duration	Unit 8 will take approximately 20 classes.
Rationale	This unit examines and interprets the Resurrection narratives in light of the themes of new life and liberation. The unit also raises the question of the present Church's response to the Resurrection, as hinted by the narratives, and thus raises the dual nature of Jesus' resurrection as both a climax and a new beginning. Theological foci are the resurrection, the Holy Spirit and Pentecost, and liberation theology. Literary foci are climax and open and closed conclusions.
Goal	SWBAT identify and interpret themes of new life and liberation in resurrection narratives, and other scriptural accounts that foreshadow Jesus' resurrection (e.g., Lazarus); identify ways in which resurrection fulfills past narrative and begins new narrative; identify some major characteristics of liberation theology.
Prior knowledge	SWBAT tell personal stories of new life or liberation; and have some basic knowledge of the Easter resurrection stories.
Assessments	Students will write several short essays on: enslavement-liberation theme in non-scriptural resurrection narrative; compare and contrast scriptural and non-scriptural narratives; and call of liberation interpretation of Paschal narrative on contemporary Church.

**Theological Suggestions**

Bode, E. L. (1970). *The first Easter morning: The gospel accounts of the women's visit to the tomb of Jesus*. Rome: Biblical Institute Press.

Fuller, R. H. (1971). *The formation of the resurrection narratives*. New York: Macmillan.

Kelsey, H. T. (1999). *The drama of the resurrection: Transforming Christianity*. Hyde Park, NY: New City Press.

**Biblical Suggestions**

Raising of Lazarus (Jn 11:1-44).

Gospel Accounts of Jesus' Resurrection (Mt 28; Mk 16; Lk 24; Jn 20-21).

**Literary Suggestions**

Deane, J. (1950). Death be not proud. In *Deans: Selected poetry* (p. 170). London: Penguin Books.

Greene, G. (1957). *The potting shed*. London: S. French.

Hamilton, E. (1969). The myth of Orpheus and Eurydice. In *Mythology* (pp. 103-105). New York: New American Library.

Hansen, R. (1996). *Atticus*. New York: HarperCollins.

Spazik, M. (2001). The portobello road. In *All the stories of Marisol Spark* (pp. 21-33). New York: New Directions.

Tolkien, J. R. R. (1991). *Lord of the rings*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Virgil. (1995). *Aeneid*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Table A16

*Jesus' Resurrection/End or Beginning?: Unit 3 Lesson Plans*

Lesson	Objective	Student Task
1.1	SWBAT narrate personal stories of liberation and identify theme of liberation in previous (non-resurrection) scriptural passages.	Journal entry on moment or experience of liberation in personal life. Careful identification of enslaving and liberating movements.
1.2		Small groups: Read selected previous scriptural narratives; identify enslaving and liberating movements.
1.3		Watch Gandalf's scenes from <i>Lord of the Rings</i> . Interpret Gandalf as Christ-figure. Identify movement of death and resurrection, fulfillment and commissioning in scenes.
1.4		Compose short character sketch of Gandalf's life based on major events, with emphasis on death-resurrection and enslavement-liberation themes.
2.1	SWBAT compare and contrast scriptural versus non-scriptural resurrection narratives.	Read and analyze scriptural resurrection narratives.
2.2		Read and analyze "resurrection" selections from Greek and Roman mythology or African-American writings. Small groups report on themes.
2.3		Compose an essay comparing and contrasting one scriptural and one non-scriptural resurrection narrative.
3.1	SWBAT identify effects of resurrection on disciples, traits of Holy Spirit and themes of Pentecost, and response of present Church.	Compare previous passages on fear of disciples to Pentecost narrative. Interpret resurrection as both the climax of Jesus' life and beginning of Church's life.
3.2		Read scriptural and doctrinal writings on Holy Spirit; identify traits and gifts of Spirit. Identify and create scene images and symbols of Spirit.
4.1	SWBAT identify some major characteristics of liberation theology.	Read liberation theology narrative of Jesus' death and resurrection. Analyze narrative for major themes.
4.2		Compose essay on call of liberation interpretation of Paschal narrative to contemporary Church issue.

Table A17

*A Life of Jesus/Final Assessment: Unit 9 Overview*

Aspect of Unit	Description
Duration	Unit 9 will take approximately 15 classes.
Rationale	This unit serves as the culminating project of the course, as well as the final assessment/exam. The unit asks students to read a short biography of Jesus (fictional, but Scripture-based), and, using this work as a model, to compose their own "Life of Jesus."
Goal	SWBAT identify the major narrative events/themes in Jesus' life, and compose an imaginative, personal "re-writing" of a life of Jesus. The re-writings are expected to be creative and relevant to the students' life, while also reflecting an understanding of several theological themes treated during the course.
Prior knowledge	SWBAT re-tell the major narrative events in the life of Jesus, and identify major characters and themes in the Gospels, through their prior work in this course.
Assessments	Students will report on the major narrative and theological events in the life of Jesus presented in Endo's <i>A Life of Jesus</i> , and using these events as a model, compose their own "A Life of Jesus."

**Literary Suggestions**

Endo, S. (1973). *A life of Jesus*. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press.

Kazantzakis, N. (1960). *The last temptation of Christ*. New York: Simon and Schuster.

Sanders, E. P. (1993). *The historical figure of Jesus*. London: Penguin Press.

Sobrinho, J. (1993). *Jesus the liberator*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books.

Table A18

*A Life of Jesus/Final Assessment: Unit 9 Lesson Plans*

Lesson	Objective	Student Task
1.1	SWBAT identify the major narrative and theological events in Endo's <i>A Life of Jesus</i> .	Read Endo's <i>A Life of Jesus</i> . Also, watch selected scenes from <i>Jesus of Nazareth</i> .
1.2		Identify the major narrative and theological events in Jesus' life presented in Endo.
2.1	SWBAT, using material gathered during course, develop an outline for their own "A Life of Jesus," including major events they will treat, a character sketch of main characters, and two or three major themes they wish to develop.	Identify approximately five major events in Jesus' life they wish to treat in their composition.
2.2		Compose short character sketches of Jesus and other central figures in their project.
2.3		Write a one-paragraph summary of two or three major themes in Jesus' life that will guide their projects.
2.4		Create overall timeline and outline for project.
3.1	SWBAT begin composing "A Life of Jesus."	Class time to be used as writing periods. Individual meetings with teacher to discuss drafts.
4.1	Final Assessment	Complete project.