

SEEK & FIND

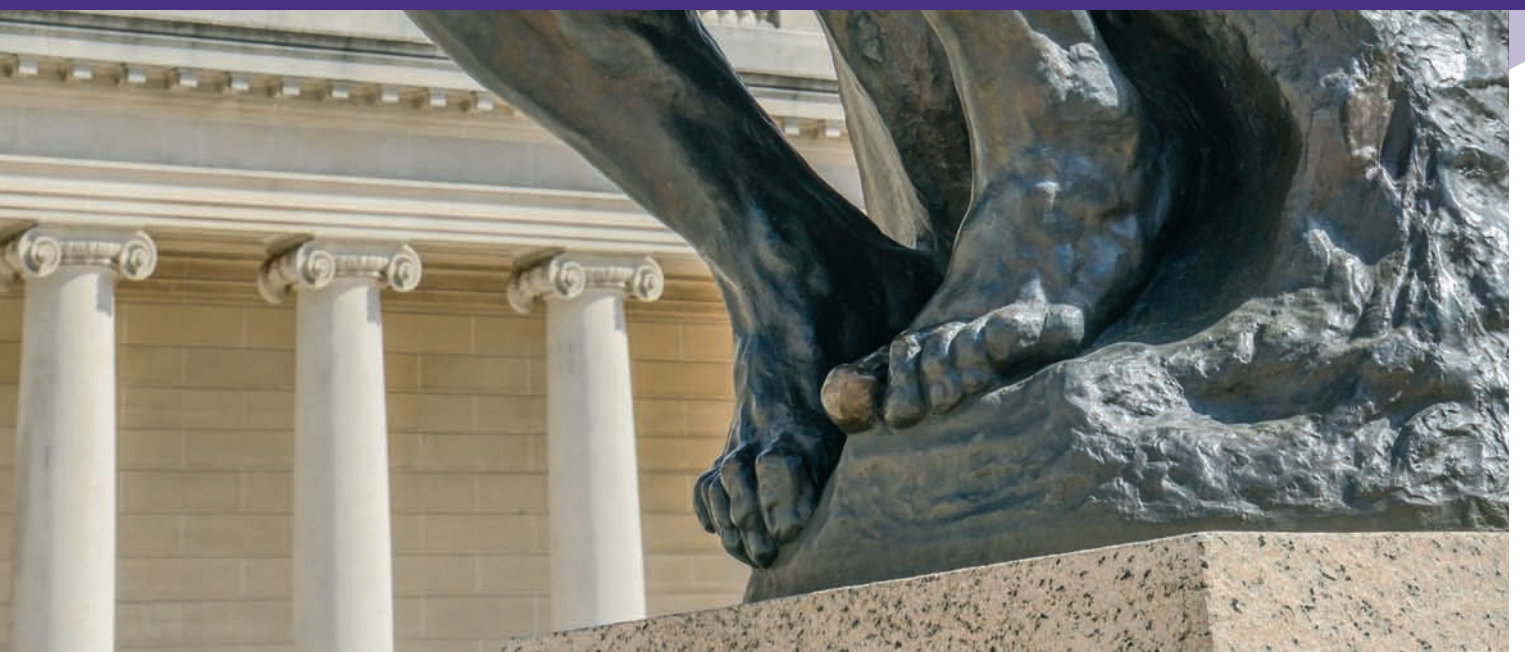


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SECTION A

PHILOSOPHY AND THE SEARCH FOR MEANING



SEEK AND FIND

Responding to feedback from teachers we are pleased to offer an exciting new textbook for senior cycle non-exam RE

- ▶ The first text of its kind to cover all eight sections of the NCCA Curriculum Framework.
- ▶ One book to cover 5th and 6th year.
- ▶ Each section is divided into lessons as opposed to chapters making it very user friendly.
- ▶ Each lesson has objectives and a summary to give a clear focus to the content covered.
- ▶ In each lesson, students are given opportunities to build their own responses to the material, thus ensuring they engage on a personal level.
- ▶ Activities vary to challenge and encourage faith development in students by helping them to relate to God in their own lives, in the life of the Church and in the local community, as well as in the wider world.
- ▶ Activities provide for differentiated, active and co-operative learning by including a variety of methodologies and a wide range of different exercises.
- ▶ Developed and piloted by a team of experienced teachers.
- ▶ Additional resources will be available online at www.seekandfind.ie

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LESSON 10

THE ORIGINS OF PHILOSOPHY

Objectives: This lesson will introduce the origins of Philosophy and the key people involved in developing philosophical thought.

OPENING CONVERSATION

What are the first thoughts that come to mind when you think of the word 'philosophy'.

WHAT IS PHILOSOPHY?

Philosophy begins with human beings and our attempt to examine and understand the world around us. In a previous chapter we studied how archaeological sites have revealed evidence of the search for meaning undertaken by ancient civilisations such as in Newgrange and Mesopotamia. However this was merely the dawn of humanity's quest for meaning. Philosophy was brought to a higher level with Classical Greece. One Greek philosopher Plato, famously argued that 'the unexamined life is not worth living'. He believed life to be pointless unless we spend time contemplating and studying it. So how exactly does one examine

life, what does the term 'philosophy' actually mean and where did philosophy begin?

The word 'philosophy' literally translates as a 'love of wisdom'. It refers to thinking about thinking; setting aside time in our lives to contemplate life at a deeper level. 'Theology' also comes from the Greeks, and means the study of the gods. When you, as a Senior Cycle student, ponder concepts such as what it is you want to do with your life and what the point is of doing your Leaving Certificate exams, you too become a philosopher. Through the act of questioning you join billions of human beings before you, who have also participated in philosophy.





PHILOSOPHY CONTAINS THE FOLLOWING MAIN AREAS OF STUDY:

Metaphysics: is the study of what reality is, for example the study of the relationship between the mind and the body.

Epistemology: is concerned with whether knowledge is possible and, if so, what the nature and scope of knowledge is.

Ethics: also known as “moral philosophy” concerns the issue of what is the best way to live and whether this question can be answered.

Political Philosophy: concerns the government, and the relationship of individuals to communities including the state. It includes questions about justice, law, property, and the rights and obligations of the citizen.

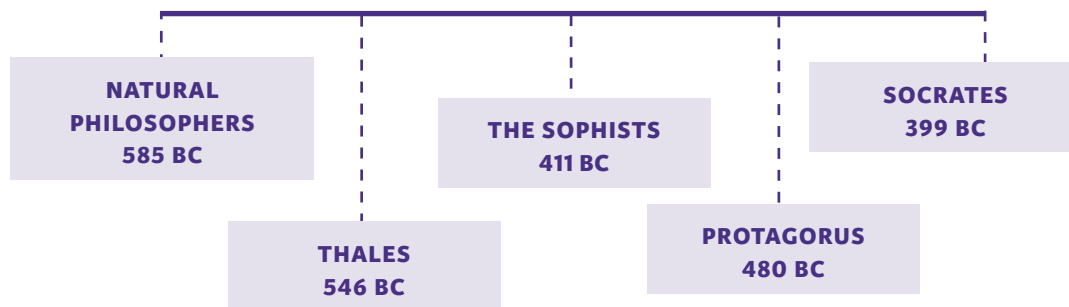
Aesthetics: looks at beauty, art, enjoyment, etc and how beauty is created.

Logic: is the study of valid arguments and how they are formed.

THE ORIGINS OF PHILOSOPHY

Several cultures have contemplated philosophical questions and built traditions based on such questions. Philosophy is said to have had its origins over two thousand years ago in 6th century BCE in Greece. Whereas earlier societies used myth, Greek philosophy used reason. In fact, the Western way of thinking, political and legal structures, and education, are very much derived from the Greek invention of philosophy and politics. At the time the cities of Greece were thriving commercial centres. Greek society was flourishing artistically, politically and creatively. The Greeks were in the process of developing the basic structure of democracy (i.e. a society should not be ruled by a dictator but rather by politicians elected by the people).

They were also an adventurous sea-faring civilisation who explored extensively. Hence, the Greeks were quite a progressive people for the time. Even the Greek language was suited to describing things precisely. During their explorations they had learned geometry from the Egyptians and knowledge of the calendar from Asia Minor. Prior to this, humanity had a mythical understanding of the world. They used myths to understand what they could not explain. Philosophers however, were dissatisfied with these mythical explanations and began to challenge them. As Athens was the cultural centre of Greece at the time, philosophy started from here and soon began to move in a new post-mythical direction.



Let's now take a brief look at the early development of Ancient Greek philosophy.

TIMELINE OF EARLY GREEK PHILOSOPHY

1 THE NATURAL PHILOSOPHERS

- ▶ The earliest known philosophers
- ▶ Concerned with our true nature as human beings, how the universe began and our place within it.
- ▶ Believed that the universe was created from one of the natural elements of fire, air, water or earth.
- ▶ Were also known as pre-Socratic philosophers because they came before Socrates.
- ▶ One was a man by the name of Thales who believed everything originated from water.

2 THALES

- ▶ A natural philosopher
- ▶ The first man to whom the name of 'wise' was given.
- ▶ A politician, geometer, astronomer and thinker
- ▶ Credited with correctly predicting the solar eclipse of 585BCE.
- ▶ Disregarded the mythical legends of his ancestors
- ▶ Focused instead in knowledge of the world and the stars.
- ▶ Laid the philosophical foundations for subsequent thinkers of the time such as the Sophists
- ▶ Made it acceptable to question age-old traditions.

3 THE SOPHISTS

- ▶ Educated men
- ▶ Travelled from place to place offering tuition on grammar and rhetoric (the art of debating, argument and applying logic).

- ▶ Also taught statesmanship and generalship.
- ▶ Charged for their services and were employed by the wealthy to provide their children with professional training.

4 PROTAGORUS

- ▶ Concerned with the person and their place in the world.
- ▶ Believed that it was impossible to know absolute truth as truth was a matter for each individual.
- ▶ Believed that the difference between good and evil cannot be fully known.
- ▶ Later philosophers disagreed with Protagorus including Socrates.

5 SOCRATES

- ▶ Concerned with the question of ethics (knowing the difference between right and wrong).
- ▶ Believed that it was not possible for any human to fully know truth.
- ▶ Wanted to establish a universal definition of justice
- ▶ Worked to find laws and limits which society could abide by.
- ▶ Socrates' philosophy involved taking the role of an ignorant questioner- asking probing questions to show the experts how little they actually knew.
- ▶ Socratic wisdom is knowing that we do not know everything.
- ▶ Encouraged others to question their beliefs and knowledge also.
- ▶ Was critical of the Athenian government
- ▶ Was executed in 399 BCE.

OVER TO YOU

1. What were the earliest philosophers known as?
2. What did the natural philosophers believe the universe was created from?
3. The natural philosophers were also known as Pre-Socratic. Why was this?
4. Thales was a Natural Philosopher and the first man to whom what name was given?
5. If you were to describe Thales' qualifications, what would you refer to him as?
6. Thales is credited with correctly predicting what event?
7. Thales made what acceptable for following philosophers?
8. Describe the function of the Sophists in early Greek culture.
9. Although widely known today for his mathematical achievements, why was Protagoras important to the philosophical world?
10. Socrates was concerned with which crucial philosophical concept?
11. How did Socrates play a crucial part in the development of our modern judicial system?
12. How and why did Socrates die?

REFLECT AND DISCUSS

Now that you have studied the Early Greek Philosophers which of them do you believe has had the greatest impact on modern culture? Take a class vote.

SUMMARY

- Philosophy originated in 6th Century Ancient Greece. Greek culture was politically and creatively advanced for the time. This progressive environment helped to nourish philosophical development.
- The earliest philosophers were the Natural philosophers who were concerned with the creation of the universe.
- One example of a natural philosopher was Thales who disregarded the myths of his ancestors and made it acceptable to question age-old traditions.
- The Sophists were educated men who travelled offering tuition on rhetoric, statesmanship and generalship.
- Protagoras believed that it was impossible to know absolute truth as truth was a matter for each person.
- Socrates wanted to establish a universal definition of justice.



LESSON 12

IMAGES OF JESUS

Objectives: This lesson will examine various images of Jesus.

OPENING ACTIVITY

As we know Jesus was a real man who lived and died in Palestine in the first century. Close your eyes and picture Jesus. How would you describe your image of Jesus? Be as specific as possible – including physical attributes and personality traits that spring to mind.

ARTISTIC DEPICTIONS OF JESUS

The Catholic Church has a long tradition of encouraging artists to express the faith of the Church through art. Indeed, the Church was the first great patron of the arts in the Western world. Works of art reach our imagination and ‘speak’ to us in ways that words alone cannot. Throughout the history of the Church, artists – such as Michelangelo and Rembrandt – have

shaped our understanding of the Christian faith as they expressed their own faith in God. Artistic presentations of Jesus by Christian artists from cultures throughout the world continue to contribute to our image of Jesus.

In 1999 the *National Catholic Reporter* sponsored a competition to see how artists imagined Jesus as the third millennium approached. The competition attracted 1,678 entries from nineteen countries. Sister Wendy Beckett, a well-known art expert, chose the winning painting, *Jesus of the People*. Jesus of the People is the work of Janet McKenzie, an American artist. Here is what the editor, Michael Farrell, had to say about it:

It was, to say the least, controversial. The first thing most people noticed was that Jesus 2000 was black. The painting is basically what people call realistic or representational. I had frequently been asked what kind of image we were looking for. The point was not what we were looking for but what artists imagined.

REFLECT AND DISCUSS

Examine *Jesus of the People* closely. Spend some time in silence identifying and reflecting on all the details the artist included: the colours, the background, the clothes, the facial expression and any other details you notice. Then, in small groups, share your impressions of the painting. Here are some suggestions to guide your discussion:

- ▶ Describe the picture in as much detail as possible
- ▶ Comment on the clothing
- ▶ Comment on the use of colour
- ▶ Comment on the facial expression of Jesus
- ▶ What is your response to the artist’s presentation of Jesus as a black person?
- ▶ What do you see in the background?

When you have completed your reflection, pair up with a partner and discuss the relevance of this image of Jesus to contemporary culture and to young people today.



Jesus of the People
by Janet McKenzie

JESUS IN THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST

Mel Gibson's film *The Passion of the Christ* is renowned for its brutality and was surrounded in controversy at the time of its release. The Passion of Christ – both the historical event and Mel Gibson's film – begins with the Agony in the Garden. In the film, the devil is watching Christ as he prays. Jesus agonises over the incredible suffering he is about to undergo in order to redeem humanity.

What is curious about this image of Jesus is the fact that, in contrast to the quietly assured Jesus commonly portrayed, Gibson's image of Jesus is much more mortal as he endures intense suffering. Jesus appears to be full of doubt and uncertainty just as humans are.

The image of the devil is also striking. It appears as an androgynous character who is neither male nor female. The devil confronts Jesus by asking:

'Do you really believe that one man can bear the full burden of sin? ... No one man can carry this burden I tell you. It is far too heavy. Saving

their souls is too costly. No one. Ever. No. Never.'

From beneath the devil's foot emerges a snake that slithers over to Christ who is shedding tears and sweating blood. He seems not to notice the serpent until it is directly beneath him; he then stands and crushes the serpent's head under his foot. What do you believe this act symbolises? The crushing of the serpent's head is but one way Christ conquers evil. The snake is an appropriate symbol for temptation; it is sneaky and deadly, lurking in the shadows until it is time to strike. So how does Christ deal with this tempter? He crushes it underfoot. This is a powerful moment in the opening scene of the film. It reminds us of the power of good over evil; the power of Jesus over evil.

OVER TO YOU

Does the image of Jesus in *The Passion of the Christ* appeal to you? Why or why not?

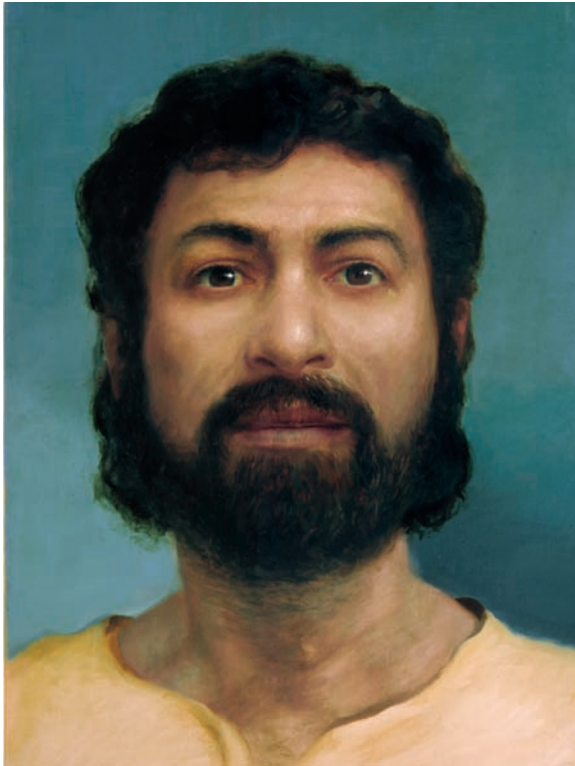
Recall any other images of Jesus you are familiar with from art or films. What do they have in common? How do they differ?



Still from the film *The Passion of the Christ*

FORENSIC ART

In 2004, CNN aired a special documentary called *The Mystery of Jesus*, which featured this painting based on the work of a forensic artist. The artist recreated the face of a typical working man from first-century Palestine: weathered, dark-skinned, Middle Eastern; in other words, the kind of face that a man in the time of Jesus might have had.



THINK IT THROUGH

How does this image compare to the images of Jesus with which you are familiar? How does it compare with the other images in this chapter?

JOURNAL

Write or draw your image of Jesus and give reasons for why you picture him this way.

SUMMARY

- ▶ The image of Jesus has been portrayed on numerous occasions down through the ages.
- ▶ *Jesus of the People* is the work of Janet McKenzie, an American artist.
- ▶ Mel Gibson's *The Passion of the Christ* offers the image of mortal Jesus who endures intense suffering.

Interpretative paintings, based upon a reconstruction by British medical artist Richard Neave, of what a first-century CE Semitic man might have looked like during Jesus Christ's lifetime.

LESSON 4

THE SEARCH FOR MEANING IN LITERATURE

Objectives: This lesson will look at how literature has helped us to reflect on the great questions. The lesson also features the thoughts of a teacher and writer on the importance of reading in developing our sense of self in the modern world.

'To be or not to be, that is the question...'

—Hamlet



DID YOU KNOW?

- ▶ The first alphabet emerged 5,000 years ago in ancient Egypt.
- ▶ J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* is said to have been developed as a personal study into a number of areas including Roman Catholicism and moral philosophy.
- ▶ Mahatma Gandhi was influenced and inspired by the Romantic poet, Percy Bysshe Shelley's verses.

OPENING CONVERSATION

- ▶ What was the last book you read? Did you learn anything about life in general from it? Did it address any of the big questions in life?

Meaning in Literature

The written word has had a powerful effect on the development of philosophical thought in the world. Throughout history, literature has influenced politics, theology, morality and values. A single book can unite people from different continents. Through literature, writers make statements about the concerns of humanity.

Niall MacMonagle teaches English at Wesley College, Dublin. He has edited several anthologies [including *Real Cool*, *Outside in*, *Slow Time*, *Off the Wall*, *The Open Door Book of Poetry*, *Lifelines*, *Poetry Now* and *TEXT*] and is a regular contributor to RTÉ Radio 1 and the *Irish Times*.

In the following extract, MacMonagle gives us an insight into the meaning literature offers to him:

Words hurt. Words heal. Words ask, argue, seduce, propose, pray, love, antagonize, answer, slander, explain, explain, explain And then there's this thing called literature. When we sit down to read a novel, a play, a poem we are in the company of something made and shaped with great care. For over two thousand years men and women have recorded in writing their response to being alive on this planet and when we read their thoughts and feelings and ideas we recognize similarities and differences between them and

us. Listening to others, in this way, prompts us to listen to ourselves. And as we listen we journey deeper. We learn to understand that life is complex, challenging, mysterious and we learn to know ourselves better.

‘Life is all confusion and inclusion,’ says the novelist Henry James, ‘but the work of art is all selection and discrimination.’ That’s why when we pick up a book it’s an experience like no other. The reader becomes the book. With literature we are in the company of an extraordinary range of thoughts and feelings and experiences – a range of emotional, imaginative, introspective experiences that literature affords.

The very act of reading – in silence and slow time – deepens our own sense of self and allows us to tap into the creative, positive energies that make it possible. Colm Tóibín is right when he points out that ‘Writing is done alone and silently just as reading is done alone and silently. The reader is enriched by reading, the world enhanced by writing, in ways that cannot be measured.’

Ian McEwan in *Atonement* speaks of the magical and mysterious process of transforming black marks on a page: ‘You saw

the word castle, and it was there, seen from some distance, with woods in high summer spread before it, the air bluish and soft with smoke rising from the blacksmith’s forge, and a cobbled road twisting away into the green shade....’ This private, enriching activity is the very opposite of life as most of us know it. School can be a busy, noisy place. Facebook is compulsive. Texts come our way. Television and DVDs claim our attention. Cyberspace is giddy. But the book is quiet and silent and yet it creates a one-to-one experience like no other.

This private space you find yourself in when you have a book in your hands is a space where language is used in interesting ways.

To read is to be free. When you read you are never alone.

On your life’s journey you must learn to live with yourself and literature allows us to do that. This is what William Faulkner says, in *As I Lay Dying*, ‘It takes two people to make you and one people to die’ and literature is something that can help when it comes to understanding life and enduring it. We each have a birth date. We can name it. A death date is also ours. But that is to come. That we



die is the most significant thing about our being alive. It's why what we do with our lives is the most important thing of all.

In my favourite moment, in my favourite novel, of all time, a young woman, Emma, twenty years old, is shopping with her friend Harriet in Highbury. But Harriet 'tempted by everything and swayed by half a word, was always very long at a purchase; and while she was still hanging over muslins and changing her mind, Emma went to the door for amusement'. Jane Austen's Emma was published in 1816 and in this one paragraph Austen does three things: she tells us what Emma hopes to see; she tells us what Emma actually sees; and then – and this is Austen's genius at work – in one sentence she tells us something vital about how our minds could and should work.

Jane Austen tells us that 'Much could not be hoped from the traffic of even the busiest part of Highbury; – Mr Perry walking hastily by. Mr William Cox letting himself in at the office door, Mr Cole's carriage horses returning from exercise, or a stray letter-boy on an obstinate mule, were the liveliest objects she could presume to expect'

And, in fact, reality is even less interesting, less colourful: '.... her eye fell only on the butcher with his tray, a tidy old woman travelling homewards from shop with her full basket, two curs quarrelling over a dirty bone, and a string of dawdling children round the baker's little bow-window eyeing the gingerbread, she knew she had no reason to complain and was amused enough; quite enough to stand at the door.'

And the paragraph's final sentence says everything about the way we think.



'A mind lively and at ease, can do with seeing nothing, and can see nothing that does not answer.'

Ask yourself this question: What kind of a person are you? Can you look around you on an ordinary day and find things to interest and occupy and stimulate your mind. Or are you someone who needs twenty-four-seven razzle, dazzle?

You become another person, a different person when you read. You become many different people. Kazuo Ishiguro is right when he says that 'We grow old, we become feeble and we die. We all know that. But love and art dignify our lives.' Our being alive is our greatest mystery and the search for meaning, understanding never ends. The philosopher Richard Kearney believes that 'If you ask 'Who am I?' you are living. If you think you know who you are, you have died.'

I think Jill Paton Walsh speaks of literature's eternal presence and immediacy when she says 'You only have to open a book to find Hamlet eternally bracing himself to murder his uncle, when from Hamlet's point of view he has done the deed, and lost his life and been laid these many centuries beside Yorick, whom he knew.

When we open a book a world is happening before our eyes and in our mind's eye. When we open a book we are journeying outwards and in that very process we are being inwardly enriched.

The adults in our life, parents, teachers, guardians urge us to read. Why? Can't you entertain and empower and educate yourself in so many other ways? Yes, of course you can. But the book is still one of the cheapest, handiest, most portable art forms around. AND even though the teenage years is a time in your life when you want to be with friends, you want to fit in, it is also a crucial time in your life in terms of discovering and becoming your true self. And reading is one of the ways you can bring into your own life a wealth of other worlds. Every time you open a book you set off on a journey, you think outside the box, you realize that the world is bigger and interesting and more varied and, most importantly, that it's all yours.'

—Niall MacMonagle

REFLECT AND DISCUSS

- ▶ What are the advantages of reading in our day to day lives?
- ▶ How does reading help to reflect on the meaning of life?
- ▶ What aspect/opinion of Niall MacMonagle's article did you find interesting? Explain your choice.
- ▶ Imagine a friend of yours is finding life difficult. What book would you recommend to them which might offer help in their situation?

JOURNAL

- ▶ "Ask yourself this question: What kind of a person are you? Can you look around you on an ordinary day and find things to interest and occupy and stimulate your mind. Or are you someone who needs twenty-four-seven razzle, dazzle?" Take some time to reflect on this and write your answer.

What kind of a person are you?
Do you need twenty-four-seven
razzle, dazzle?

SUMMARY

- ▶ Literature has played a powerful role in the development of philosophy.
- ▶ For centuries writers have used the written word to reflect on life's deeper questions.
- ▶ The act of reading enriches the very essence of our sense of self.



LESSON 2

THE SEARCH FOR MEANING IN MUSIC

Objectives: This lesson will reflect on the importance of music in the search for meaning. We will study one song and identify the key questions that it addresses.

OPENING CONVERSATION

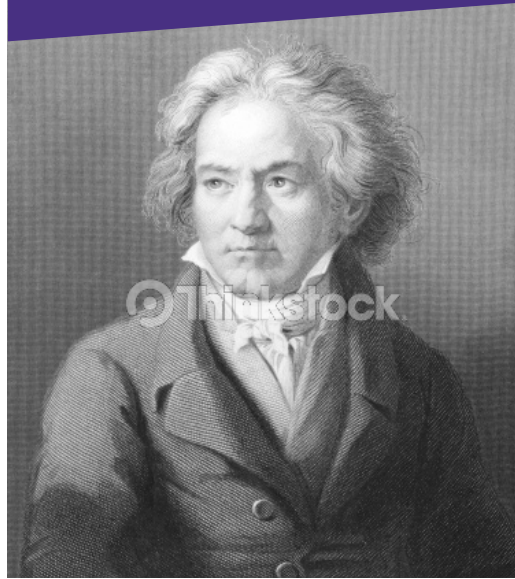
- ▶ Who is your favourite band/musician at the moment? Why do you enjoy listening to their music?
- ▶ Songs can bring many emotions to the surface for those who listen carefully. Name a song which has special meaning for you. What emotion does this song cause you to feel?

MEANING IN MUSIC

We are constantly surrounded by music, whether it is inaudibly playing in the background of our local shop or listened to on our ipods or phones while we walk down the street. Music lovers faithfully stand for hours in mud-drenched fields in order to be entertained at music festivals. In the last fifty years or so, the music industry has become a multi-billion dollar organisation creating legends out of talented musicians including the likes of The Beatles, Elvis Presley, Michael Jackson, Madonna and more recently Lady Gaga. Of course thanks to clever marketing and management even some people without much talent have managed to have very successful careers! The popularity of TV talent shows like The X Factor are testament to how many people long to make a career in the music industry and how many millions are happy to follow their progress.

But music is much more than sheer entertainment. For centuries music has been important to the way of life for many people of various cultures. Greek and ancient Indian philosophers defined music as an art form. In religion music is a form of prayer. In fact, St. Augustine said “to sing is to pray twice”. The Bible is loaded with references to music, from the angels who were created with musical abilities, to the psalms written by King David. Choral music is written specifically for a choir to perform. Hymns are composed for the purpose of praise. Gospel music expresses a belief regarding Christian life as well as giving

**‘Music is the mediator between the spiritual and the sensual life!’
– Ludwig van Beethoven**



Ludwig van Beethoven

a Christian alternative to mainstream secular music.

During a religious ritual, sacred music can enhance the spirituality of the occasion, for example, when a poignant song is used during a wedding ceremony it can capture the essence of the love the couple feel for each other. Hans Christian Anderson remarked, ‘Where words fail, music speaks.’ Music can bring about powerful emotions and engage our spiritual inner selves; it can remind us of life-changing memories; it can make us laugh or cry. Some believe that music nourishes the soul. Music can be a means of escaping the world we live in by transporting us beyond our reality. It inspires us to reflect upon the deeper questions in life.

One example of a group that has used music to try to find some meaning in life is Elation Ministries. The group is made up of a number of people from various parts of Ireland who have experienced the transforming power of Christ in

their lives and feel a calling to minister to others through their gifts. Each member of Elation Ministries has found that their relationship with God has developed through music. One of the founding members, Paul Keogh, experienced the love of God in his life after a tragic personal event. Paul's cousin Brian, who was also one of his best friends died at the age of 17. This left

Paul wondering how a loving God could let such an awful thing happen. Eventually it was through the power of music that Paul came to realise that God is with us in our times of sorrow. He not only found comfort through music but he found great joy. The title track to Elation Ministries second album was inspired by Paul's experience.

Still I Know

Your ways are far from me Oh God,
Your thoughts are far beyond my mind
I search and try to find some answers,
I seek but I never seem to find

Still I know you hear me when I call you
Still I know you lift me when I fall
Still I know you always walk beside me, I trust
you'll never let me go

The more I ponder on your presence,
The less I seem to understand
Your love remains for me a mystery,
How can I be part of this plan?

Still I know you hear me when I call you
Still I know you lift me when I fall
Still I know you always walk beside me, I trust
you'll never let me go

When life brings trouble and confusion,
The pain is more than I can bear



My soul is full of doubt and anguish,
In sorrow I turn to you and pray

Still I know you hear me when I call you
Still I know you lift me when I fall
Still I know you always walk beside me, I trust
you'll never let me go

OVER TO YOU

Read through the lyrics again carefully.

- What are the key questions that this song addresses?
- What are your own questions for God? Write a fourth verse that expresses your feelings on the search for meaning.
- Reflect on the chorus in this song. Do you share a similar belief and trust that God is always there for you? Why or why not?

RESEARCH PROJECT

For your next RE lesson choose one song that you feel deals with some of the key questions in the search for meaning in life. Present to the

class the insight that you feel your chosen song offers and prepare an explanation of it for the class. Where possible, play the song to the class before discussing it.

SUMMARY

- Music can play an important role in the search for meaning as it offers contemporary answers to the great questions.
- Music can be a form of prayer, as St. Augustine said "to sing is to pray twice."

To find more about *Seek and Find* please
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