



St Dominic's Sixth Form College

Reflections from Core RE

After every Y1 Core RE lesson, students are invited to write about what they have learned and how it connects with their own values and beliefs. The reflections that follow are a small selection of their work from Module 2: Created to Love. Each lesson title is shown, followed by three students' responses. Together, they offer a glimpse into the depth of thinking taking place in Core RE and the way our students are learning to connect belief with action. Students are invited to give permission for their work to be included. They can choose whether to have their name attached or to remain anonymous.

Lesson 1: The Magi and Us

Darren Yip

1. I've learned (a) the definitions of "The Epiphany" and "an epiphany" (b) the story of the three wise men and how they set out to find Jesus (c) what truth is and how the different views people have on my table view it.
2. I think St Matthew included the story of the Magi in his Gospel (a) because he wanted his readers to know that Jesus is the saviour of the whole of mankind (b) to show that the prophecies in the Bible had been fulfilled with Jesus' birth.
3. This lesson my opinion about whether Christmas (or Epiphany) has developed because we looked at a real scenario of when someone had rejected someone's gift. The discussion about how to receive a gift, even when it wasn't what the person wanted, was inspiring.

Dilan Peach

1. This lesson I've learned about the Magi and the Feast of the Epiphany, which is the celebration of their arrival in Bethlehem. They brought with them gifts for Jesus of gold, frankincense and myrrh, which had symbolic significance.
2. I think Matthew included the story of the Magi in his Gospel because there may have been a factual basis to it and there really was a star. It also fulfilled the prophecies of the Old Testament, giving credibility to the Christian faith so more people would believe and trust its teachings.
3. This lesson my opinion about whether Christmas (or Epiphany) is really about presents hasn't changed because I've always thought Christmas is more about the company we keep and the best gift you can give someone is your time.

Dawid Tucki

1. This lesson I've learned about the Epiphany and how the word can have two meanings – the Feast of the Epiphany and a “light bulb moment.” I also learned how the Epiphany is celebrated in different countries, e.g. how it's celebrated in France.
2. I think St Matthew included the story of the Magi in his Gospel to show that the prophecies in the Old Testament were fulfilled and to tell everyone that Jesus is our Saviour, no matter who you are (e.g. your age or your ethnicity etc.).
3. This lesson my opinion on the Epiphany has developed as I learned that some people think there is some factual proof that there was a star. This is because in 5BC there was a large comet which may have been the star in the Epiphany story.

Lesson 2: Always right? Always wrong?

Sophia Lo

1. This lesson I learned about the Nazi T4 programme and that innocent children were killed because they had disabilities. I think this is horrific.
2. I think it could be argued that some of the Ten Commandments should be followed by everyone, such as “Thou shalt not commit adultery” because this is not loyal to your partner. It shouldn't occur because it isn't how one human being should treat another.
3. This lesson my opinion about deciding what is right and wrong has developed because I didn't know about Joseph Fletcher before. He said that in every situation you should do the most loving thing. He thinks nothing is absolutely right or wrong. It's about how you see it and your perspective. However, the Catholic Church argues that there are some things that are wrong no matter what the situation.

Aaliyah Ali

1. This lesson I've learned about the T4 programme and how, under the guise of benefitting society, people can be capable of true evil.
2. I think it could be argued that some of the Ten Commandments should be followed by everyone because no society works if people go around murdering each other. The justice system in the UK is in line with the Western perception of morality and punishes those who murder and steal. Murder is different from

killing in self-defence. I think theft may not always be wrong. Some people may be so desperate they have to steal.

3. This lesson my opinion about deciding what is right and wrong has developed to some extent. I always come into class with very strong opinions! I believe that while many acts throughout history have been heinous and evil, the people who committed them wouldn't have had the same views as people today. While this doesn't mean that what they did was any less wrong in our eyes, the very fact that we have different views from theirs suggests morality is fluid and ever changing. I understand the merits of moral absolutism, but I also see the appeal of moral relativism, even though I believe sexual assault is always, always wrong.

Anonymous

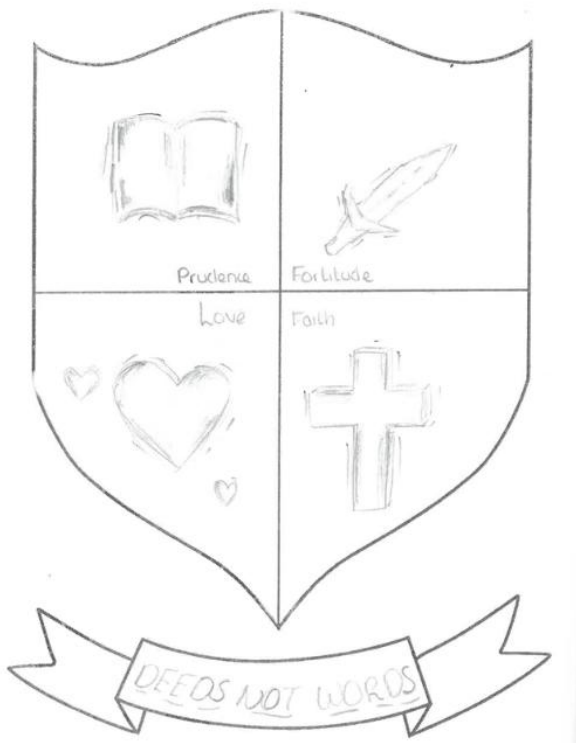
1. This lesson I've learned about moral absolutism and moral relativism. In discussions some students were moral absolutists on some issues but were moral relativists on others. I learned about the T4 programme in Nazi Germany which was "intrinsically evil."
2. I think it could be argued that some of the Ten Commandments should be followed by everyone because some of them provide a moral idea that all of society can unite together around, such as "You shall not murder."
3. This lesson my opinion about deciding what is right and wrong has developed. I learned about different situations when people had to make difficult decisions, such as Brigadier John Masters, whose men were retreating from the Japanese in World War II.

Lesson 3: Made with a purpose – human dignity, values and virtues

As part of this lesson, in addition to their usual written work, students designed their own coat of arms with a motto which reflects their values and four virtues which are important to them.

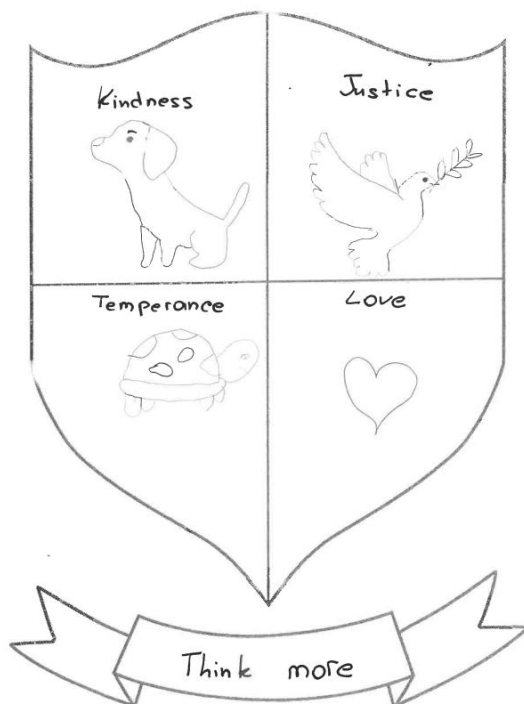
Benson Cabral

1. This lesson I've learned about St Thérèse of Lisieux, who said, "When one loves, one does not calculate." I've also learned about the theological virtues of hope, faith and love, and the cardinal virtues of prudence, temperance, justice and fortitude.
2. If God made me with a purpose, the virtue I think he especially hopes I'll grow in is love, because love shows our compassion and kindness to others. Through love we begin to value and acknowledge others' worth, and love allows us to love God's creation meaningfully.



3. This lesson, producing my own coat of arms made me realise how I can change to become a better version of myself and how there is always room for improvement to grow spiritually and as a person.

Anastasiia Havryliuk



1. This lesson I've learned the difference between values and virtues. I've learned about Gretchen Rubin, who wrote a book called "The Happiness Project," because she realised she would never be happy until she'd identified the values she wanted to live by. One of her "spiritual mentors" is Thérèse of Lisieux, who wrote a book known as "The Little Way." She said, "When one loves, one does not calculate."

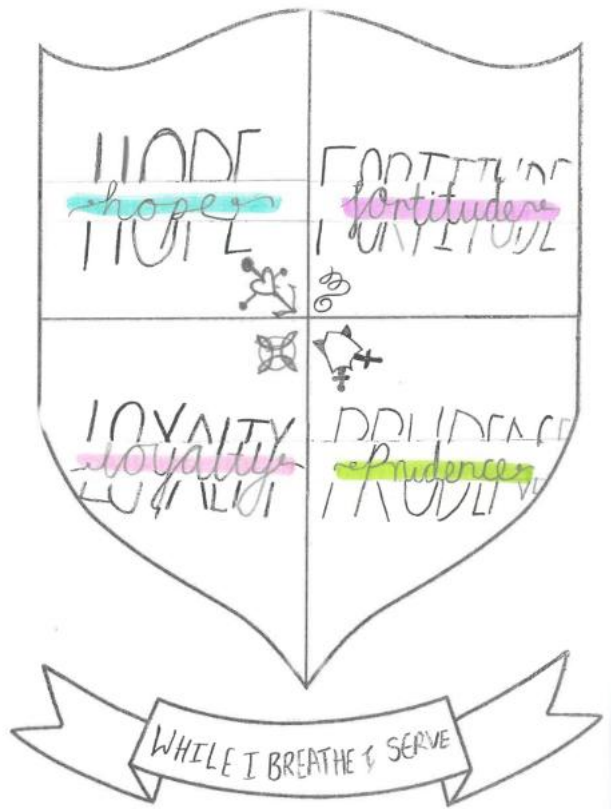
2. If God made me with a purpose, the virtue I think he especially hopes I'll grow in is temperance because this virtue will help me make balanced choices, to check my impulses, to think before I act, and manage

my time and my feelings so I can live in a way that reflects my values.

3. This lesson, creating my own coat of arms, made me reflect more deeply about what really matters to me. It made me reflect on how my values guide my actions in everyday life. It also made me think that when you love, you shouldn't keep score, e.g. "I've done this for you, now you should do this for me."

Samarthi Patel

1. This lesson I've learned about values and different virtues. The theological virtues are hope, faith and charity (love). There are also cardinal virtues, e.g. fortitude. I've also learned about the author Gretchen Rubin, who believes that "real happiness comes from knowing what your values are."



2. If God made me with a purpose, the virtue I think he especially hopes I'll grow in is fortitude because, for me, it represents strength and courage. Strength not only against those things that are wrong but also for justice. It's about having strength in life and strength in your beliefs and values and holding fast to that.
3. This lesson, creating my own coat of arms, has developed my thinking about the values I want to live by. It has helped me reach a deeper understanding of my values and the virtues I want to grow in throughout my life. (On my shield, the images I used I got by looking up the international symbols for each word.)

Lesson 4: What is love? Divine and Human Love

Aaniya Bathia

1. This lesson I've learned that the ancient Greeks had four different words for love. One of them is Agape. I have also learned that FAIRTRADE ensures fair returns for farmers and how the FAIRTRADE premium works.
2. I think a mother who regularly goes to visit her son (who has committed a serious crime) is an example of Agape because she does not fear what other family members or her friends think of her. This shows she is selfless. She loves her son unconditionally even though he has committed a serious crime.
3. This lesson my opinion about what love is has developed. I have a deeper understanding of what love is and how it doesn't have one single definition. "Love is kind" and "Love is patient" and it can be shown in so many ways.

Iriza Benitha

1. This lesson I've learned that although in English there is just one word for love there are different aspects to it. The ancient Greeks had four words for it. One of them was Philia which described the love between family members. I also learned that to live out and share the same love Christ has shown and given us (Agape), we must actively live out 1 Corinthians 13:1-3 using it as our blueprint of how we love one another.
2. I think a mother who regularly goes to visit her son (who has committed a serious crime) is an example of Agape because visiting him doesn't mean she condones what he has done. I truly believe that the love a mother has for her child is like no other and cannot be explained unless experienced.
3. This lesson my opinion about what love is has developed because in class we were asked to go below the surface level and go deeper to really explore its meaning and the different ways we express our love for others.

Hazel Connolly

1. This lesson I've learned about Ancient Greek different words for love - Philia, Storge and Agape. Discussing the words allowed me to see how to put out more love and share it with others.
2. I think a mother who regularly goes to visit her son (who has committed a serious crime) is an example of Agape even though I don't agree with her decision. She is demonstrating unconditional love for her son even though she is bearing some of the consequences of continuing to love him, for example, losing her friends etc.
3. This lesson my opinion about love has developed because I've thought about how Storge, Philia and Agape are applicable today because love is eternal and we should strive to show it in everything we do.

Lesson 5: Love no matter what?

Frank Wojciechowski

1. This lesson I've learned about the Parable of the Lost Sheep which is told in both Luke's Gospel and in Matthew's. We discussed its meaning and its message. We also learned about "red flags" in relationships.
2. I think Jesus told the Parable of the Lost Sheep to show that God is always looking out for the lost and ready to welcome them back. This doesn't mean he doesn't care about the ones who aren't lost. The rejoicing isn't because the one matters more than the ninety-nine. The ninety-nine are safe so the focus is on the one who is back in the fold.
3. This lesson my opinion about unconditional love has developed because we looked at different relationship scenarios. We thought about what Catholic

Social Teaching, especially respecting people's dignity, says about how one person in the relationship was treating the other. It opened my mind to what unconditional love is and what it isn't.

Samay Kachalia

1. This lesson I've learned about the different aspects of coercive control and how the isolation of the victim occurs due to the actions and strategies of the manipulator or aggressor.
2. I think Jesus told the Parable of the Lost Sheep to demonstrate that love doesn't disappear once someone is safe. When a person is safe you don't have to worry about them. But you are going to worry about the one who is lost. When the one who is lost is found there is the explosive joy of finding them which often overtakes the joy of presence. The parable is all about the explosion of love God feels when someone returns to him.
3. This lesson my opinion about unconditional love has developed because unconditional love does mean limitless tolerance and personal boundaries associated with human dignity are still required to be respected. In the case study we looked at about Siobhan – Siobhan should not feel "indebted" to her mother to the point where she starts to feel guilty about applying to go to university and decides to put her application on hold.

Deeya Bhatt

1. This lesson I've learned about coercive control which can appear in all sorts of relationships, not just romantic ones. For example, in times gone by, some parents used to expect their youngest daughter to remain single so she could look after them in old age and would manipulate their youngest daughter into feeling so guilty she would comply.
2. I think Jesus told the Parable of the Lost Sheep to convey there are different types of rejoicing – the upsurging joy of recovery and the steady joy of presence. This parable links to the Parable of the Lost Son where the Father is overjoyed when the son, who wanted his inheritance straight away and squandered it, repented and returned. We used different analogies to explore this – such as a young child getting lost and all the medical staff being overjoyed when a critical patient on a ward turns a corner. This links to people returning to God having sinned and wandered off. God loves those who don't wander off but there's a different type of divine joy when a sinner has changed and returns.
3. This lesson my opinion about unconditional love hasn't changed much since, as discussed in today's lesson, I have always believed loving someone unconditionally doesn't mean tolerating anything. If you really love someone you want them to be the best version of themselves and in the case study of Bonnie and Adam, Bonnie definitely isn't being the best version of herself.

Lesson 6: Learning to disagree well

Sofia Zachopoulos-Butler

1. This lesson I've learned what an ad hominem attack is and how an ad hominem attack can affect people. Furthermore, I've learned how common these attacks are. This is because it's often easier to attack a person than to put together a good argument and also because people often don't think before they speak.
2. I think Jesus started the conversation with the Samaritan woman by asking for a drink of water because he wished to indicate that every person is human. One thing we all have in common is that we've all experienced being thirsty. He separated her humanity from the ethnic and religious differences between Jews and Samaritans to promote a sense of unity between him and the woman.
3. This lesson my opinion about whether it is possible to "disagree well" has developed because I have discovered new ways to have fair disagreements without immediately jumping down the other person's throat or twisting their words. Another way is to check you've understood what they mean by relaying their point of view back to them to check you've got it right.

David Portariuc

1. This lesson I learned about ad hominem attacks and about the Crime and Policing Bill. If it becomes law, it means police officers can enter people's homes without a search warrant if electronic tracking shows stolen items, such as phones, are there. In the lesson those in favour said more people would get their stolen property returned. Those against said the new powers could be misused. I'd say we disagreed well when we discussed it.
2. I think Jesus started the conversation with the Samaritan woman by asking for a drink of water as it made him seem human to her. In society today sometimes we're seen as different "tribes" not as individuals. Jesus opened up their encounter, so she didn't see him as someone from a different "tribe".
3. This lesson my opinion about whether it is possible to "disagree well" hasn't changed as I thought before that it's possible but not always very likely. It wasn't likely with the "Just Stop Oil" protest we looked at where the protesters held up all the traffic and people trying to get to work were angry and frustrated.

Zara Ali

1. This lesson I've learned about ad hominem attacks. These are when the speaker becomes personally insulting. Rather than addressing the other person's argument, they directly attack the person.
2. I think Jesus started the conversation with the Samaritan woman at the well by asking for a drink of water to demonstrate that people should be treated as

individuals instead of as a member of “their tribe”. The story makes us think about stereotypes and looking beyond them.

3. This lesson my opinion about whether it’s possible to “disagree well” has developed. Structuring an argument is quite hard while ad hominem attacks are easy. It’s important to consider how you can structure your argument and put it well. This means you won’t hurt or insult the person you’re disagreeing with.

Lesson 7: When relationships change

Alicja Szczepaniak

1. This lesson I learned about lots of things including Pope Francis’ connection to the painting “Mary Undoer of Knots.” I found this particularly moving. I am an artist and someone who also seeks comfort and meaning in art. Art can be very healing.
2. I think comfort can result in positive consequences. I don’t think it ever serves a positive purpose (pedantic, sorry!). Suffering can make people more empathic. It can also sometimes build character. But that doesn’t mean the purpose of suffering is positive. It was interesting in class that some people thought suffering can be redemptive. But my view is that suffering serves no purpose, even though the consequences of suffering can be positive.
3. In this lesson my views on how to respond to changes in relationships have developed because I think that when it comes to ending a relationship it can be difficult to do what you know is “right”. It’s more comfortable to do things which are easier or wrong. The part of the lesson when we looked at how to end a relationship well made me think more about this.

Cyprian Mbogo

1. This lesson I’ve learned about life’s ups and downs and how to stay hopeful and optimistic. I also reflected on Kahlil Gibran’s poem “On Pain” which made me think about being patient when bad things come your way.
2. I think suffering can sometimes have a positive purpose because our lowest moments can teach us things which shape us to be who we are in our best moments. Without hardships I think we can’t entirely understand the value of good moments.
3. In this lesson my views on how to respond to changes in relationships have changed as I’ve realised there are considerate ways to end a relationship which respect the other person’s dignity as a human being.

Shann Tamakuwala

1. This lesson I’ve learned about how you can support family and friends who are experiencing difficult times. I’ve also learned how you can reframe a statement

into a question to help you when a bad change happens in your own life, e.g. “What can I do to cope with this loss?”

2. I think suffering can sometimes have a positive purpose or meaning because it can bring out emotions so deep within people that they then express them in art or poetry. It may make them live life giving out benevolence without any expectations of having people treat them back with the same love. Also, when we suffer ourselves, we feel more sympathetic when other people suffer.
3. This lesson my views on how to respond to changes in relationships have developed because the scenarios in today’s lesson were very eye-opening and I’ve looked at things by putting myself in other people’s shoes.

Lesson 8: I-thou relationships

Student Z

1. This lesson I’ve learned about Noah and the Ark, the difference between a covenantal relationship and a contractual one, and I-thou relationships and Martin Buber.
2. I think that in society today covenant relationships are less prevalent because as society has become more secular people prefer to enter into contractual relationships.
3. This lesson my opinion about covenantal relationships has changed because before I used to think of them as being contracts disregarding the fact that they are so much deeper, emotional and binding.

Heleannah Vasantharias

1. This lesson I’ve learned about a covenant (a solemn promise) and how it differs from a contract. I also learned about God’s covenant with Noah and about “I-thou relationships” and treating everyone as truly human.
2. I think that in society today covenant relationships aren’t entered into as often as they used to be. Many people today prefer non-binding commitments which benefit them and which they can change when the commitments don’t benefit them any longer. This is very different from a covenant.
3. This lesson my opinion about “I-thou relationships” has developed because until the lesson I had never heard of the term. I was introduced to Martin Buber, who said we must always treat other human beings as human beings and respect their dignity.

Rosa Serban

1. This lesson I've learned about Martin Buber who said our relationship with God is an I-thou one. When we interact with another human that should be an I-thou encounter too. You should never treat another person as an "it."
2. I think that in society today covenant relationships are crucial because once you make a commitment to a person in marriage, you shouldn't leave them for someone else but rather stick by them through good and bad times.
3. This lesson my opinion about relationships has developed because of the article we looked at written by a journalist. She said Thomas Aquinas defined love as willing the good of the other person. That means caring enough about another person to think how your actions might affect them.

Lesson 9: Just, Fair, *Loving*?

East Aggarwal

1. This lesson I've learned about the 2010 Equality Act, tribunal cases such as the one brought by Eileen Jolly, the meaning of "partiality" and the difference between treating some legally and treating someone as a member of the human family.
2. I think God doesn't show partiality because everyone is equal in God's eyes and we are all made in the image of God. In Hinduism we have similar principles to the verses we looked at in class like Proverbs 24:23 "These also are sayings of the wise. Partiality in judging is not good."
3. This lesson my opinion about partiality hasn't changed because I largely already aligned with the principles taught. However, it was interesting to see how things played out legally with the different tribunal cases.

Gracie Stack

1. This lesson I've learned that partiality is essentially favouring someone or something, e.g. a cake, as in "I'm partial to Tiramisu cake." I've also learned about the 2010 Equality Act which added protected characteristics to previous legislation, e.g. "religion or belief."
2. I think God doesn't show partiality because everyone is equal in God's eyes and we are all made in the image of God, e.g. Romans 2:11 "For God shows no partiality."
3. This lesson my opinion about tribunal cases has changed because I didn't realise people are awarded different amounts of compensation when they have been discriminated against. Some of them are large. When public sector organisations have to pay compensation, it is basically taxpayers who pay, but the tribunal system provides justice and clarity.

Sivanjah Sivayogan

1. This lesson I learned the definition of partiality (favouritism). We learned about tribunal cases and discussed whether the people involved had been treated as valued members of the human family. We also considered whether what happened to them breached the Equality Act (2010).
2. I think God does not show partiality because He treats everyone fairly, such as when Jesus died for our sins, showing love for all of us. Moreover, we should follow God's teaching to "love thy neighbour," meaning we should love everybody, as we are all made in the image of God. In Matthew 7:12 it says, "Whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them."
3. This lesson has developed my opinion about tribunal cases, particularly because of the Sean Walsh case. In 1975 he was dismissed from the RAF because he was suspected of having "homosexual tendencies." He took the case to a tribunal in 2023, which he lost, even though he had been treated unfairly. This was because it happened in 1975 and the Equality Act (2010) was not in force at that time.

Lesson 10: Marriage Part 1

Orion Bradford

1. This lesson I've learned that marriage is a commitment. In Catholicism marriage is a sacrament, a visible sign of God's invisible grace. Marriage is important because it gives couples strength to love and support each other.
2. The part of the lesson I found most interesting was learning about the pros and cons of marriage. It was interesting to understand how the benefits of marriage have developed. Nowadays, marriage is beneficial financially and legally but in Catholicism it is beneficial religiously. Despite the idea that marriage is a sacrament, I still think it is important, regardless of religion, as it is a ceremony of unity and love.
3. This lesson my views on marriage have developed because originally I wanted to get married, but it was no big deal. Now I understand that marriage is the ultimate form of commitment in love. For example, couples express their love and declare the strength and lasting nature of their love.

Julia Czech

1. This lesson I have learned that there are three important aspects of the Sacrament of Marriage. Matrimony brings unity, fruitfulness and it is life-long. I have also learned that the Pope can grant an annulment if the marriage is seen as invalid in the Catholic Church.
2. The part of the lesson I found most interesting was the change in the UK of age for marriage. I didn't know that in previous years the age of consent for marriage

was sixteen, but you had to have parental consent. Now the age of consent is eighteen. We looked at a world map showing the age of consent in different countries. The information on it surprised me.

3. This lesson my views on marriage have developed because you need to be mature enough to know it is a life-long commitment. I also learned that in the Catholic Church you have preparation before you receive the Sacrament of Marriage. The lesson made me realise that there are different approaches to marriage and different reasons why people choose to get married.

Xyza Mendoza

1. This lesson I have learned that marriage is a sacrament. A sacrament is sacred and is a visible sign of an invisible grace. Marriage is seen as giving strength to the couple and this is seen through the idea of unity, fruitfulness and life-long commitment. Life-long means that you will be seen as married in the eyes of the Church until the time one of the spouses passes away.
2. The part of the lesson I found most interesting was why people get married because usually marriage is seen based on love, but there are other reasons why some people marry. For example, legal arguments and legal issues and also to gain different benefits. Some people cohabit and don't feel the need to marry as they see the idea of living together as acting like a married couple. This is interesting as it reminds us that not every person sees the need for marriage to show love.
3. This lesson my views on marriage have developed. Though there are several reasons people may choose to marry, usually marriage focuses on love.

Lesson 11: Marriage Part 2

Student Y

1. This lesson I have learnt that as marriage is a covenant, the Catholic Church teaches that a valid marriage is indissoluble. However, Catholic couples may be granted an annulment, highlighting the marriage was never true from the beginning. I've also learned that money, parenting styles, work-life balance, household chores and intimacy are the top things married couples in the UK argue about.
2. The top things I would look for in a marriage partner are shared values and beliefs, as well as similar interests. Moral values are very important to how you live your life and can impact marriages and your children. I do believe marrying someone who you have interests in common with is important and can bond two people initially.

3. This lesson my views on marriage have developed further because I have thought about the importance of sharing the same religious views with the person you may marry, as this impacts your outlook on life and expectations for relationships.

Maryam Albatat

1. This lesson I've learned that because for Catholics marriage is a sacred covenant and a holy sacrament, although a Catholic might be divorced in the secular sense, they wouldn't be divorced in the eyes of the Church.
2. The top thing I would look for in a marriage partner is the same religion as me. Not only do I want this, but I want them to truly believe in God and not be a Muslim in name only. I want us to be on the same page about (mostly) everything and having the same religion would mean sharing values and virtues. Also, I think both of us truly believing in God and having God at the centre of our relationship would bring endless blessings and allow us both to grow spiritually and to become, as marriage partners, closer to God.
3. This lesson my views on marriage have developed further because there are many factors which are important to consider when you're looking for a marriage partner which people might miss. For example, having the same attitude to money is often overlooked but this is the top thing couples argue about.

Ruzaynah Sanjania

1. In this lesson, I explored and discussed "marriage dilemmas" and what an ideal partner might be like. We looked at Biblical teachings about marriage, as well as ideas from philosophers and poets, which helped deepen my understanding of the topic.
2. The most important qualities I would look for in a marriage partner are shared faith, loyalty and honesty. Having the same religion is especially important to me, as it would form the foundation of our relationship and guide our values and decisions. Honesty is also essential because it allows both partners to communicate openly, handle challenges in a mature way and build trust over time.
3. This lesson has helped my views on marriage develop further. I now see that marriage is not just a legal contract, but a meaningful commitment based on love and compassion. It involves building a life together, supporting one another through challenges and growing both as individuals and as a family. Overall, it is about standing by each other through all of life's ups and downs.

Reflections from Core RE Y2

The second assessment in Y2 followed the talk “Supper at Emmaus”. Students could choose between two essay questions which focused on Caravaggio’s famous painting of the same name as the talk.

Below, to give a flavour of the reflective and articulate responses so many students produced, is a sample of the essays. The work is written in a range of styles. All show an enthusiasm for engaging thoughtfully with the painting and its themes. Their responses give a strong sense of how far students have come on their spiritual journey since joining St Dominic’s.



Helena Keyvanfar

How does Caravaggio involve the viewers in the story of Supper at Emmaus?

Caravaggio involves the viewers, by having Peter and Jesus having their hands out and this feels as if they are speaking directly to me and involving me in the conversation. The basket of fruit, nearly falling off the table, and the empty space at the table involves me too. It is as if the basket has been placed there for me to knock it off. The empty place at the table is so anyone (everyone) can sit there and can share the moment too. This is something that Jesus taught and encouraged.

The painting is based on the story two of the disciples travelling to Emmaus with Jesus who they don't recognise. Caravaggio's painting shows them at an inn having a supper together. It has a very welcoming atmosphere and has a kind message; the empty place at the table, suggests everyone of all religions can be part of the gathering.

There is enough bread to share and keep everyone full. This might be because of the beauty of Jesus sitting with them. With Peter's arm spread out it seems to me like he is involving everyone in the room, including the innkeeper as well as me. Even though I am not Christian, I feel welcomed and accepted and this is beautiful as, I believe there isn't a hierarchy when it comes to religion with one being better than another.

Because Jesus blessed the bread, I feel I am blessed and the empty space allows everyone who wants to be blessed too.

Matthew Hayllar

How does Caravaggio involve the viewers in the story of Supper at Emmaus?

Caravaggio involves the viewers of the painting by providing an empty space in the foreground as a place for us as the viewer to be seated. This position of the innkeeper is interesting. Where he is standing allows a halo-like shadow to be projected behind Jesus' head. This is visible to us as viewers. In essence this allows us to recognise Christ at the table even if he does not look like we anticipate or how we remember him from paintings of him on the cross.

With the fruit basket dangerously dangling over the edge of the table Caravaggio provides a sense of impact for the viewer as they can imagine that if they, too, had been present in that room they might, as they recognised Jesus, have upset the basket and sent it to the floor in amazement - a reaction similar to Cleophas' and Peter's.

While the innkeeper, who does not know Jesus, cannot see him for who he is, Cleophas, Peter and we, the viewers, see the risen Jesus in the way we know him,

through his blessing of the bread. This act reveals his divinity and confirms that he did indeed come for us as his people.

The shadow cast onto the table by the fruit basket resembles the shape of a fish. This perhaps reflects the Ichthys symbol or perhaps is intended to make us recall Jesus' miracle of multiplying the five loaves of bread and two fishes in order to feed five thousand people. Either way, the illusion created reminds us that each of us is welcomed at the table with God incarnate as not only one of his people but also as a friend.

Sai Patel

How does Caravaggio involve the viewers in the story of Supper at Emmaus?

Caravaggio involves the viewers by capturing a freeze frame of the moment Cleopas and Peter recognise Jesus. Luke says that Jesus revealed himself in the blink of an eye and then disappeared. This links to how Jesus is omnipresent, meaning that, even when you least expect it, God is always present. Caravaggio painted the scene with a table, white cloth, and bread reminiscent of the altar at Mass.

The viewers see a Jesus who is clean shaven. Caiphas and Peter may never have seen Jesus clean shaven before. But there are hints about who he is, like the basket of fruit and the fish shadow cast by it, reflecting the story of how Jesus fed the five thousand with five loaves and two small fish. This reflects the artist's handling of secrecy and concealment. It is unusual how everyone in the room, except Jesus, is puzzled about what is going on.

There is a spare place available at the table. I believe this is because Caravaggio wants the viewer to imagine themselves in the picture. Caravaggio involves us by making us wonder how well we know a person. Is recognition based on their appearance or do you recognise people however they look because you truly have a connection with them? Cleophas was puzzled until Jesus blessed the bread and then he recognised the clean-shaven man. This teaches us two things. You cannot judge people by their looks and that, when God reveals himself, you cannot miss him.

Caravaggio's painting makes the viewer reflect on how important the Sacrament of the Eucharist is when Jesus is truly present. The artist involves the viewer by making them want to always stay awake, as God can be anywhere and everywhere. The astonished faces of Caiphas and Peter say it all. Caravaggio involves his viewers in the story by making them feel fully immersed in it.

Joann Denedo

What do you find unusual or striking about the way that Caravaggio depicts the Supper at Emmaus?

First of all, what is unusual, is the depiction of Jesus with round cheeks. The first thing that comes to my mind is his resemblance to a newborn baby. In contrast to how Jesus most likely looked before his crucifixion. This may be a representation of the new - the old things passing away and all things becoming new. This ties in with the season, as it was Easter at the time of the Supper. Perhaps, even the innkeeper's ignorance of Jesus may symbolise how, unlike Peter and Cleopas, some people may choose to reject a fresh start, the unknown, or something new and different.

On a closer look, Jesus' halo is formed by the shadow of the innkeeper's head. The other two companions would have been able to see it, but for the innkeeper, it might not have been in the same place or at the right angle for him to see it.

There is a basket perched on the edge of the table. As the painting is in a freeze frame, I am left wondering, is the basket seconds away from falling? Why is it by the only spot that was left empty? Though these are questions I do not have the answer to, they provoke a lot of thoughts and speculation. Like perhaps the odd angle of the basket on the table, leaning at the edge, was necessary to create the fish-tail-like shadow on the cloth. Or maybe it being about to fall over signifies change. Change in our lives. That may not always be good. But at least we have Jesus with us.

Danus Ravi

How does Caravaggio involve the viewers in the story of Supper at Emmaus?

Caravaggio involves the viewers by choosing the dramatic moment when Christ is recognised. The intense chiaroscuro lighting draws the viewer's eye directly to Christ and the reacting disciples. The figures are placed close to the picture plane, making the scene feel immediate, and intimate gestures, such as the disciples' outstretched arms, extend into the viewer's space. The basket of fruit appears to tip off the table, breaking the boundary between painting and viewer. Caravaggio uses realistic, ordinary looking figures so viewers can easily relate to them. The eye-level viewpoint makes the viewer feel seated at the table with the figures.

The dark background removes distractions and focuses attention on the action. Facial expressions clearly show the surprise and recognition guiding the viewer's emotional response. Through realism and drama Caravaggio invites the viewer to become part of the moment of revelation. Caravaggio also uses strong contrasts of light and shadow to heighten tension and surprise. The frozen moment captures the instant of realisation, pulling the viewer into the unfolding story. The innkeeper's calm

and collected expression contrasts with the disciples' shock encouraging close observation. Naturalistic details, such as worn clothing and rough hands make the scene believable. The composition subtly directs the viewer's gaze in a circular motion around the table. Hence the viewer becomes a witness to the miracle rather than a distant observer.