

# **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

**STUDENT-TEACHER'S BOOK**

# **YEAR 3**

**OPTIONS:**

**ECLPE , SME AND LE**

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## **FORWORD**

Dear Student-teachers,

Rwanda Education Board is honoured to present the Religious Education textbook for Year III for ECLPE, LE and SME Options. It was designed based on the revised curriculum to support its implementation. The book will help you not only to acquire basic knowledge concerning beliefs and religions in the world but also to develop skills and appropriate attitudes and values such as empathy, reflective expression, commitment, fairness, self-control, self-esteem, accountability that help you to take well reasoned and sound decisions in everyday life. Furthermore, this book is important tool for effectively implement the Competence-Based Curriculum in Pre-primary and Primary schools. Religious Education textbook equips you with competences to meet teaching profession standards that are: teacher as educator, communicator and connector, guide, organizer and facilitator, innovator, researcher and reflective practitioner.

The textbook is made of four units of various religious beliefs and practices in the world. Each unit starts with a key unit competence which represents abilities you are expecting to have by the end of the unit. This competence will be built progressively throughout the unit. The key unit competence is followed by an introductory activity that you are requested to attempt before any other contact with the content under the unit. The unit is then broken down into different subtopics to help you to go step by step. Each subtopic starts with an activity in which you are requested to engage through research, classroom visit, group discussions, presentations, brainstorming, interpretation of illustrations, etc. The content that follows each subtopic is a summary that gives you clear definitions of concepts, explanations to complement what you have acquired through learning activities. At the end of each unit there are assessment tasks/activities that give you an opportunity to demonstrate the level of achievement of the key unit competence.

You are therefore encouraged to always work out introductory and learning activities before reading the provided content to develop cooperation, communication, critical thinking, innovation, problem solving, and research skills. You are also advised to do research to enrich information provided under each topic.

Enjoy learning Religious Education using your book!

**Dr. NDAYAMBAJE Irénée  
Director General of REB**

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

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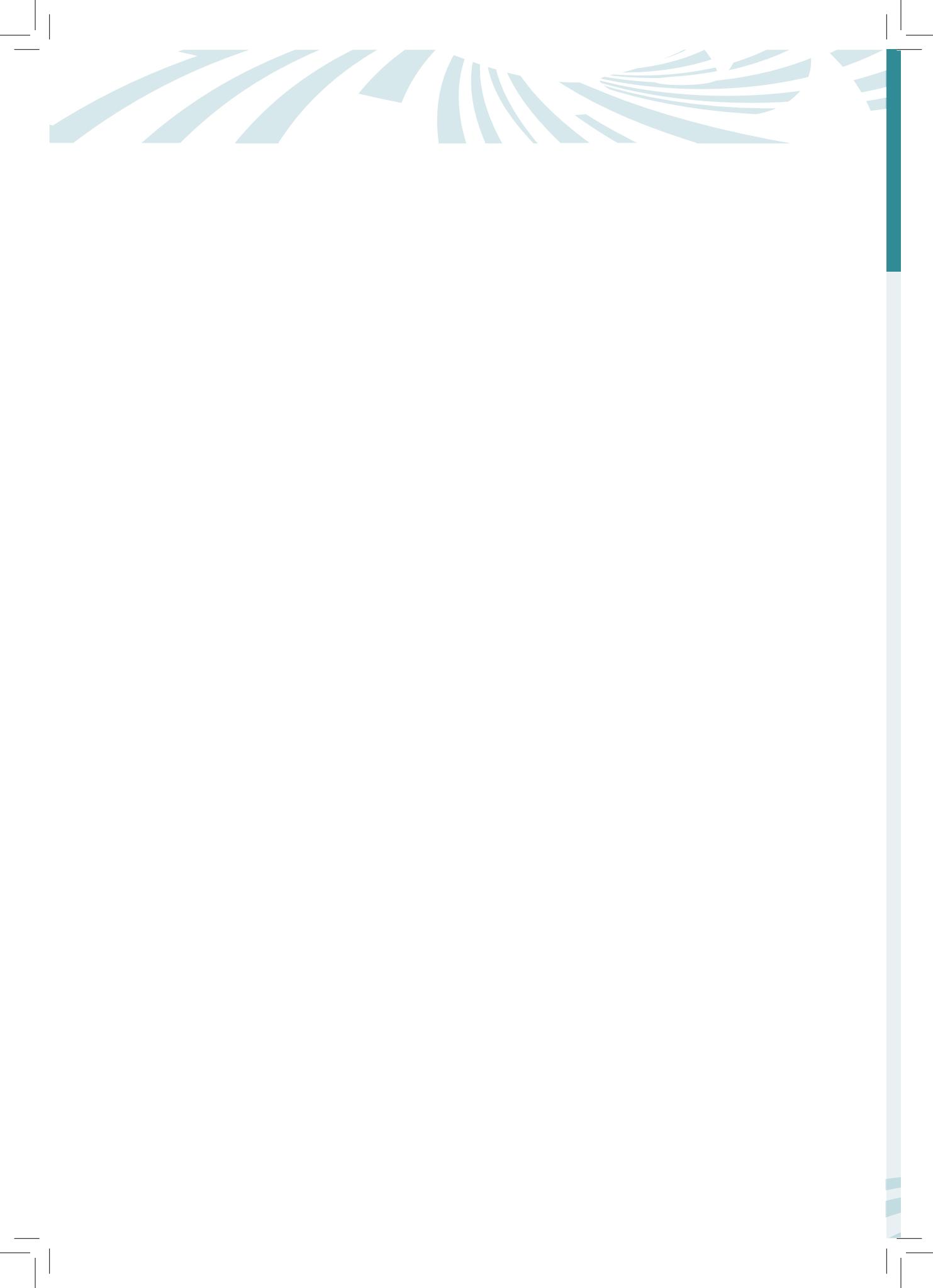
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# UNIT 1

## GOD'S NATURE AND ATTRIBUTES

### Key Unit Competence:

Assess different theistic views on the nature of God and the related lessons to enhance unity, solidarity and mutual respect.



### Introductory activity

Human inquiry about the nature and attributes of God has never ceased in the course of time, some relate God to what they are, to what they fear or to what they hope to be. According to you, basing on religious experience as a believer what do you understand by God, what characterizes his nature and action for all creations? How does God's nature influence people actions and attitudes?

The human mind has a very difficult understanding on who is the cause of everything while Himself is caused by none. This is what philosophers and thinkers refer to as "uncaused cause". The experience teaches us that everything came from something else, and whatever exists must have a cause that was before it. When somebody asks himself or herself, "Where did God come from?" he/she presupposes the knowledge of the concept of cause and effect. The idea of source and origin are already firmly fixed in the mind of every individual. From a very early age, everyone intuitively knows that everything around him came from something else, and he/she simply extends that concept upward to God. The concept of God is hard to grasp, since it introduces a category with which He is totally unfamiliar.

**The Nature of God:** God's nature means His characteristics, His attributes, His qualities. "I read somewhere that man can not really know anything about the nature of God." This means that God is beyond our experience. We can not know Him with only our mind, if He does not reveal Himself to us. From the beginning, God has spoken to our ancestors and revealed Himself to them as eternal, almighty, and righteous. God continues to reveal Himself to everyone

of us today as merciful, protector, and savior. This unit will discuss generally the nature of God and qualities that He shared to human beings that help them to live in close relationship with Him.

## 1.1 Communicable and non communicable attributes of God

### Learning activity 1.1



1. Using various sources of information explain the qualities of God identified from following passages.
  - **Exodus 15:11-13:** “Who among the gods is like you, Lord? Who is like you? Majestic in holiness, awesome in glory, working wonders? You stretch out your right hand, and the earth swallows your enemies.”
  - **Isaiah 55:8-9:** “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord. As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.”
2. Basing on your christian and personal relationship with God, who is God to you/ to your family?

Religious teachings promote a high view of God among his people. By gaining an accurate understanding of who God is, Humans become better equipped to understand themselves and the world around them.

**Definition:** An attribute refers to quality or characteristic that belongs to a person or some thing. God's attributes define and describe who God is and who He is not. Although we cannot understand in depth God's character, this unit explores some of the main characteristics/attributes of God that are mentioned in Scriptures. These attributes highlight supernatural phenomena such as absolute power, miracles that people understand of God from the perspective of their feelings, lives and Holy Scriptures. God's attributes/qualities or characteristics are divided into two categories:

1. **Incommunicable attributes of God:** these are attributes that belong to God alone. These attributes are not communicated to creatures and are served for God alone. The attributes include immutability, self-existence, omniscience, omnipresence and omnipotence that belong to Him alone.
2. **Communicable attributes of God:** These are attributes that God shared to human beings. Since they were created in His image, He communicated His attributes to them in order to establish the relationship

between Him as the Creator and mankind as His creatures. Some of these attributes are love and wisdom, mercy, knowledge, power, honesty, helpfulness, goodness, truth, and compassion. These communicable attributes find their fullest expression in God but can also be displayed on a smaller scale by His human image-bearers. They also regulate the relationship between human beings themselves. For example, when a person forgives the offender, manifests the attribute of mercy and pardon. When a person tells the truth, she/he reflects the attitudes of truth of His creator, These attributes are on the lower level in comparison with the Incommunicable attributes.

God's attributes are not independent but interconnected and interdependent. They are shared by all the three persons of the Trinity. God neither gains nor loses attributes. Because God is a one being, it is impossible to divide Him into parts, so as to separate His goodness from His wisdom. Instead, each attribute describes the others; for example, God's holiness is immutable, omnipotent, and eternal. God's attributes have crucial implications for our day-to-day lives. Hence, an accurate understanding of God is foundational to know Him, serve Him, and become like Him.

### **A. Incommunicable Attributes of God**

All theistic religious teachings agree on the attributes of God and the most supreme being who does not have neither beginning nor end. The following are some attributes that are reserved for God alone.

#### **• Infinite Nature and Self-Existence of God**

One of the attributes that most distinguishes God from mankind is His infinite nature. The word infinitude or infinity refers to His eternal self-existence. God has always been in existence: In the beginning, God was present (Genesis. 1:1). God is everlasting and His rule over the universe is everlasting (Isaiah 40:28; Psalms. 93:2). He created heaven and earth. He is Alpha and Omega (Rev.1:8) He is the Lord who was and is and is to come (Revelation 4:8-9). Human beings and other creatures have a beginning and have an end. They have time and place of origin. God does not have a time or place of origin; He is the source of All Things. He is the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end.

The finite universe owes its existence to the infinite God. God is eternal. This means that before the creation of time and space, the triune God existed eternally without anything or anyone else in the universe. He created everything we see because of his own glory. God's act of creation therefore displays His love and majesty. God is the source of all life. Because He is completely self-existent,

He is not caused by or dependent upon anything outside Himself (John 5:26). As His creatures, our physical life, spiritual life, and even eternal life with Him, all have God as their source (Acts of the Apostles 17:28).

Scripture indicate that all things are “from him and through him and to him” (Romans. 11:36). This can be expressed in the following words:

- That all things are “from Him”: God indicates that He is the source of all things.
- That all things are “through Him”: God indicates that He is the means of all things.
- That all things are “to Him”: God indicates that He is the goal of all things.

All human beings are Children of an Infinite Father and are made to live in fellowship with Him. The greater our understanding of who God is, the more our own hearts become filled with contentment and satisfaction in Him. Through his words in the Bible, He always invites us to bring all our concerns to Him and trust Him with everything. However, compared to His greatness and self-sufficiency, all things in our lives are small; yet, He invites us to come to Him anyway. God does not need us or the rest of creation to survive. We glorify and bring Him joy for our interest. He is All-sufficient. Do not think that God created people because he was living lonely. By nature, God has no source, while other creatures came from, are ruled, permitted and controlled by Him. He is a sovereign God (Ephesians 1:11).

## **Omnipresence and Omnipotence of God**

### **– *Omnipresence of God***

The concept “omni” comes from a latin word which means “all”. Human beings are limited by space and time. When confronted with coincident demands on our time, we often excuse ourselves by stating that we can not be in two places at once. God, however, is everywhere at once. The biblical teaching of God’s omnipresence demonstrates that there is no place in heaven or earth, nor the entire universe, where God is not present in the fullness of His being (Psalms 139:7–10; Jeremiah 23:23–25, Joshua 1:15; 1 Chronicles 16:34; Psalms 33:11; Hebrews 13:5). He is also present in all hearts and in our lives

The doctrine of divine omnipresence teaches that God is at the same time present in every part of the universe. As a spiritual being, God does not experience spatial constraints and is not barred from any location. Moreover, when God is present in all places, He is present in the fullness of His being. God is everywhere and at the same time because of his spiritual nature. Scripture attests that God rules from the highest place and His influence is everywhere.

Christians in all places and times can trust that their God is in absolute control and is actively at work in their lives. The God who is exalted on high (transcendent) is also present with His people (immanent). Scripture affirms God's commitment to His creation and His people. So God accompanies His people in the valley of the shadow of death (Psalms. 23:4). God is present on earth and in heaven (Deuteronomy. 4:39). God dwells both in the high places and with the humble and lowly (Isaiah. 57:15). God will be with His children to the end of the age (Matthew. 28:20), never leaving or forsaking them (Hebrews. 13:5).

In our daily Christian life, the doctrine of God's omnipresence offers tremendous encouragement telling us that God is with us in the midst of trial and adversity. God is committed to His people and never forsakes them. Since God alone is omnipresent, Satan is spatially finite and we must rely upon God's power and presence in spiritual warfare.

Again, the doctrine of divine omnipresence also offers a grave warning to those who oppose God. They can never flee from Him. It is also a warning to those who experience God's common grace but do not respond in faith. They will one day experience divine punishment.

#### **– Omnipotence of God**

The term “potent” means “powerful”. God is Almighty. The power of God is unlimited (Ephesians 1:18-23; Hebrews 6:18; John 10:17-18; Psalms 147:5; Ephesians 3:20-21; 1 Peter 5:6; John 15:5; Genesis 17:1; John 32:17; Matthew 19:26).

The Omnipotence of God is linked to His supremacy: the greatness, the power, the glory, the victory and majesty of God (1 Chronicles 29:11-12). God has also the ability to care, to guide and to protect his creatures: which is His providence. God is then our refuge and protector. Humility, respect and to live peacefully are the values that should characterize us.

To say that God is sovereign is not to say merely that He is stronger than everyone else, although this is true. Rather, to call Him sovereign is to ascribe to Him a rule and authority that transcends space and time, leaving nothing outside its scope as the biblical passages highlights it (Psalms 33:1–22; Psalms 93:1). God's reign and sovereignty mean his rule and reign over all things. He is most powerful and has the authority over everything. All things belong to God and exists for His Glory. Therefore, in all circumstances, God is at work for the glory of His name and the good of His people (Romans. 8:28).

### **– *Omniscience of God***

God possesses perfect knowledge. Therefore, He has no need to learn. He has never learned and cannot learn “All knowing”. It is impossible to hide anything from God, visible or invisible (Proverbs 15:13; Psalms 33:13; 1 Chronicles 28:9). The knowledge and wisdom of God supersedes that of human being. God is wise at the level He devises perfect ends and to achieve those ends by the perfect means. So God makes no mistakes (Romans 11:33). The following are important things for knowing more about the Omniscience of God:

- God’s knowledge is intuitive, not discursive. Human knowledge comes to us by way of observation, reasoning, comparison, induction, deduction, and so on. In other words, we learn. But God’s knowledge is intuitive, by which is meant that it is innate and immediate. Therefore, God does not learn: He simply knows. He neither discovers nor forgets.
- God’s knowledge is also simultaneous, not successive. He sees things at once and in their totality, whereas we know only as the objects of knowledge are brought before us, one bit after another. With God the act of perception is complete and instantaneous. God thinks about all things at once.
- God’s knowledge is independent, not dependent. He does not receive his knowledge from anyone or from anything external to himself.
- God’s knowledge is infallible, not subject to error. As Ronald Nash has said, “Divine omniscience means that God holds no false beliefs. Not only are all of God’s beliefs true, the range of His knowledge is total; He knows all true propositions”. God is always correct in what he knows.
- God’s knowledge is infinite, not partial. “Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world” (Acts of Apostles 15:18). God knows exhaustively all his own deeds and plans. He also knows us thoroughly and exhaustively. No secret of the human heart, no thought of the mind or feeling of the soul escapes his gaze. (1 Chronicles. 28:9a; Proverbs. 15:3; Psalms. 69:5; 139:1-4; Isaiah. 40:27-28; Ezekiel. 11:5; Jeremiah. 17:9-10; 1 Kings 8:39; Matthew. 6:8; Acts of Apostles 1:24; Hebrews. 4:13; 1 John 3:20.)
- God has exhaustive foreknowledge over all things that come to pass, including the morally accountable choices made by men and women. God alone declares what is to come. God alone knows the future, for God alone has ordained it. The truth of God’s omniscience should affect our worship and adoration of him.

- God's knowledge of the secrets of our hearts should have a profound influence on our personal and practical holiness: If a man's conscience easily follows something that is sensible under the knowledge of God, temptations have no encouragement to come near him that is constantly armed with the thoughts that his sin is booked in God's omniscience
- The knowledge of God is fearful of sin. It is also the foundation of comfort and assurance. If God is omniscient, then he knows the worst about us, but loves us notwithstanding! The apostle John writes: "This then is how we know that we belong to the truth, and how we set our hearts at rest in His presence whenever our hearts condemn us. For God is greater than our hearts and He knows everything" (1 John 3:19-20).

## **Holiness and Immutability of God**

### ***Holiness of God:***

This attribute refers to God's majesty and His perfect moral purity. There is no sin or evil thought in God at all: pure and righteous in the entire universe. God is separated from sin. God is also incorruptible. God is Holy. From Isaiah, this holiness is explained in God's infinite majesty and glory (Isaiah 6:1-5). Other text related text are 1Peter 1:16, Psalms 22:3; Isaiah 57:15; Revelation 6:10; John17:11; 1Samuel 2:2; Psalms 77:13; Luke1:49ss.

The Hebrew word translated into English as "holy" primarily indicates separation or the act of setting apart. The Holiness is one of the most prominent attributes of God. It highlights His separation from creation as the infinitely superior One and His absolute moral purity (Exodus 15:11; Isaiah 6:1-7).

The holiness of God surpasses everything that exists. God is therefore distinctly and infinitely superior to His creation and His creatures. To say that God is holy is to ascribe to Him kingly majesty (Exodus. 15:11; Psalms. 22:3). i. God's glory is too difficult for human beings to behold or comprehend. The church is at its strongest when it recognizes and honours the holiness of God.

God is completely without sin or moral blemish hence his all of God's decisions and judgments are perfect. Being totally and infinitely Holy, God is not neutral toward good or evil. God takes delight in all that is true, worthy, and upright.

Because God's very nature is one of purity, He loves sinners but cannot tolerate sin. It is only through the righteousness of Jesus Christ that guilty sinners can be reconciled to God.

## ***Immutability of God***

"I am the Lord, and I do not change that is why you descendants of Jacob are not destroyed" (Malachi 3:6). God is always the same yesterday today and tomorrow. God is unchangeable in His being. This attribute shows the quality of the unchanging nature of God (Isaiah 46:9-11; Ezekiel. 24:14; James 1:17; Psalms 3:11; John 17:15; 2 Timothy 1:9; Numbers 23:19). In our daily life, we must develop the value of honesty.

In human experience it is hard for anyone to go a day, even an hour, without changing in some way. Our actions, plan, desires, thoughts and emotions are in a constant state of changing. God, however, never changes His mind or His course of action in the world. The biblical view of God's immutability, showing how His character, word, plan, and salvation never change (Psalm 102:25-28; Isaiah 14:26-27). God neither lies nor takes back what He has said (Number. 23:19).

Fallen human beings, on the other hand, tend to twist the truth, change their minds, or mislead others intentionally or unintentionally. Even human laws change, but God's Word stands forever (Isaiah. 40:8). d. Jesus taught that it would be easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for a single stroke of God's law to fail to be accomplished (Luke 16:17).

In all generations, God's standards are the same, and His plan of salvation is the same and unchangeable. God's eternal decrees can never be altered. God's plan for salvation did not change. Though God's redemptive work advances throughout human history, His plan of salvation has remained unchanged. The spiritual rebirth that believers experience is a new birth unto eternal life and is not a merely short-term sample of divine favour. God's promises to believers are given unconditionally and with absolute certainty.

## ***Mercifulness of God***

Both the Old and the New Testaments underline the merciful nature of God. Sometimes the punishment of God went with His forgiveness. This can be understood when one considers how God dealt with Israel as chosen nation in several instances of their rebellion. God Himself declares, "For your God is Merciful God, He will not abandon or destroy you or forget the covenant with your ancestors" (Deuteronomy 4:31)

The mercy of God refers to God's goodness. God is Merciful at the level our sins cannot inhibit His good plan for us. Into the New Testament Jesus highlighted the mercy of the Father where He invites us to do the same among us, "be merciful, just as your Father is Merciful" (Luke 6:36). The mercy and kindness of God cover the heaven and the earth and they are uncountable (Psalms 35:6; 57:70;

108:8; Revelation 4:3; Exodus 34:6; Micah 7:18; Isaiah 27:7; Lamentations 3:33; Jeremiah 44:22; 2 Corinthians 1:1; Job 10:15; Hosea 14:4; Psalms 51:1; Romans 3:34; Deuteronomy 29:19-20). The values to be developed in our daily lives are sharing, helping, tolerance, and empathy. God's saving grace is super-abound. There is no amount of sin that God cannot forgive.

Mercifulness also means that, when we deserve punishment, He doesn't punish us, and in fact blesses us instead. Mercy is the withholding of a just condemnation. Throughout the Bible, God gives many illustrations of His mercy. For Christians, The fullness of his mercy was fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

### **Examples of God's mercifulness:**

- God was merciful to Solomon in 1 Kings 11:13.
- God was merciful to Israel in captivity (Psalm 106:45; Nehemiah 9:31).
- David illustrated God's mercy when he showed kindness to Mephibosheth (2 Samuel 9:7).
- God's mercy was illustrated every year on the Day of Atonement, when the high priest entered the Holiest Place and sprinkled the blood of the sacrifice before the mercy seat (Leviticus 16:14).
- Another example of God's mercy is found in Matthew 18:23–27. In this parable, Jesus describes a rich ruler who was owed a large sum of money. The ruler ordered that money be collected, but then the debtor came and begged for mercy. The ruler, in turn, graciously forgives the debt.

Mercy is coupled with other attributes of God in Psalms 86:15, "You, O Lord, are a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness"

God's mercy is originating from His love for us. He is merciful, because He is love (1 John 4:8). As sinners, we deserve punishment (Romans 3:23). Since God does love us and is merciful, He sent His Son (John 3:16). The fullness of His mercy is seen in Matthew 27. Jesus is brutally beaten and murdered on our behalf; Jesus received our just condemnation, and we received God's mercy. Because of His love, God wants us to be with Him. There is an inseparable connection between God's love and mercy. Jesus laid down His life and became the sacrificial lamb (Isaiah 53:7; John 1:29) so that God's mercy could be extended to us. That is the ultimate act of God's mercy (Ephesians 2:4–5). To our eternal benefit, "mercy triumphs over judgment" (James 2:13b).

To the list of non-communicable attributes the following are also very important

- **Sovereignty** :God is the supreme being who answers to no one and who has the absolute right to do with his creation as he desires (1 Timothy 6:15; Isaiah 46:10).
- **Spirit** :God exists completely and sufficiently as an immaterial being--without physical characteristics (John 4:24; Luke 24:39).
- **Transcendence** :God's transcendence is the product of the relationship between God's essence and creation. God transcends space and time in that he is not dependent on them nor affected by them (Psalm 139:7-10).
- **Uniqueness** :God alone is God. There is no one like him. He is completely "other" than all things that exist (Isaiah 43:10; 44:6-7).

## B. Communicable attributes of God

Communicable attributes are shared to Humans because they were created in the image of God. They regulate and keep the relationship between the creator and Humans and between humans themselves.

"Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God" (Ephesians 5:1-2).

The Lord also has communicable attributes, or attributes that He shares with human beings to at least some degree. Passages such as Genesis 1:26-27, which teaches that we are made in God's image, presuppose that there are some things that human beings hold in common with the Creator that other creatures do not. We are like God in ways that nothing else in creation is like God, although we are not so like Him that there is no distinction between Creator and creature. Furthermore, Paul's exhortation to imitate God in today's passage also indicates that human beings, have the capacity to reflect the character of the Lord and His attributes in who they are and what they do (Ephesians. 5:1).

When we speak of God's communicable attributes, we are referring primarily to His moral attributes such as love, goodness, and kindness. In one sense, we must not forget that there is a basic incommunicability of even these attributes, for insofar as such things as the love and goodness of God are infinite, we cannot imitate them. Nevertheless, because we bear God's image, there is a manner in which we exhibit these attributes by way of analogy. For example, the kind of love we have as creatures is not identical to the kind of love our Creator possesses. However, at the same time, our love is not wholly dissimilar, such that there is no point of contact whatsoever with the love of God. Our Creator loves truly that which is lovely. As regenerate people, we possess the capacity to do the same.

Consider also God's attribute of holiness. The holiness of God encompasses several concepts, including the fact that He is inherently set apart from creation and that He is morally pure, without any hint of darkness or sin. We cannot possess holiness in the sense of being inherently set apart from creation; however, by the renewing work of God's Spirit, Christians are continually purified over the course of our lives (1 John 3:3).

Space prohibits us from studying all the Lord's communicable attributes. We close today with a brief look at wisdom. Our Creator is the "only wise God" (Romans 16:27), but in His grace, He shares His wisdom with us. In our fallenness, we are foolish creatures, but our Lord has given us His Word, by which He grants us wisdom by His Spirit (Proverbs. 1:1-7).

- **Goodness**: Being good can only be understood in relationship to God and his character. Humans can be good in relation to one another, but their standard is subjective. Therefore, true goodness is understood in light of the revelation of God in his Word. We can emulate the goodness of God, but we can never be perfectly good.
- **Justice** :Where God always does what is perfectly right according to the law, we do not behave perfectly. We can be lawful, and in so doing we emulate the perfect justice of God.
- **Knowledge** :Where God knows all things (1 John 3:20), we only know partially. Our knowledge is incomplete and always will be incomplete.
- **Love** :God is love (1 John 4:8) and expresses his love perfectly through Jesus. Because we are touched by sin, our expression of love towards others will always be tainted. But we are still able to express it.
- **Rationality** : God's mind is perfectly rational since all that God possesses in knowledge and wisdom necessitates his perfect thought. We, on the other hand, are imperfectly rational. Our conclusions and deductions are not always correct. They cannot be since we are affected by sin and do not have all knowledge.
- **Mercy** : God is merciful. Mercy is not getting what we deserve. We can exhibit mercy to others though we do not always do it properly and perfectly.
- **Speech** : We can speak and communicate. This is an attribute we possess, but our communications are never perfect. An attribute of God is his speech. He said "let there be light" (Genesis 1:3), and it was so. God always speaks truth, and it contains power. Our speech is not always true, nor does it contain the same creative power as God's speech.

- **Truthfulness** :Truth is a quality where statements properly reflect actuality, but it is also a quality of character possessed by God. We can be truthful, but our ability to be truthful is damaged in part because of our lack of all knowledge and also because of our sin.
- **Wisdom** :People are capable of expressing wisdom, which is the proper use of knowledge. But this is best done in light of scriptural revelation. We can possess wisdom but not perfectly. God, however, possesses wisdom perfectly and always makes the right decisions as well as the best ways to accomplish his decisions.

The standard for true love, wisdom, kindness, justice, and so on is the character of God Himself. This means that we cannot define these moral qualities without reference to the Lord and that we cannot base our understanding of these qualities on the way the world understands them.



### Application activity 1.1

1. With clear examples differentiate communicable from Incommunicable attributes of God.
2. Explain how the following attributes are communicable and show their importance to humanity.
  - a) Goodness
  - b) Truth
  - c) Knowledge/wisdom
  - d) Justice
  - e) Love

## 1.2 Oneness and Trinity of God

### Learning Activity 1.2



Read the following Biblical texttract and answer the following questions

After Jesus finished saying this, “I have made you known to those you gave me out of the world. They belonged to you, and you gave them to me. They have obeyed your word, and now they know that everything you gave me comes from you. I gave them the message that you gave me, and they received it; they know that it is true that I came from you, and they believe that you sent me.... Father! May they be in us, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they be one, so that the world will believe that you sent me. I gave them the same glory you gave me, so that “**they may be one, just as you and I are one**”, so that “**they may be completely one**”, in order that the world may know that you sent me and that you love them as you love me. **John 17: 20-23.**

- Basing on the two bolded sentences what is the pray of Jesus about?
- Basing on the content of the prayer, what is the relationship between Human race, Jesus and God to whom the prayer is addressed?

### Christian views of oneness of God

God is the source and end of all things; uncreated, sufficient, necessary being; infinite, immeasurable, eternal; all-present, all-knowing, all-powerful, creator, redeemer, and consummator of all things; immanent without ceasing to be transcendent, Holy One present in our midst; absolutely free, self-determining, spiritual, responsive; whose operations are incomparably good, holy, righteous, just, benevolent, loving, gracious, merciful, forbearing,

1. **God's creation.** We recognize the invisible God and his eternal love, power and glory by observing his visible creation. “For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse” (Romans 1: 20).
2. **Divine revelation,** which culminated into the incarnation of the Word (Son) of God in Christ. “No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him” (John 1: 18). “Nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and the one to whom the Son wills to reveal Him” (Matthew 11: 27). “And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding, that we may know Him who is true” (1 John 5: 20).

The Holy Trinity is one of the basic doctrines of the Christian faith. God is ONE single undivided divine essence (being) distinguished in three distinct Persons: God the Father, His Word/Wisdom (God the Son), and His Holy Spirit (God the Holy Spirit). Unlike the divine essence, which is ONE uncreated and unique, human nature is one but not unique because it is reproduced every time a human being is born. The one triune God has existed since eternity's past well before his creation. He is eternal. He has no beginning and no end. There was never a time when God the Father existed without his Word/Wisdom (Son) or his Holy Spirit (life). God is accommodating his eternal truth to the limitations of human language and mind, just as, for example, a human father must use simple language when trying to explain something difficult to his child.

Because of the single **undivided** divine essence of the Godhead, the three divine Persons of the Holy Trinity have only **one** single will or energy. This means that no one of the three divine Persons acts independently from the other Persons. There is always mutual concurrence (John 5: 19; 10: 30).

The three divine Persons are of the same one undivided essence, and have, by their very nature, the same attributes without distinction pertaining to eternity, will, energy, power, glory and authority. The distinction between them is based on their hypostatic attributes (properties) which are incommunicable: the Father – original cause, unbegottenness, and paternity; the Son – begottenness (from the Father) and sonship; and the Holy Spirit – procession (from the Father). God the Father does not make God the Son and the Holy Spirit any more than a mother makes her child.

Within the single divine operation, each Divine Person shows forth what is proper and distinctive to him in the Holy Trinity: the Father is primarily but not exclusively the creator of all (God above us). The Son (the Word/Wisdom of God the Father) is primarily but not exclusively the one by whom all things were made, and through whom redemption is effected (God with us). The Holy Spirit is primarily but not exclusively the life giving and sanctifying principle (God in us and in all creation). The one God is present in all the triune acts and outworkings.

The Divine Persons are interior one to the other and, hence, receive nothing from outside – but they are not confused with one another since they find themselves within a perpetual movement and communion of being and love. This total interpersonal communion intensifies the personal character of God to the highest degree. The perfect unity of the divine Persons in the Holy Trinity is based on perfect love characterized by complete self-denial. The concept of egoism does not exist in this unity. The Holy Spirit, the third divine Person of the Holy Trinity, is the comforter that establishes our communion with God.

Through the Holy Spirit, God dwells in the Christian believer. The Holy Spirit progressively sanctifies and deifies the Christian believer in Christ. Through the Holy Spirit, the Christian believer participates in the energies of God. We can say that: the Spirit is God within us, the Son is God with us, and the Father is God beyond us.

It is important to emphasize the fact that a unipersonal god is an eternally lone person confined within his own being with no other to love, cannot experience the fullness of the interpersonal essential godly attributes of the exceedingly rich communion, love and self-giving expressed from all eternity's past within the relationship of the three Persons of the Holy Trinity. The interpersonal attributes of the Biblical God (e.g. love, communication, empathy, and self-giving) have been expressed from all eternity within the relationship among the three persons of the Holy Trinity.

### **Biblical teaching on the Holy Trinity**

The biblical teaching on the Holy Trinity is rooted in the Old Testament, which points to it. Therefore, the Christian doctrine of the Holy Trinity is an elaboration of traditional Jewish theology. According to some notable Jewish scholars, views on the Holy Trinity were present among Jews of Jesus time.

Christ, the promised Messiah, has spoken through the prophet Isaiah about seven hundred years before His incarnation and birth (Come near to Me, hear this: I - the Son, have not spoken in secret from the beginning. From the time that it was, I was there, and now *the Lord God* (the Father) and *His Spirit* have sent *Me*" (Isaiah 48: 16; 42: 1; Genesis 3: 22). "The Spirit of *the Lord God* (the Father) is upon *Me* (the Son), because *the Lord* has anointed *Me* to preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent *Me* to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound" (Isaiah 61: 1; 63: 7-10).

In both verses, the Lord God is God the Father, and the Spirit of the Lord God is the Holy Spirit. God appeared to Abraham in the form of three men. They spoke to him as One, and Abraham worshiped the One (Genesis 18: 1-5, 9-19). Abraham lived about 2000 years before Christ. The angels glorify God in the heavenly realm by singing the hymn of the Three-Holies: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory" (Isaiah 6: 3b; Revelation 4: 8).

The New Testament amplifies, clarifies, and emphasizes the doctrine of the Holy Trinity. It affirms both the deity and the unity of the Father, his Word (the Son), and his Holy Spirit, for there are three that bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one. "And the angel answered and said to her (Mary), '*The Holy Spirit* will come upon you, and the

power of *the Highest* (the Father) will overshadow you; therefore, also, that *Holy One* who is to be born will be called *the Son of God*" (Luke 1: 35). "And *the Holy Spirit* descended in bodily form like a dove upon *Him* (Jesus), and a voice came from heaven which said, 'You are *My beloved Son*; in You / (the Father) am well pleased" (Luke 3:22; Matthew 3: 16-17; 17: 2-5; Acts 20: **28**). The baptismal formula affirms the divinity, the distinctness, the equality, and the unity of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit: "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28: 19; 16: 15-17).

The Father, the Son, and the Spirit are distinguished and all present at Jesus baptism (Matthew 3: 16-17). St. Paul's threefold apostolic benediction joins together equally and distinctly the Christ (the Son), God (the Father), and the Holy Spirit (2 Corinthians 13: 14). The Holy Spirit of God the Father declares the Son: "By this you know *the Spirit of God*: Every spirit that confesses that *Jesus Christ* has come in the flesh is of God (the Father), and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world" (1 John 4: 2-3). The Holy Spirit is a divine Person in the Holy Trinity, who proceeds from the Father and is sent by both the Father and the Son, as Christ said: "But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me" (John 15: 26; Colossians 1:13-16; Hebrews 1: 1-4). The unity of the triune God is perfected due to the following:

1. The three divine Persons of the Holy Trinity: the Father, his Word (the Son), and his Holy Spirit are of the same **one** undivided divine essence. They are of the same **one** undivided divine substance and nature.
2. Although there are three divine Persons in the Godhead, there is only one will and one common energy in the Godhead. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit have only one and the same divine will, not three; and only one divine energy, not three. Therefore, there can never be conflict of wills within the Godhead. None of the three divine Persons ever acts separately from the other two. They are one God, not three gods. Christ said: "I and My Father are one" (John 10: 30).
3. There is only **one source** in the Godhead: God the Father. He is the only unoriginated origin in the Godhead. God the Son is begotten by God the Father. God the Holy Spirit proceeds from God the Father.
4. Each of the three divine Persons of the triune God dwells and exists in the other two, without confusion or separation: "Jesus said to him, 'Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known me, Philip? He who has seen me has seen the Father; so how can you say, 'Show us the

Father'? Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own authority; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works" (John 14: 9-10).

5. "God is love" (1 John 4: 8b). Ontologically, God is a being of absolute divine love. Love is the very mode of God's triune being as a unity. The unceasing mutual perfect infinite divine love characterizes the personal divine relations of the three divine Persons of the Holy Trinity. The human desire for love reflects this divine reality.

The Christian profession of faith which begins with God, for God is the First and the Last, the beginning and the end of everything. For example, the catholic Credo begins with God the Father, for the Father is the first divine person of the Most Holy Trinity; our Creed begins with the creation of heaven and earth, for creation is the beginning and the foundation of all God's works. (CCC: 200) I believe in one God. These are the words with which the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed begins.

The confession of God's oneness, which has its roots in the divine revelation of the Old Covenant, is inseparable from the profession of God's existence and is equally fundamental. God is unique; there is only one God: "The Christian faith confesses that God is one in nature, substance and essence.

(CCC 201) To Israel, his chosen, God revealed himself as the only One: "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord; and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might." Through the prophets, God calls Israel and all nations to turn to him, the one and only God: "Turn to me and be saved, all the ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other... . To me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear. 'Only in the Lord, it shall be said of me, are righteousness and strength

The Old Testament testifies that Jesus is God "Before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. I, even I, am the Lord; and beside me there is no saviour" (Isaiah 43:10-11). "Is there a God beside me? yea, there is no God; I know not any" (Isaiah 44:8). "Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me" (Isaiah 46:9).

The New Testament Testifies That Jesus is God "There is none other God but one" (I Corinthians 8:4). "But to us there is but one God, the Father" (I Corinthians 8:6). "But God is one" (Galatians 3:20). "For there is one God" (I Timothy 2:5). "you believe that there is one God; you do well: the devils also believe, and tremble" (James 2:19).

Definition of the doctrine of the Trinity Trinitarianism is the belief that there are three persons in one God. This has been stated in various ways, such as “one God in three Persons” and “three persons in one substance.” It holds that in God are three distinctions of essence, not just of activity.

- **Islamic view on oneness of Allah (God)**

Muslims worship the same God as the Jews and Christians, Allah but they believe, above all else, that Allah, or God, is the sole divine deity, who does not share his divinity with other partners. There are three traditional categories of Tawhid: the Oneness of Lordship, the Oneness of Worship, and the Oneness of Allah’s Names.

Oneness of the godhead is the fundamental principle of all heavenly religions and a specialty of the religion of Islam. Divine prophets called people to belief in oneness of God and monotheism and prohibited them from polytheism and duality. The Holy Prophet of Islam began his mission with monotheism and in the first stage announced: Say ‘there is no god except Allah’.

Christianity, Judaism, and Islam are all considered monotheistic faiths, but for Islam, the principle of monotheism exists to an extreme degree. For Muslims, even the Christian principle of the Holy Trinity is seen as a detraction from the essential “oneness” of God. Islamic belief encourages absolute and strict monotheism. The Arabic term Tawhid is used to describe this belief in the absolute Oneness of God. Tawhid comes from an Arabic word meaning “unification” or “oneness”.

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- **Oneness of Lordship**

Muslims believe that Allah caused all things to exist. Allah is the only one who created and maintains all things. Allah is not in need of help or assistance over creation. While Muslims greatly respect their prophets, including Mohammad and Jesus, they firmly separate them from Allah. On this point, the Quran says: “Who is it that provides you with sustenance out of heaven and earth, or who is it that has full power over your hearing and sight? And who is it that brings forth the living out of that which is dead, and brings forth the dead out of that which is alive? And who is it that governs all that exists?” (Quran 10:31).

### • Oneness of Worship

Because Allah is the sole creator and maintainer of the universe, it is to Allah alone that Muslims direct their worship. Throughout history, people have engaged in prayer, invocation, fasting, supplication, and even animal or human sacrifice for the sake of nature, people, and false deities. Islam teaches that the only being worthy of worship is Allah. Allah alone is worthy of prayers, praise, obedience, and hope. Islam condemns all activities that are intended to worship others God. Whoever is involved in idolatry commits a grave sin of shirk which is unforgivable in Islam.

### • Oneness of Allah's Attributes and Names

The Quran is filled with descriptions of Allah's nature, often through attributes and special names. The Merciful, the All-Seeing, the Magnificent, etc. are all names which describe Allah's nature. Allah is seen as distinct from his creation. As human beings, Muslims believe that one may strive to understand and emulate certain values, but Allah alone has these attributes perfectly, in full, and in their entirety.



#### Application activity 1.2

1. “God is one in Trinity”. Based on the clear and precise biblical text, discuss this Christian affirmation.
2. Discuss the Islamic view of Oneness of God.

### 1.3 Qualities from the Oneness and from other attributes of God

#### Learning activity 1.3



1. Discuss the following Rwandese saying: Ijambo ryiza ni mugenzi w'lmana.
2. Using various resources identify and discuss qualities that humans have and are given by God himself to God.
3. What is the importance of the identified qualities

God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him, male and female he created them. Man occupies a unique place in creation and was given special ability and duties in the world according to creation account. Of all visible creatures only man is able to know and love his creator. He is the only creature on earth that God has willed for its own sake, and he alone is called to share, by knowledge and love, in God's own life. It was for this end that he was created, and this is the fundamental reason for his dignity, he is able to taste the eternal attributes such as goodness, justice, truth, Love, Holiness and perfection (CCC 356).

Being in the image of God the human individual possesses the dignity of a person which other creatures do not possess.. A human being is capable of self-knowledge, of self-possession and of freely giving himself and entering into communion with other persons. And he is called by grace to a covenant with his Creator, to offer him a response of faith and love that no other creature can give in his stead. God created everything for man, but man in turn was created to serve and love God and to offer all creation back to him.

It is man that great and wonderful living creature, more precious in the eyes of God than all other creatures! For him the heavens and the earth, the sea and all the rest of creation exist. God attached so much importance to his salvation that he did not spare his own Son for the sake of man. Nor does he ever cease to work, trying every possible means, until he has raised man up to himself and made him sit at his right hand. "In reality it is only in the mystery of the Word made flesh that the mystery of man truly becomes clear.

St. Paul tells us that the human race takes its origin from two men: Adam and Christ. The first man, Adam, he says, became a living soul, the last Adam a life-giving spirit. The first Adam was made by the last Adam, from whom he also received his soul, to give him life. The second Adam stamped his image on the first Adam when he created him. That is why he took on himself the role and the name of the first Adam, in order that he might not lose what he had made in his own image. The first Adam, the last Adam: the first had a beginning, the last knows no end. The last Adam is indeed the first; as he himself says: I am the first and the last.

#### • Unity of human race

Because of its common origin the human race forms a unity, for "from one ancestor God made all nations to inhabit the whole earth". The human race is in the unity because it originates from one God. The unity of its nature, composed equally in all men and women of different races, colours and nationalities made of a material body and a spiritual soul; in the unity of its immediate end and its mission in the world; in the unity of its dwelling, the earth, whose benefits all

men without discrimination, by right of nature, may use to sustain and develop life; in the unity of its supernatural end: God himself, to whom all ought to tend and to end. «This seems to be the law of human solidarity and charity», without excluding the rich variety of persons, cultures and peoples, assures us that all men are truly brothers and sisters.

The human person, created in the image of God, is a being at once corporeal and spiritual. The biblical account expresses this reality in symbolic language when it affirms that “then the Lord God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being. Man or human race is therefore entirely willed by God”.

In Sacred Scripture the term “soul” often refers to human life or the entire human person. But “soul” also refers to the innermost aspect of man, that which is of greatest value in him, that by which he is most especially in God’s image: “soul” signifies the spiritual principle in man.

The human body shares in the dignity of “the image of God”: it is a human body precisely because it is animated by a spiritual soul, and it is the whole human person that is intended to become, in the body of Christ, a temple of the Spirit.

Man, though made of body and soul, is a unity. Through his very bodily condition he sums up in himself the elements of the material world. Through him they are thus brought to their highest perfection and can raise their voice in praise freely given to the Creator. For this reason man may not despise his bodily life. Rather he is obliged to regard his body as good and to hold it in honor since God has created it and will raise it up on the last day.

The unity of soul and body is so profound that one has to consider the soul to be the “form” of the body i.e., it is because of its spiritual soul that the body made of matter becomes a living, human body; spirit and matter, in man, are not two natures united, but rather their union forms a single nature.

### **Equality, interdependance between Women and Men**

Man and woman have been created, which is to say, willed by God: on the one hand, in perfect equality as human persons; on the other, in their respective beings as man and woman. “Being man” or “being woman” is a reality which is good and willed by God: man and woman possess an inalienable dignity which comes to them immediately from God their Creator. Man and woman are both with one and the same dignity “in the image of God”. In their “being-man” and “being-woman”, they reflect the Creator’s wisdom and goodness.

In no way is God in man's image. He is neither man nor woman. God is pure spirit in which there is no place for the difference between the sexes. But the respective "perfections" of man and woman reflect something of the infinite perfection of God: those of a mother and those of a father and husband.

God created man and woman together for complementarity and unity. The Word of God gives us to understand this through various features of the sacred text. "It is not good that the man should be alone. I will make him a helper fit for him". The woman God «fashions» from the man's rib and brings to him elicits on the man's part a cry of wonder, an exclamation of love and communion: «This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh». All these biblical text show that Men and women share the same humanity.

Man and woman were made "for each other" not that God left them half-made and incomplete: he created them to be a communion of persons, in which each can be "helpmate" to the other, for they are equal as persons ("bone of my bones. . .") and complementary as masculine and feminine. In marriage God unites them in such a way that, by forming "one flesh", they can transmit human life: «Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth.» By transmitting human life to their descendants, man and woman as spouses and parents cooperate in a unique way in the Creator's work.

In God's plan man and woman have the vocation of «subduing» the earth as stewards of God. This sovereignty is not to be an arbitrary and destructive domination. God calls man and woman, made in the image of the Creator «who loves everything that exists», to share in his providence toward other creatures; hence their responsibility for the world God has entrusted to them.

The "mastery" over the world that God offered man from the beginning was realized above all within man himself: mastery of self. The sign of man's familiarity with God is that God places him in the garden. There he lives "to till it and keep it". Work is not yet a burden, but rather the collaboration of man and woman with God in perfecting the visible creation.

### Goodness / Kindness, Love and Compassion

God is holy; love, just, good, merciful, gracious, faithful, truthful, patient, and wise. When we talk about being "conformed to the image of Christ," this is the list we are describing. These things show us how to reflect who God is as Christ did. The more gracious I become, for example, the more I reflect Christ, who perfectly images God.

The goodness of God is one of the attributes of God, as well as a description of His very essence. God, by nature, is inherently good, as Psalms 34:8 tells us: "Taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the one who takes refuge

in him." He is the foundation of goodness and of everything good that humans have or do towards their fellow men or nature. People can have good traits or do good deeds, but goodness is not in our character. Our goodness comes from God. God is good in perfect sense.

The Goodness of God is evident in all His creations and accomplishments. "God saw all that he had made, and it was very good" (Genesis 1:31). We cannot earn and do not merit His goodness. It is available to us regardless of our station in life, and even though we are not worthy of it (Matthew 5:45). "He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous." "The Lord is good to all; he has compassion on all he has made" (Psalm 145:9).

Humans personalize goodness of God. It is not surprising to here people saying "God is so good to 'N' or to me; this implies that He is good to each of us personally, in ways that meet our individual needs. His goodness provides us with benefits such as:

- It gives us the perfect model of goodness. By knowing God and learning about His goodness, we recognize true goodness and strive to do good things. "You are good, and what you do is good; teach me your decrees" Psalms 119:68. We can look to God as the perfect role model to teach us about goodness and how to do good things.
- It assures us that God's purpose for us is good. Just as parents want good for their children, our Heavenly Father wants only good for us. James 1:17 says, "Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows." Humans should remember, however, that good things may not always show up as happy experiences. Sometimes good can come disguised as adversity or hardship, but God can use difficulties for good, as we learn in Romans 8:28 "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose."
- It offers us security and encouragement. We can depend on the unchanging goodness of God. Psalm 51:2 says, "The goodness of God endures continually". God will always be good. His character does not change. He will continue to be the creator of all things good and we can be confident He will provide good things for us according to His perfect plan.
- It draws us to God. The purpose of God's goodness is to draw us to Him. For Christians, this was manifested in the highest degree when God sacrificed His Son, Jesus, for our salvation n. Because of His goodness we have been given opportunities to hear His word and to claim eternal life by accepting Jesus Christ as our Savior.

The Goodness of God is the core attributes of our humanity of our Christian faith. It is because of His desire for our good that He provided salvation through His son. Everything God does is for our good. We can see proof of the goodness of God all around us in the life-sustaining provisions He supplies from crops that provide our food, to the very air we breathe. We can have goodness in us, and even desire to do good, but true goodness comes from the One who is perfectly good and wants good things for all people. Our goal should be to show the goodness of God to others every day.

### **Love**

The love of God for his creatures is perfect and pure human of love is a reflection of God's love. Though to value love that two or more people reflect, family members, or the relatives however, the perfect love is for God who did not even spare his only Son for the sake of sins. This is the true and highest value of love.

### **Generosity**

Humans are perfect recipients of the good and perfect gifts of God, goodness toward others means generosity. It means we recognize that God gives us good things not so that they might terminate on us, but so that we might steward them on behalf of others. God gives good things to us generously, risking no loss in doing so. We, too, should give good things to others generously. We should be generous with our possessions, our talents, and our time on behalf of others because we see these good gifts as a means to bring glory to their Giver instead of to us.

### **Justice**

God is just all the time. When humans cease self justifying motives and pursuing their own interest, begin to have eyes for the needs of our neighbors. They turn their attention toward securing justice for the weak and the oppressed. God refers to himself as a "father of the fatherless and protector of widows" (Psalms 68: 4-5). As his children, we ought to carry this family identity into the spheres of influence he gives us. Those of us who have any form of advantage must seek to use it to benefit our neighbors.

### **Mercy and forgiveness**

God is perfect, slow to chide and swift to bless, he cleanses sins and become as white as snow. He shows rain to good and bad people. In the same sense humans sacrifice their bitterness and anger for the sake of extending forgiveness, love. The vast mercy of God has fallen from our view. We must obey the will of God for our lives to "be merciful, even as your Father is merciful" (Luke 6:36)

## **Truth and wisdom**

God is truthful all the time. Truth and wisdom was communicated to humanity, created in God's likeness and image. God communicated to us his Truth. We have a sense of truth though we can not know the reality and the future in the perfect sense. Truth and wisdom allow to be in right relationship with God and others. God's truth is communal, given not merely so that the individual can live in right relationship to God, but so that the individual can live in right relationship with others. All humans have the idea of what is true and good. Living the truth will inevitably prevent humans from falsehood, prejudices and will inevitable enhance justice. Wisdom given to humans helps them to discern and judge what is good and what is bad, right and wrong.

God made us in His image (Genesis 1:27), which means He imprinted upon us several of His attributes. This sets us apart from the beasts of the field and the birds of the air (Genesis 1:28).

Yet, God did not endow humans with all of His characteristics, hence why man stands at a lower rank than even the angels (Hebrews 2:7). For instance, both God and humans have an innate sense of justice (Proverbs 21:15) Although we all share in this sense of wrong and right, due to our sin nature, we can have this to a lesser extent or a polluted version thereof. In addition to a sense of justice, God and humankind have the ability to love. For this reason, Jesus told us the two greatest commands: love God and love our neighbor (Matthew 22:37-39). Of course, we cannot exercise the amount of love God has for us. The Greek even has a word for it: *agape*, unconditional, selfless love. Yet humans love others in a deep friendship sense.

## **Knowledge**

God gifted us with our ability to think and know about Him. Without such knowledge, we cannot come to know about God's goodness and His saving work.

## **Reason:**

God has given us the skills to reason and think logically, he created us with reasons and conscience to think critically on matters and then take responsible decisions. These decisions are taken with full will and consent. Humans should see each other as brother and sister since the same God created them without any discrimination. This implies the unity of human race. The basis for human rights, human freedom and human dignity place above every creature in the world. This helps humans to have a better place in the world and keep good relationship between us and God and hope being as perfect as Him despite human sinful nature.



### Application activity 1.3

1. Discuss how interdependence and complementarity between men and women are willed by God?
2. Compare and contrast the following human qualities in relation to God's attributes or Character: Goodness, justice, truths, kindness, wisdom, peace, and Love

## 1.4 End Unit Assessment



### End of unit assessment

1. God is Omnipresent, Omniscient and Omnipotent. Discuss this affirmation.
2. Identify and discuss exhaustively qualities that humans derived from the attributes of God and their implication in the relationship of all humans in the world?
3. God is one in three persons. Discuss.

# UNIT 2

## RELIGIOUS BELIEFS AND UNITY IN DIVERSITY

### Key Unit Competence:

Evaluate the unity and peaceful co-existence among religious beliefs and propose appropriate solutions.



### Introductory activity

Read attentively the passage below and then answer to the questions:

In Rwanda, there are several religious denominations. Rwandans, though having the same culture, they have different religious beliefs (e.g. Catholic, Islam, Presbyterian, Pentecostal (ADEPR), Anglicans (EAR), Restoration Church, Orthodox, Seventh-day Adventists, and the traditional belief).

1. Why do you think there are several denominations and religions not just one as the creator is one?
2. Write briefly, what you know about each religious belief mentioned above. Which distinguishes it from others (distinctive doctrine).
3. Based on biblical references: John 4:6-15; Luke 9:49-50 and Galatians 3:26-29, what are the Christian values to be lived beyond our differences?

## 2.1 Different religious beliefs, teachings and religious practices

### Learning activity 2.1



1. Using various resources, discuss the fundamental religious teachings of the religious beliefs you know.
2. Establish similarities and differences of these religious beliefs.



*Believers are encouraged to manifest unity as they all originate from the same God*

We find many religions in the world: Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism and traditional beliefs. In one religion, we find many beliefs or confessions. In Christianity, we find for example catholics, orthodox, and protestants and different branches.

#### 2.1.1 Christian Beliefs

Christians believe in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ who died because of people's sins. All Christian denominations believe that Christ is the Word of God incarnated. They confess He came to save them through his Death and resurrection. He rose from the dead and appeared to the apostles who became the witnesses of what they saw (Acts of Apostles 2:32). The Christian faith came from the apostles' who are followed Jesus Christ. The word of God

about Christ was written in the Holy Scriptures. Thus, christians also believe in the written Scriptures to nourish their faith.

By His death, Jesus wanted to destroy the wall of hatred and conflict that was between the kingdoms, Judea and Samaria (John 4:6-15). He worked for the unity of the twelve families of Jacob. Love for one another was an important concern.

Like Jews Christians have no fundamental reason to live in disunity with one another. After all the one, they believe in is One! Salvation is universal for all who believe and confess the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

We note that the name Christians was used at Antioch and it means the Disciples of Christ, the ones who believe and imitate Christ (Acts of Apostles 11:25-26).

Today's apostles are the gospel ministers who serve God in different churches. Since the Pentecost event the Church is guided by the Holy Spirit as the Motor and Soul of it who guides the operations of the church to be in consent with the written Word of God.

The following are major groups of Christianity:

- **Catholicism (Roman and Orthodox Church)**

The Catholicism is the large group of Christianity in the world and it is founded in the common creed expressed in the following articles:

**Article 1: I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth.** This affirms that God exists, that he is a Triune God known as the Holy Trinity and that he created the known universe. God the father loves the Son vice-versa and they communicate in the Holy Spirit. There are then the relationships of Fatherhood, Filiation and of Love.

**Article 2: And in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.** This attests that Jesus is the Son of God and that He's most certainly divine. So the use of Lord with Jesus is meant to profess His divinity. The name Jesus comes from the Hebrew Joshua, meaning "God saves." Catholics believe that Jesus is the Saviour.

**Article 3: Who was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary.** This affirms the human nature of Christ, meaning He had a real, true human mother, and also affirms His divine nature, meaning He had no human father but by the power of the Holy Spirit was conceived in the womb of the Virgin Mary.

**Article 4: He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried.** The human nature of Christ could feel pain and die, and he died on Good Friday. The mention of Pontius Pilate (the Roman governor of Judea, appointed by Caesar) by name means to place the Crucifixion within human history.

**Article 5: He descended into hell. The third day he arose again from the dead.** The hell Jesus descended into wasn't the hell of the hopeless, where Jews and some Christians believe the devil and his demons reside. Jesus possessed a glorified and risen body.

**Article 6: He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.** The Ascension reminds the faithful that after the human and divine natures of Christ were united in the incarnation, they could never be separated. Sitting at the right hand of the Father means to be in glory with the Father

**Article 7: He will come again to judge the living and the dead.** This article affirms the Second Coming of Christ at the end of the world to be its judge. After the judgment there will be eternal life or eternal suffering

**Article 8: I believe in the Holy Spirit,** this part reminds the believer that God exists in three persons the Holy Trinity God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. The Council of Constantinople 381 After Christian Era (ACE) confirmed that the Holy Spirit is consubstantial to the Father and to the Son.

**Article 9: The holy Catholic Church, the Communion of Saints,** the Church is holy in the intension of the Founder who is holy. It is holy without consider one member. It is holy because Jesus always uses the Holy Spirit to sanctify it in the Sacraments

**Article 10: I believe in one Baptism that removes sins,** Christ came to save the world from sin. Belief in the forgiveness of sins is essential to Christianity. Even many forms of Baptism, baptism is one and it removes the original sin and other sins and Christians became new creatures.

**Article 11: The resurrection of the body,** the Resurrection of Jesus is the proof that after death there is other life. The resurrection of bodies will occur in order that the judgment takes place

**Article 12: And I believe in the life everlasting.** As He rose, so shall all human beings. Death is the only way to cross from this life into the next. Catholics believe and hope the happiness, the heavenly life after judgment. This life is prepared here on earth and the condition is the Faith and works of love (James 2:14-26)

The Catholicism is made of two major groups: Roman catholic Church (recognize the authority of the Pope as the universal Church leader) as well as the Orthodox Church (they rejected the authority of the Pope and are it is led by a Patriarch). There are also some slight differences in the liturgical celebration but the doctrine remains the same.

### • Protestantism

Protestantism originated in the time of reformation in 1517 (ACE) with Martin Luther tried a reform in the church. He found out that the church had started diverting the mission left by Jesus Christ. He published and defended what he saw was a problem in the Catholic Church. Some of them are the following: power of indulgences, the sacraments administrated in the church. Martin Luther declared then the schism and the foundation of Protestant Church (reformed church) in 1517.

The protestant reform or the schism in general affected the society on two sides. One side the unity of people was broken. Sometimes the loss of human lives and infrastructures occurred. The hatred, poverty and conflict take places. Other side, it became a good opportunity for the Church to evaluate itself. The Council of Trent then was held to reform the Roman Catholic Church about theology, discipline, and Sacraments.

### Major Branches of Protestantism in Rwanda

1. **Calvinist Church:** it came from teachings and ideas of John Calvin. They resulted in what we know as the Presbyterians today. Presbyterians are named for their view on church leadership-the Greek word for elder is presbyteros.
2. **Methodist Church:** founded in the USA in 1939 by a group of Episcopal churches from North and South America. The Methodists got their name because their founder, John Wesley, was famous for coming up with "methods" for spiritual growth.
3. **Baptist Church:** It was founded by individuals that support only the baptism of adult people and not the baptism of infants. Baptists got their name because they have always emphasized the importance of baptism. This baptism must be performed in form of complete immersion like the baptism administrated by John the Baptist. The Baptist church was founded in Amsterdam in 1609 but their first congregation in North America dated in 1938 by William Roger.
4. **Pentecostal churches:** it is the church animated by the Holy Spirit. It is the church that looked back to the Pentecost event (Acts of Apostles 2:1-13) and to take source. The Holy Spirit inspires it and allows the members to prophesy.

- 5. Anglican Church:** the term Anglican means Church of England. It resulted from the misunderstanding between the Pope Clement VII and the king of England Henri VIII. The king wanted to remarry Anne Boleyn and to divorce Catharina of Aragon. The Pope refused to annul the first marriage; the king declared then the Church of England to bless his second marriage.
- 6. The Seventh-day Adventist Church:** Officially, the Seventh-day Adventist Church was founded in 1863 from mille rite movements, a group that had studied the prophecy of Daniel 8:14 and thought Jesus was going to come for the second time in 1844. The Seventh day Adventist Church uphold the Ten Commandments as found in Exodus 20:1-17, which include the seventh-day Sabbath as a day of rest. For Adventists, the Sabbath is not only for Jews only but as a commandment of God it also concerns all people who must keep it holy if they are to be faithful to God (Matthew. 5:17; John 14:15, Revelation 12:17)

### **2.1.2 Non-Christian World Religions:**

The theistic religions have different ways and means of believing. Some of them believe God's salvation through mediator Jesus Christian (Christian religions) while others believe the direct God's salvation without intermediary (non-Christian religion). Among non-christians there are also people who do not believe in God at all. These are called non-theistic religions.

- **Judaism**

It is a theistic religion of Jews, which means they believe in the existence of supreme God who is transcendent. Together with Christianity and Islam Judaism considers Abraham as their ancestor. The Jewish faith is based on the Torah, the first five books of Moses.

The Jewish bible does not contain the New Testament because they do not accept Jesus Christ as the promised Messiah. It contains three parts Torah/Law (five books of Moses), Nebiim (Prophets) ant Ketubim (other writings). In Judaism belief, the promised Messiah is still to come.

- **Islam**

It is also a theistic religion. Islam means submission under Allah's laws. Muhammad, the prophet of Allah started receiving the content of the Qur'an from 610 up to 632. Officially, Islam was founded in 622. Muhammad was born at Mecca probably in 570. He went in Medina by exile. Fundamental beliefs for Islam are the following:

- **The oneness and unity of God (tawhid):** the creator, sustainer, ruler, and judge of the universe.
- **Prophets:** Muhammad and the prophets of the Hebrew Bible, including Abraham and Moses, and of the New Testament, Jesus and John the Baptist.
- **Scriptures:** God's revelation was received in the Torah, the Psalms, the Gospels and the Qur'an. The latter (in 114 chapters called surahs) is approximately four-fifths the size of New Testament.
- **Angels:** as part of God's creation. They act as God's agents and serve Him by protecting humans, relaying His messages, or performing different functions.
- **Day of Judgment:** it includes the destruction of the world and all creatures, resurrection of the body, and judgment, reward (heaven), and punishment (hell) for all creatures.
- **Divine predestination:** Muslims believe that Allah knows everything event what will happen, and is responsible for everything.

These core beliefs are completed by five required observances, which the Qur'an prescribes all practicing Muslims accept and follow. These observances, called "The Five Pillars of Islam", include to believe, to pray, to give to charity, to fast and to go on pilgrimage.

1. Shahadah (creed): there is no God but Allah, Muhammad is his Prophet
2. Salah (prayer): prayer five times a day
3. Zakah (almsgiving): an annual sum for the care of the poor
4. Sawm (fasting): observation of Ramadan the month of fasting
5. Hajj (pilgrimage): pilgrimage to Mecca once in a lifetime

The following table shows some aspects of among Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

Topic	Christianity	Islam	Judaism
<b>Origin of the Name</b>	From the Greek: <b>christos</b> , meaning ' <b>Anointed</b> ' - referring to Jesus Christ who was waited as the Messiah for humanity.	Derived from an Arabic word for 'submission'. Also related to the Arabic word salaam, ' <b>peace</b> '.	From the Hebrew: <b>Yehudim</b> , 'Judah'.
<b>Founder</b>	Jesus Christ (4 BCE - 30 ACE)	Mohammed (570 - 632 ACE)	Abraham (First Patriarch, born 1800 BCE)
<b>Divisions</b>	<p>Three main groups:</p> <p><b>Orthodox:</b> Originated from Catholicism in the first schism. it is also name oriental churches. The leader is called patriarch</p> <p><b>Protestant:</b> Originates from the reformation time and it is made of several religious groups and denominations</p> <p><b>Roman Catholic:</b> this is the church headed by the Pope as its leader in the world.</p>	<p>Two main groups: Sunni and Shia (The division occurred due to a dispute as to the legitimate successor of the prophet Mohammed).</p>	<p>Several divisions, including Hasidic, Conservative and Reform Judaism. Ethnic groupings include Ashkenazi (The majority) and Sephardi Jews.</p>

<b>Nature of God</b>	One God, who exists in three distinct persons (The Trinity): Father, Son and Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19).	One God (Arabic:Allah), who is not a trinity. The Islamic view of God is called strict Monotheism (Qur'an 112:1).	One God (known in English as 'Yahweh' or 'Jehovah') . "Hear Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is one." (Deuteronomy 6:4).
<b>Holy Book(s)</b>	The Bible (from the Greek: Biblos, 'books'), given by God to man. The Bible writers were inspired by God in their writings. Thus Christians refer to the Bible as the Word of God (2 Timothy 3:16).	The Quran or Koran (Arabic: 'recitation'), revealed to the prophet Mohammed over a period of about 20 years. The Quran is the final revelation given by Allah to mankind.	The Hebrew Tanakh, similar to the Christian Old Testament, comprised of the Torah (Hebrew: 'Law'), Nevi'im ('Prophets') and Ketuvim ('Writings').
<b>Jesus Christ</b>	The second person of the Trinity and born of the Virgin Mary. "true God from true God". Jesus mission ws to reconcile Man to God, through his death as a sacrifice for the sins of all mankind.	Isa (Jesus) was a prophet, sent by Allah and born of the Virgin Mary, but not divine (Qur'an 5:17). Jesus mission was to proclaim the Injil, or gospel. This gospel has been corrupted over time by human additions and alterations.	An ordinary Jew, not the Messiah nor a divine person, his mission is of no relevance.

<b>The Death of Jesus Christ,</b>	"For our sake he was crucified, he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again, he ascended into heaven" (Nicene Creed)	Jesus was not crucified (Qur'an 4:157), but was raised to Heaven by Allah (4:158).	Jesus was crucified for his claim to be divine.
<b>Holy Spirit</b>	The third person of the Trinity, truly divine: "with the Father and the Son he is worshipped and glorified." (Nicene Creed)	Identical with the Angel Gabriel, who appeared to the Prophet Mohammed giving him the Quranic text.	Not a distinct person, but a divine power which for example, was given to the Prophets.
<b>Other Traditions considered to be important</b>	The writings of the early church fathers and ecumenical councils, including the Creeds.	The Hadith, a collection of traditions/sayings of the Prophet Mohammed. The Hadith functions as a supplement to the Qur'an, giving guidance to Muslims for daily living.	The Talmud, an oral tradition explaining and interpreting the Tanakh. It includes the Mishnah : a code of Jewish law.
<b>Examples of Rituals</b>	The Sacraments, including Baptism and Holy Communion (Eucharist). In Orthodoxy and Roman Catholicism, five more are added, viz: Confirmation (Chrismation), Marriage, Penance, Holy Orders and Anointing of the sick. Common and structured prayers are important part of the faith.	Five important rituals (known as the pillars of Islam): <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Shahadah: A profession of faith.</li> <li>2. Salat: Prayer five times daily.</li> <li>3. Zakat- alms giving.</li> <li>4. Sawm/ramadan: Fasting during the Holy month of Ramadan.</li> <li>5. Hajj: Pilgrimage to the Holy city of Mecca.</li> </ol>	Rituals include the Circumcision of newly born Jewish males, Barmitzvah: a ceremony marking the 'coming of age' of Jewish Boys and observation of the Sabbath (Shabat). As in the other faiths, prayer is important. The Jewish prayer book is called the siddur.

<b>Sin</b>	We inherit a sinful nature through our common ancestor Adam, who rebelled against God. Jesus Christ atoned for our sins through his death on the Cross (Romans 5:12-17).	There is no concept of original sin, nor vicarious atonement. All Humans are born sinless, but human weakness leads to sin.	Judaism rejects the doctrine of original sin. Atonement for sins committed is made through seeking forgiveness from God in prayer and repentance. In addition, the day of atonement (Yom Kippur) is set aside specially for this purpose.
<b>Salvation</b>	By grace through faith in Jesus Christ (Ephesians 2:8-9).	Achieved through good works, thus personal righteousness must outweigh personal sin (Qur'an 23:101-103).	Through good works, prayers and the grace of God.

<b>Hell</b>	A place of everlasting punishment for the unrighteous (Matthew 25:46). There is no crossover between Heaven and Hell.	A place of torment and fire (Qur'an 25:65, 104:6-7). In Islam, Hell is known as Jahannam. Jahannam has several levels and a person may not necessarily spend eternity there.	Traditionally, there is the concept of Gehinnom or Gehenna : those who die in sin may suffer temporary punishment, but certain sins merit eternal punishment. However, Judaism's ideas of the afterlife have varied widely among different groups and in different time periods. For the most part, Judaism does not emphasize the afterlife.
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### • Buddhism

Buddhism is non-Christian religion. It is based on teachings, traditions and beliefs of Gautama Buddha. The name Buddha means knowledgeable one. He said education is a guide, knowledge is a key. For Buddhists the purpose of life is to end the suffering. Life is determined by Karma: law of action or law of cause and effects: suffering or good life are the effects of bad or good action.

Buddha fixed teachings called Dharma. They are cosmic laws and order: right way of living including duties, rights, laws, conducts, virtues. The duties we find in Dharma are self-control, humility, serving others, outcast. The Buddhists believe also the reincarnation of the soul.

### • Hinduism

Hinduism is no-theistic religion. It originally come from India. They believe in a supreme and absolute spirit called Brahman that is the world Soul. It is considered as god creator. Other gods are Vishnu, god preserver, protector and Shiva, god destroyer. They also have thousands of other gods in Hinduism beliefs.

The purpose of life in Hinduism is to join soul Brahman. The bad behaviour for Hinduism means lower state of life, to be considered as an animal and or

plant. The Tenets are beliefs and traditions of Hinduism. Among them there are Dharma: ethics and duties, Samsara: Rebirth by cycle of death and rebirth, Karma: right action, Moksha: liberation from cycle of Samaras that means to be free from suffering in cycle of death and rebirth.

The old main document of Hinduism is Vedas. Apart from three main gods of Hinduism there are thousands of other gods and Hindus worship spirits, trees, animals, planets. Nirvana is the Highest state one attains. Stage of complete freedom: good behaviours, intellectual ability, devotion thought, contemplation, meditation, devotion to a favourite god. Suffering for Hinduisms is not punishment but the result of action. The actual texts they use are called Shastra.

### **2.1.3 Traditional Beliefs**

The members of traditional beliefs know the real God. They believe also the spirits and they use their power. Their faith is based on ancestor's intercession.

The ancestors are intermediary between God and living people. Example in Rwanda: The cult of appeasing/pacifying the living dead is called Guterekera. To consult the specialist of divination or prediction in order to know the cause of misfortune is called Kuraguza. The cult of Lyangombe expressed by the rite of kubandwa as a practice in which its adherents hope to live earthly happiness.

The cult of ancestors is different from the cult of the Saints. The people practice the cult of ancestors because they are afraid of then while the cult of the saints is characterised by communion. The traditional beliefs have negative effects like human sacrifice, wasting of resources, the immoral acts, etc. As positive effects we can say that formerly for example the members of the cult of Lyangombe lived with shared peace, unity, and honesty in the pact of love.

To become a full member of Lyangombe required to attend the rite three times. The first rite was to enter in the family of imandwa (Kwatura). The second rite to emphasize the first (Gusubiza ku ntebe). The third was that the new member become mature (Gutonora).



### Application activity 2.1

1. Discuss the fundamental religious teachings of the following religious beliefs
  - Christianity
  - Traditional beliefs
  - Buddhism
2. What do you think are the similarities between Christianity, Islam and Judaism?

## 2.2 Significance of Religious Unity in Diversity

### Learning activity 2.2



1. Christianity is based on the person and mission of Jesus. Discuss.
2. What can be the negative and positive impact of pluralism in Christianity?

Unity in diversity is a concept which signifies unity among individuals who have certain differences among them. These differences can be on the basis of culture, language, ideology, religion, sect, class, ethnicity. Concerning religious beliefs, though created by one God, people have various approaches and beliefs about him. The most important element is to see the diversity as strength not as a weakness and then strive for unity of humanity.



### **• Teamwork and cooperation**

First of all, following Religious unity in diversity implies an interaction between many types of individuals of various religious beliefs on various scales. Though these individuals may have slight doctrinal differences among them, they have common purpose which is helping people to live a meaningful life as willed by the creator. In addition to this, all of them belong to the same family of humanity and were created by the One God.

Working together and cooperate is the most needed value in various religious beliefs. This implies avoid and fighting against doctrinal extremism, terrorism in the name of religions, solving conflict, and promoting sustainable peace, tolerance for all as well as striving for common good for all humanity regardless, religion, ethnic groups, races, gender sex, nationality. The team work can be easily manifested even in the small instances for example in workplaces, schools, public places, churches.

Furthermore, this interaction would build up a tolerance in people. Hence, people would respect the opinion of others. The true and genuine religious unity certainly enhances the quality of teamwork and wellbeing for all. This is because of the development of trust and bonding among people increases and people interact, make dialogue and work together in efficient way.

### **• Promotion peace**

In the course of time, Religious beliefs have caused tension among the adherent leading to conflict, terrorism and war. The examples are wars that were led in the mane of defending a given set of beliefs to non adherent to this religion. Religious unity is a tremendous tool for sustainable peace in the world since the unity allows people of various religious beliefs, cultures and societies to live together peacefully and harmoniously with conscience of respect of other people's beliefs, understanding one another and respect of human dignity above all things irrespective of differences.

### **• Respect of human dignity**

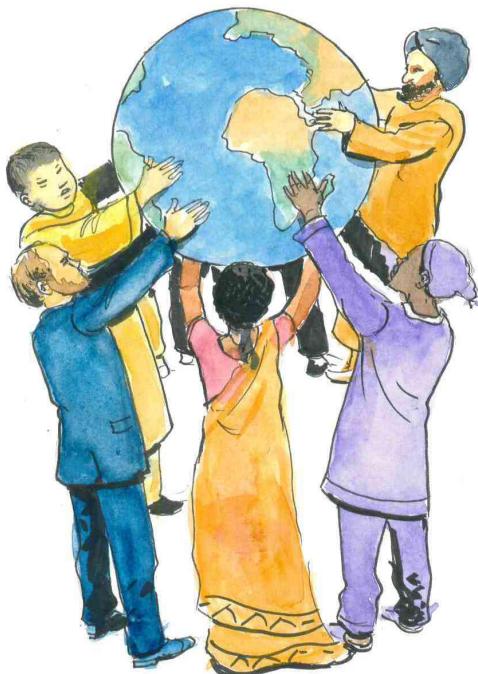
Respect for human dignity is the driving force for morality and wellbeing in the society. Before people see themselves in the mirrors of religion, race, ethnic groups they have an obligation to understand that they belong to the bigger family of humanity. This is the basis for fighting against any feeling or actions of racism, discrimination, conflict and oppression. Jesus himself prayed for this unity of believers in the following world:

"I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you,

that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me" (John 17:20-23).

For the world to change and believe in good news, the adherent must be eager to maintain unity of the spirit in the bonds of peace.

- **Interdependence and complementarily**



*We are brothers and sisters let us be united in caring for the world*

All Religious leaders, Politicians, thinkers, scientist strive to create a more stable, just and peaceful society. Humans vested by various capacities and talents are interdependent one another. Religious believers also are interdependence not only in matters of their theological teachings but also finding solutions to challenges of live of everyday. For example fighting against global warmth is not a responsibility of one nation or one Religious belief. This affects the whole humanity. Religious believers need collaborative effort to fight against this collective challenge. Unity of all Religions must be a commitment for all to journey together is accomplishing the mission assigned by the creator:

## Subduing the Earth.

Christians created a social movement whose aim is to strengthen unity of all believers. This movement is called Ecumenism. The movement is based on four aspects: collective challenges, common purpose, social solidarity and sustainable interaction. The following part shows the commitment towards human solidarity and unity by this movement:

"We long for the visible openness of Christ affirming the gift for all, young and old, Women and Men, lay and ordained. We expect healing of human community, the wholeness of God's entire creation. We trust in liberating the powers of forgiveness, transforming enmity into friendship and breaking the spiral of violence. We open ourselves for a culture of dialogue and solidarity sharing life with strangers and seeking to encounter with those of other faiths" (Ecumenical Review 1998: 267).

The unity of all humanity is a solution to many global challenges that are affecting the world in general. The differences and diversity should be seen as strength not as a weakness. Religious diversity is richness for humanity. Respect for human dignity, solidarity, interdependence, teamwork and complementarity should be enhanced and strengthened so that all religious believers strive for common good for all humanity.



### Application activity 2.2

1. In your own words, explain the meaning of unity in diversity and its necessity in the world, particularly in Rwanda?
2. Discuss the significance of religious unity in diversity in the world.

## 2.3 End Unit Assessment



### End of unit assessment

1. Discuss fundamental teaching of the following Religious Beliefs:
  - Protestantism
  - Judaism
  - Islam
  - Traditional beliefs
2. Compare and contrast the teaching of Judaism, Christianity and Islam in matters of beliefs and practices.
3. Assess the importance of religious unity in the world, particularly in Rwanda.

# UNIT 3

## BELIEVER'S COMMITMENT TO SOCIETY

### Key Unit Competence:

Explain the link between religious conviction and responsibility in life and in the society.



### Introductory activity

Mugisha is a Rwandan business person. He is also a religious man because he is a member of a church near his home. He attends church services, visits sick people, and gives offerings and tithes. On the other hand, he has an account in one of the commercial banks located in the centre in which he operates that he uses for payment of transactions in his various business activities. He pays taxes to the government, attends the meetings organized by local authorities, and never misses to participate in the community works at the end of every month. Mugisha has a good relation with his neighbours. He attends parties when invited and gives his contribution. His one car is used to take sick people to the hospital whenever needed.

1. Based on the above description of Mugisha, what are the values that Mugisha has?
2. Do you think that Mugisha's commitment to his church and society is very important and relevant to his life? Justify your answer.

### 3.1 Role of the believer in society

#### Learning activity 3 .1



Using different resources: internet, English dictionary , religious books, and other resources, describe the role of a believer in society.



*Arms giving and caring for the poor is a sign of practicing one's faith*

The Bible, Word of God, encourages believers to live godly before men so that they could see God revealed in their lives (1 Peter 2:12). In verse 17 of 1 Peter 2, we are given a brief description of what a christian's role in society is to be. The Apostle Peter nicely mentions four roles that show how believers are to relate to those around them. "Honour all men. Love brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king" (1 Peter 2:17).

The main thought of this chapter is to live in submission to the authorities around us. Considering the situation of our country, believers should not think only in terms of paying taxes as if it were sufficient. Believers should invest their money, time, knowledge and life, as well as anything else they may treasure, in the interest of their country. A believer must know that his/her country and the people around him or her are God's gift to him/her and to his/her posterity. The believer is part of society and as such he/she should cooperate with government as well as other organizations such as rural and urban associations, in working

for the well-being of the Rwandan people. Everything possible should be done by the believers in contributing to the development of agriculture so that hunger, one of the most enemies of developing countries, should be done away with.

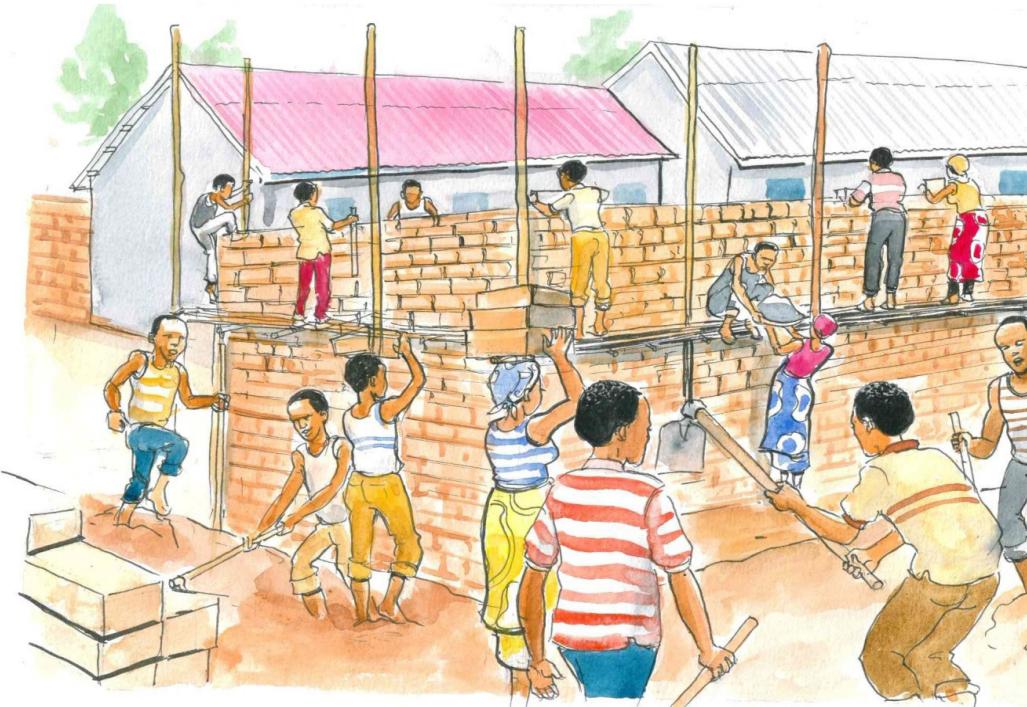
Beyond obeying laws and rules, believers should strive to live with respect and honour towards others around them.

God created people because He wants to have a relationship with them. The Bible is written so that we can know God. Yet, when we do not respect and honour others because of the creator who made them in His image, then we are not showing respect to God.

This does not mean we need to accept the sins of others. God does not tolerate sin. He will punish it. Yet God calls us to love those around us. Love them enough that we are willing to share with them the joy of knowing God's Son, Jesus Christ, as our Redeemer.

It is a part of religious people's duty to act in a moral way. This involves helping others around them.

Believers can support people who are going through difficulties, whatever background they may come from.



*Believers participate in works of charity in society*

Christianity began by preaching and practicing the 'gospel of love and charity' which included almsgiving and care for widows, orphans, slaves, travellers, the sick, the imprisoned and the poor.

Driven by the love of Jesus believers went out and expressed their love for the neighbour. The early disciples showed true mercy and compassion. Peter, who had no silver or gold on his person, gave a crippled beggar what he did have: the gift of health (Acts of Apostles 3:6). Tabitha (Dorcas) is cited as an early disciple 'full of good works and acts of charity' (Acts of Apostles 9:36).

Jesus taught the importance of helping others who are less fortunate:

"For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me (Matthew 25:35-36).

### **Relationship between a believer and his or her fellow Christians**

Jesus said in John 13:35, "By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you love one to another."

If we are to live according to 1 Peter 2:17 then we must live with love and in harmony with God's children. There is nothing wrong with having your own group of friend with whom you would rather spend time; you should be in love with everyone in the church. Begin with the people in your congregation. Learn to love them for who they are in Christ. Extend that out to other Christians who may have some differences from yours. For example those who may not dress like you do or listen to the same music because our tastes and preferences are different.

This does not mean you blindly accept everything that comes along and claims the name of Christ. We should be wise in what we accept (1 Thessalonians 5:21; 1 John 4:1-5). But we also should not push genuine christians away just because they part their hair differently. Separation is necessary due to doctrinal differences, not because of petty preferences.

However, believers must understand they have a unique role to play in the world as citizens and representatives of God's unique kingdom. If they operate according to the principles of this world, if they mistakenly believe that God's kingdom is established in opposition to worldly kingdoms, then they lose that uniqueness.

### **Believers as Salt and Light of the World (Matthew 5:13-16)**

Jesus explained the unique role of believers in society by calling them the salt and light of the world. "You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men. You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a

bowl. Instead, they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven" (Matthew 5:13-16).

Believers must be first to raise moral objections when the powerful oppress the weak, first to expose injustice and corruption, and first to seek redress for the oppressed and protection for the vulnerable. Of course, believers must be the salt and the light not just in what they say, but also in their life example. To effectively illuminate God's standard of righteousness and justice; they need actions that correspond with their words. Believers can be proud of their heritage in both advocacy and action. For example, believers not only advocated for the abolition of slavery in the United States but helped to establish the Underground Railroad that helped slaves escape from Southern plantations.

This advocacy on behalf of the weak goes on today as believers speak out against illegal abortion on behalf of those who have the least voice of the unborn children. Many others adopt children who need families, work to stop human trafficking, bring hope to those in prison, and care for the poor and needy because of their beliefs. In doing so, these believers act as salt and light helping society see, hear, and understand the standard of righteousness and justice found in the Bible.

### **Role of the church in contemporary society**

It is the duty of believers to help other people in the society. Religious people can do a number of things to help unite local communities and to assist homeless and poor people.

### **Religion and community cohesion**

Believers can also play an important role in community cohesion. This is very important because we live in an increasingly multicultural and multi-religious society. Christians believe that the church can be a stabilizing force for good in a world that is increasingly unreligious. Often the church will seek to work with other religious groups to help keep peace and harmony in the community as religious leaders still have some influence in the areas that they work in. Churches can do number of things to help promote unity within a diverse and multicultural community.



### Application activity 3.1

1. Explain this statement, "Believers are the salt and the light of the world."
2. Describe the role of believers to the community, the church and the country.

## 3.2 The concept of freedom

### Learning activity 3.2



Using internet and dictionaries find the meaning of the concept of freedom and the types of freedom.

### Definition of the term freedom

Freedom is having the ability to act or change without constraint. Something is free if it can change easily and is not constrained in its present state. The word 'freedom' can have powerful emotive force, that is, the power to arouse strong emotions. Its connotations are almost exclusively positive.

For example, if you describe a group as 'freedom fighters' this suggests that you approve of the cause for which they are fighting; to call them 'terrorists' means you make clear your disapproval.

### Types of freedom

The following are the main types of human freedom:

- **Freedom to be alive:** it means that nobody can try to end your life. This means that the Government has to take appropriate measures to safeguard life by making laws to protect its people.
- **Freedom of association or freedom of assembly** which is the right to join together with others peacefully to reach common goals and express common opinions both in public and private. This usually includes business groups or corporation, civic organizations, political parties, and protest groups.
- **Freedom of belief or freedom of religion:** the right to change your religion or beliefs at any time.
- **Freedom of speech or freedom of expression:** is the right to state

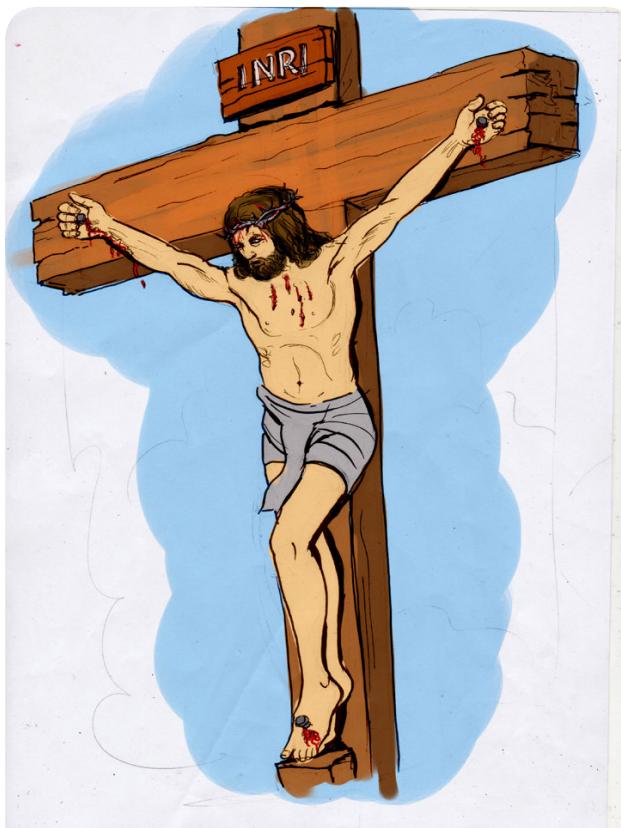
one's opinions and ideas without being stopped or punished. Freedom of speech is thought to also include freedom of information.

- **Freedom of the press:** is a promise by a government not to punish journalists and other people who report the news for doing their jobs.
- **Freedom to choose one's state in life:** this means the freedom to have a nationality.
- **Freedom from bondage and slavery:** this prohibits people being held in conditions in which the powers attaching to the right of ownership are exercised.

### Biblical view of freedom for our lives

Freedom in the Bible begins as inner freedom from bondage to sin that leads us to desire outer freedom for ourselves and others. Inner freedom bears outer implications.

### Redemption as a basis for people's freedom



*Christianity teaches that redemption in Jesus Christ gives freedom from sin bondage*

When thinking about freedom, it is important to remember that redemption applies to all of life. On a personal level we are redeemed from sin. On a corporate level, we are also brought into a new community, the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:13). Redemption extends beyond the personal and the corporate to the whole earth. Acts 3:21 says that God's ultimate goal is the "restoration of all things."

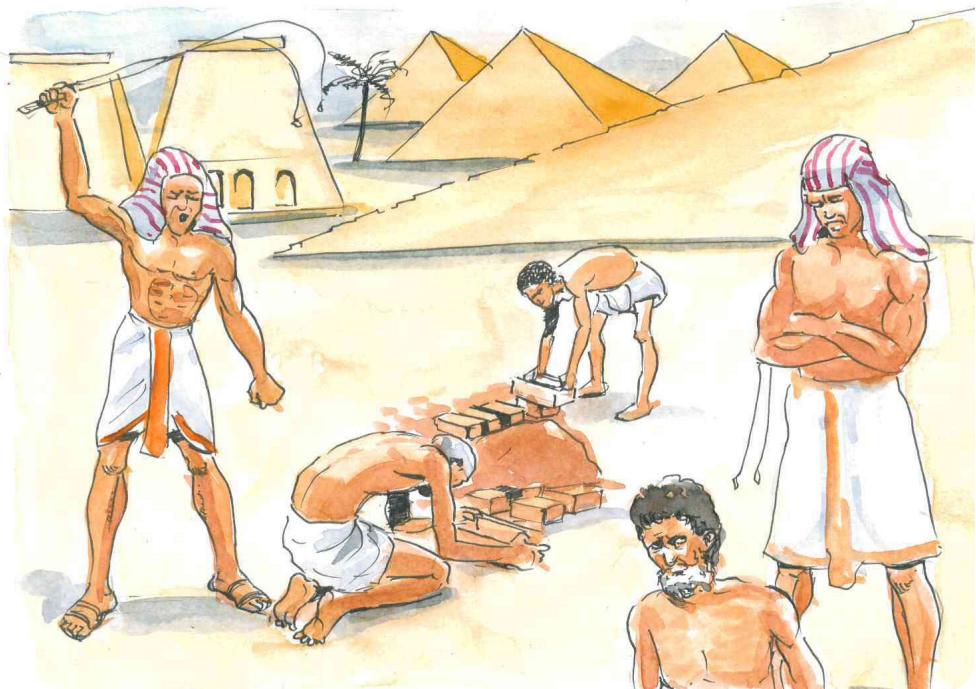
Freedom cannot be limited to inner transformation. On necessity, it must extend to all life. Jesus not only preached and taught, he also healed people's body. People were freed inwardly and outwardly. Where Christ's freedom is experienced, the natural outworking is towards political, religious, and economic freedom.

### **Implication of the biblical view of freedom**

Freedom from the bondage to sin, the Mosaic Law, death, and lies about reality will inevitably push further and further out until it leads to freedom in all areas of life. Here are seven implications for our lives from this truth.

1. Freedom is not autonomy or doing what you feel like doing without any constraints. In fact, following Christ's commands frees you to be more of the person God created you to be.
2. Freedom is within the context of Law. We are not under the obedience to the Law as a condition of salvation, but the moral Law and Christ's commands give us a guide to know how to live and to love.
3. We are truly free when we know the truth about ourselves and the world. This means throwing off the lies and deceptions to which we are so often captive.
4. Salvation is not primarily political liberation. But God often intervened when his people were oppressed by unjust totalitarian leaders (Exodus and Judges, for example).
5. Inner renewal often leads to outer consequences and renewal of the land.
6. The Bible does not prescribe one type of government but freedom (political, economic, and religious) is consistent with (not contradictory to) the Bible.
7. Inner freedom inevitably drives toward outer freedom. You can have political, economic, and religious freedom and still be in bondage to sin. You can have inner freedom in an oppressed situation. Inner and outer freedoms are the most ideal state for human beings (Micah 4:4). Believers should be the freest to enjoy life and God's creation, as long as it is within the structure of how God has made us. We are not free from God-ordained obligations, but we are free to live life as God intended it to be lived.

## Freedom in the Old Testament



*Israelite during the Egyptian captivity/slavery*

There is a universal thirst for freedom. Throughout history people of all cultures have sought it. The freedom in the Old Testament is presented differently.

In the Old Testament, freedom was primarily a freedom from slavery. There was provision in the Law for the freedom of Israelite slaves every seven years in the sabbatical year. The previous “owner” was to be generous in giving gifts that would enable these freed ones to set up a new life (Deuteronomy 15:12-13).

In a larger sense, freedom was unstable for Israelites. God by his grace delivered them from slavery in Egypt (Exodus 20:2; Deuteronomy 7:8). After reaching the Promised Land, Canaan, they repeatedly needed to be delivered from foreign oppression by the Judges.

Time and again, a generation came along that didn't know and follow the Lord and a foreign conqueror would make their lives difficult until the Lord raised up a deliverer. When God's people were disobedient, they often lost their freedom.

The Assyrian conquest of the northern kingdom (2 Kings 17:7-23) and the Babylonian captivity of the southern kingdom (2 Kings 21:10-15; 22:19; 23:25) are illustrations of this pattern. In later Judaism, freedom movements arose to gain political freedom in order to allow religious freedom among other things.

This freedom was often referenced in the prophets. Jesus' inaugural sermon repeated this theme (Luke 4: 18-19). Isaiah 61:1 said: "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me, to bring good news to the afflicted; He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and freedom to the prisoners."

This proclamation of "liberty" and "freedom" was a mark of the Messiah's message.

### **Freedom in the New Testament**

The predominant note of the New Testament is not political freedom but freedom in Christ from bondage to sin, the Law, Satan, the old man, and death.

It is not that political freedom or freedom from slavery was unimportant, but that there was an even deeper bondage that had to be overcome first of all.

The problem is that even if you were politically free, you could still be in bondage. Human will is not at this present time neutral, but it is captivated by sin. Humans by nature "love the darkness" and "hate the light" (John 3: 19:20). "And this is the verdict, that the light came into the world, but people preferred darkness to light, because their works were evil. For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come towards the light."

Jesus speaks about this freedom in the classic verses in John 8:31-32: "Jesus then said to those Jews, who believed him, 'If you remain in my word you will truly be my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.'"

The scribes and Pharisees immediately respond to this statement of Jesus by arguing that they are Abraham's offspring and have never been slaves, so how can Jesus say that "You shall become free?"

Jesus responds that anyone who sins becomes a slave of sin, but "If therefore the Son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed" (John 8:36).

Jesus' death and resurrection graciously applied to our lives liberate us from bondage to sin so that we can live a redirected life.

Freedom has its degrees according to the measure of their faith; and therefore Paul, though clearly made free, still groans and longs after perfect freedom (Romans 7:24).

The truth will make us free.

- We are, in our natural sinful state, captive to lies.
- We do not see reality as it is.
- We deny what we know deep down is true, “exchanging the truth of God for a lie” (Romans 1:25).
- We live in a state of unreality. If truth is that which corresponds to reality, then throwing off lies and deception frees us to see reality for what it is. We see our own slavery to sin and can receive forgiveness and new power to live in accordance with reality. We can be what we were created to be. Truth leads to freedom.

We are historical beings that have a past, present, and future. We do not reinvent ourselves at each moment, but are influenced by past patterns and choices. We are according to the old self (sinful nature) directed away from God, saying, in effect, “My will be done.”

In Christ, we are freed from this bondage in order to say “Your will be done.” We are headed down a road away from God and have been turned around 180 degrees by God’s grace so that we are now pursuing our Lord rather than running away from him.

We were serving sin, but now we are serving Christ.



#### Application activity 3.2

1. What do you understand by the term freedom?
2. Explain what a person can do in order to be free from sin.

### 3.3 Responsible freedom

#### Learning activity 3.3



1. Using English dictionary and internet define the following terms: Freedom and Responsibility
2. What do you think can be the benefits of being responsible?

## Being a responsible person



*Responsible freedom is doing what you are supposed to do.*

### Definition of the term responsibility

If we look at the etymological origin, the meaning of responsibility is not so much related to the tasks performed or the obligations, but rather with commitment involved.

Becoming a responsible person means being able to consciously make decisions, conduct behaviours that seek to improve oneself and/or help others. Most importantly a responsible person accepts the consequences of his/her own actions and decisions.

We can define a responsible person as one who accepts the results of the decisions he/she makes. Oxford dictionary defines responsibility as “the state or fact of being accountable or to blame for something.”

This definition of responsibility emphasizes the need for the person to agree with the negative consequences of his or her actions.

Being responsible brings us many benefits. It can help you achieve your goals and objectives in any area of your life. Responsibility allows you to create principles, morals and helps you to lead your life. Being a responsible person helps you to:

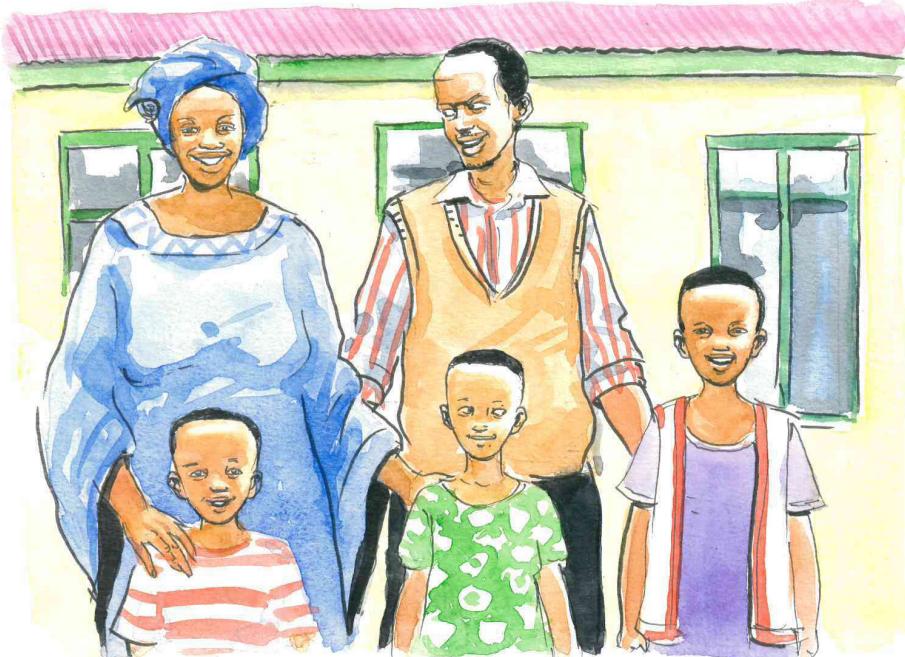
- **Be honest:** When we tend to tell the truth and keep our promises, the people around us will believe us and see us as an honest person.
- **Be more independent:** Assuming the consequences of our actions will help us make better decisions.
- **Be more reliable:** by being responsible, we gain other's trust and we will also gain confidence in ourselves. Doing the right thing will make us feel good. And even if we are wrong, we will be satisfied because we know that we have done our best.

### The value of responsibility

Both families and schools teach their children to be responsible. The aim is to educate in values and morals.

It is clear that everyone wants a committed and responsible partner, responsible children who do not get into trouble, responsible parents and teachers who take care of the children, professionals who do their work responsibly.

The reason of that is that having responsible people around us generates confidence, gives us security. You will hear some people saying, "yes, he is a responsible person, he will do it and things will work out.



*Responsible parenthood generate happiness for their families and society in general*

This is one of the reasons why in our society, responsibility is so positively and highly valued because it gives us security, confidence, and a certain stability.

## How can I be more responsible?

There is no magic formula that makes us more responsible. However, responsibility can be trained.

If you want to fulfil your purposes, your obligations, and commitments, what you need is, to a large extent, predisposition and motivation. Here are some guidelines for you:

1. **Set goals:** It is important to know what we do things for. Having a sense and direction helps us to be consistent and to continue to do our duty. If you think the goal is too long term, set small goals to achieve it. I advise you to write them down. It sounds silly, but putting it on paper makes them real. Writing your goals can help you be more responsible.
2. **Objectivity:** What is under my control or up to me and what is not? Make a list of the things that depend on you and you can control them. Your attention must be directed to those aspects, for what does not depend on you is not your responsibility.
3. **Routines: This means being organised.** If it takes a lot of effort to "get dressed", it's best to get organized. If you have a routine, you will know what to do at every moment. But not only that, sometimes, knowing how much time you have to put in the effort also helps. "Come on, it's only an hour of study before I go to the movies!"
4. **Rewards:** Internal attributions come into play here. If you've reached what you set out to do, why not admit it? It is your moment; give yourself a pat on the back.
5. **Be honest with yourself:** Have you failed; was it something that you could control? Take responsibility, assume the consequences and analyze what you could have done differently, how would you improve for another time?
6. **Share your plans:** I am not talking about posting on social networks. No, I mean something more intimate. Talk to your partner, your mother or your best friend and tell them what you are going to do, when and how. This way they will ask and become more involved and there will be no escape, you will have to comply.
7. **Operationalize:** This means that the things you can take responsibility for are actions. For example, picking up your room, delivering a job, preparing food, etc. These are concrete behaviours that you can take on as responsibilities and obligations to fulfil, but you cannot assume responsibility for the consequences. For example, the teacher can give you an A, people might like or not the food you prepared or flatter you but this is not up to you. Therefore, specify activities and tasks that you have the resources and willingness to do and get on with it.

## Responsible freedom



*Parents are taking care of their children*

True freedom is the highest virtue, and it is sought after by all who are, or consider themselves to be, oppressed.

Freedom is the opposite of being bound, the opposite of bondage. Bondage means slavery. True freedom protects the freedom of others and acts responsibly on behalf of others. True freedom is the unrestricted, uninhibited access to pursue the specific area of one's gifts and talents for the blessings and benefits of others.

True freedom demands greater responsibility, accountability, stewardship, maturity, wisdom and character. We must learn that freedom is not the absence of laws, but the embracing the divine law.

Responsible freedom is a value to be acquired, a gift to be cherished, and a quality to be cultivated. We are free only if we surrender ourselves to God. We are free in the measure in which we are generous and unselfish. There are laws of nature, society, state, morality and laws of freedom. These are necessary limitations to our freedom, and it is best for us to know and accept them. Law helps us organize our lives and guarantee the freedom. Real freedom therefore is not restricted by law; in fact it can flourish only under the law. True Freedom is being virtuous, free from anxiety, confusion, and fear, being brave and wise.

## **Responsible freedom in relation to others**

Responsible freedom makes you see others as having their own choices and decisions. You limit your own freedom because of love which means you pursue the best for others.

Responsible freedom affects thoughts about yourself and your behaviour. You now see more clearly how many options and choices you have rather than thinking you are powerless. In fact, you encourage, trust, and accept your own freedom to make choices.

However, because of people's sinful nature, freedom is more often used irresponsibly. They are free to treat others improperly, manipulate and dominate them. In fact, one of the greatest misuse of one's freedom is when he or she fears others will be irresponsible with their freedom. That drives you to try to limit their freedom.

## **Responsible freedom versus Irresponsible freedom**

In the same chapter where God tells you that He sent His Son to die for you to set you free, He tells you to not use your freedom irresponsibly.

"For you were called for freedom, brothers. But do not use this freedom as an opportunity for the flesh; rather, serve one another through love" (Galatians 5:15).

God urges you to be responsible, not irresponsible with your freedom.

"For God wants you to silence the ignorant talk of foolish people by the good things you do. Live as free people; do not, however, use your freedom to cover up any evil, but live as God's slaves" (1 Peter 2:15-16).

Freedom is often hard to accept, not as much as yourself, but definitely for others. You tend to push for maximum freedom for yourself, but often minimize the freedom for others.

Responsible freedom and irresponsible freedom is the difference between what you are able to do and what you are encouraged and invited by God to do. It is the difference between can and will, between the possibility and the beneficial.

You can do whatever you want. You are free to do it. However, why would you? Once dead and now made alive in Christ, why would you want to walk as though you were still dead? This is why this verse points you back to the fundamental decision in life.

"And do not present the parts of your bodies to sin as weapons for wickedness, but present yourself to God as raised from the dead to life and the parts of your bodies to God as weapons for righteousness. For sin is not to have any power over you, since you are not under the law but under grace" (Romans 6:13-14).

Depending on God means, you present yourself as an instrument of righteousness not unrighteousness. Responsible freedom pleases God, irresponsible freedom is often sin.



### Application activity 3.3

1. Define freedom and responsibility.
2. Explain how being responsible can help you achieve your goals and objectives.
3. Identify the effects of irresponsible freedom and show how they are threats to the community.

## 3.4 End unit assessment



### End of unit assessment

1. Identify the responsibilities of a believer to the society and to the country.
2. How can you describe a responsible believer?
3. Define freedom and responsibilities. What is the difference?
4. Explain what a responsible freedom is.
5. Discuss the benefits of responsible freedom and the effects of irresponsible freedom.

# UNIT

# 4

## IMPORTANCE OF WORSHIP

### Key Unit Competence:

Assess the moral values that believers draw from worship practices.



### Introductory activity

1. Why do you think people go to churches?
2. Identify the different religions that you find in your region and what they do as actions of worshipping God.
3. Discuss the importance of worshipping God

### 4.1. Forms of worship and moral values

#### Learning activity 4.1



1. What is the meaning of the term worship?
2. Discuss the various forms people use to worship God.



*Preaching during worship*

### **Meaning of worship**

The word worship is used to mean having a strong feeling of respect and admiration for God or a god. It also means to show a lot of love and adoration for something. Religious believers worship gods, and people can worship other people too.

Worship is an extreme form of love; it is a type of unquestioning devotion. If you worship God, then you love God so much that you do not question him at all. Going to church is a form of worship, so is a prayer.

People also use the word worship in other cases. If you love a musician or a sport star, you might say, "I worship her!"

Worship is not the slow song that the choir sings. Worship is not the amount you place in the offering basket. Worship is not volunteering in children's church. Yes, these may be acts or expressions of worship, but they do not define what true worship really is. There are numerous definitions of the word *worship*. Yet, one in particular contains the priority we should give to worship as a spiritual discipline: As worship is to honour with extravagant love and extreme submission, then true worship, in other words, is defined by the priority we place on *who* God is in our lives and *where* God is on our list of priorities. True worship is a matter of the heart expressed through a lifestyle of holiness. Thus, if your lifestyle does not express the beauty of holiness through an extravagant or exaggerated love for God and you do not live in extreme or excessive submission to God. Believers are invited to make worship a non-negotiable priority in their lives.

## Forms of worship



Praise during worship



Silent worship

The first thing we need to consider, before worshiping God is our attitude. Jesus told the woman at the well, recorded in John 4, something profound in this regard. He states that those who wish to worship the Father must do in Spirit and in truth (John 4:24).

Many scriptures commanded us that we reverence God such as Genesis 35:1, Exodus 15:1; 1 Chronicles 16:29, Haggai 1:8; Mark 1:44 among several others. There are at least seven types or ways, according to the Bible; we can worship our loving Creator.

### 1. Praise

We worship our creator though a grateful declaration of praise, either in public or in private. This declaration can also made though prayer (Ephesians 5:20). A very special praise and thanking to the Lord took place when Solomon completed the Temple, with voices and many instruments of music praising the God of Heaven (2Chronicles 5:13).

### 2. Joyful songs

We can worship our Maker through songs like the Psalms. King David especially called on people to make a joyful shout to the Lord and to come before Him with singing on our lips (Psalm100:1-2, James 5:13, Colossians 3:16).

### 3. Dancing

King David not only offered sacrifices to God when the Ark of the Covenant was brought to Jerusalem, he also danced as a form of worship (1 Samuel 6:12-14)! There were dancing for joy when the sea through, a miracle, killed Pharaoh and his army as they were as they were pursuing the fleeing children of Israel (Exodus 15:20-21).

#### **4. Observing annual feast days**

Jesus observed the Feast of Passover during his entire ministry (Matthew 26:17). He also faithfully kept, as his disciples and family did the feast of Tabernacles (John 7:2, 10). The disciples even worshiped by keeping the Day of Pentecost after Jesus had died and rose from the grave (Acts 2:1).

#### **5. Cheerful help to others**

God especially loves those who help others not grudgingly or of necessity but out of a willing heart of service and love (2 Corinthians 9:7; 8:1-2; Acts 2:44-45).

#### **6. Using our spiritual gifts**

We can, in every real sense, worship God by using the natural and supernatural-given gifts he gave us to serve as many people as we can (1 Corinthians 12:1, 4-7, Ephesians 4:7,11-13,15-16).

#### **7. Be a living sacrifice**

The last of the seven ways we can worship God is by being a living sacrifice. This means that we dedicate our entire lives to serving Him and being a blessing for others. "So then, my friends, because of God's great mercy to us I appeal to you: Offer yourselves as a living sacrifices to God, dedicate to his service and pleasing to him. This is the true worship that you should offer" (Romans 12:1).

While differing considerably in form, the following items characterise the worship of virtually all Christian churches.

- Meeting on Sunday (Sabbath in Christianity, Sabbath in seventh-day churches is an exception.)
- Bible readings
- Communion or the Eucharist
- Music, either choral or congregational, either with or without instrumental accompaniment.
- Prayer
- Teaching in the form of sermon or homily
- A collection of offering.

#### **Place of worship**

A place of worship is a specially designed structure or consecrated space where individuals or group of people such as congregation come to perform acts of devotion, veneration, or religious study. A building constructed or used for this purpose is sometimes called a house of worship. Temples, churches,

synagogues for Christians and Jews, and mosques for Muslims are examples of structures built for worship.

Under International Humanitarian Law and the Geneva Conventions, religious buildings are offered special protection, similar to the protection guaranteed hospitals displaying Red Cross or Red Crescent. These international laws bar firing upon or from a religious building.

Religious architecture expresses the religious beliefs, aesthetic choices, and economic and technological capacity of those who create or adapt it, and thus places of worship show great variety depending on time and place.

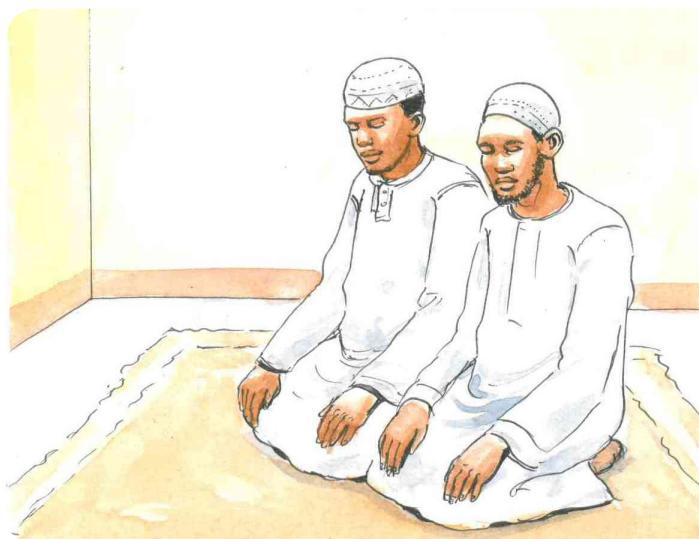
### **Five major world religions and how they worship**

#### **1. Judaism**

Sabbath for Jews is known as Shabbat and runs between Friday and Saturday evenings. Depending on the Jew, services might start at sundown or later in the evening. Shabbat begins with a meal that includes braided bread and grape juice or wine. A special prayer and blessing known as "Kiddush" is said Friday evening. Some observe a special service Friday night, Torah reading Saturday morning and Havdalah ceremony Saturday evening to formally end Shabbat observance.

Jews who observe Shabbat view it as a time of renewal and peace. It reminds many to take time to live. Some Jews may avoid shopping; others might avoid gardening and other forms of work.

#### **2. Islam**



*Muslim worship*

Muslims are required to offer five prayers daily. Every part of their life is supposed to remind them to worship Allah (the Arabic word for God). They have a special day for congregational prayer on Fridays at noon. These noontime prayers are called Jumah. Muslims are encouraged to come to the mosque for Friday prayers or with other Muslims, while on every other day of the week they have the option of praying at home. Men and women pray separately. Other than having a set day of prayer, Muslims do not observe a Sabbath.

### **3. Buddhism**

Buddhists do not observe a weekly holy day. Some Buddhists, however, observe Uposatha, or a day of resting, listening to and discussing Buddhist teachings and meditation. The timing and frequency of Uposatha are based loosely off the lunar calendar, and may vary by sect. Depending on the tradition and person, Buddhists attend a temple or worship in their homes. They will also worship during different festivals and observances throughout the year. Buddhists do not worship a deity in the same way as Christians, Jews and Muslims. They venerate and respect the Buddha, but do not see him as a God.

### **4. Hinduism**

There is no set day for worship in Hinduism. That said, different deities are linked to different days of the week and may be remembered on those days. Worship is less formal than some other forms of religious worship and those attending can come and go as they please. Hindus will often worship in the early morning or evening, at home, in a temple, or during a pilgrimage.

### **5. Christianity**

Christians in general celebrate Sabbath and worship on Sunday, a practice for some that began after Biblical accounts of Jesus' resurrection. Christians see this as a day to draw closer to God and will often hold worship services on Sunday.

Ways of observing the Sabbath vary depending on tradition and person. Some Christians will avoid spending money and restrict their activities on this day. Others will spend time in nature and with their families, or take time to visit the sick or those who are in need. Some Christians do not see the need to observe a Sabbath and see it as no longer relevant.

### **Seventh-day Adventism**

Seventh-day Adventists observe a Friday night to Saturday night Sabbath. They believe the Bible to be the main authority for practice and doctrine, called Sola Scriptura, and sees the bible as setting Saturday as the Sabbath.

Similar to other Christians, Seventh-day Adventists see their Sabbath as being a day of physical and spiritual rest and will attend worship services when possible. They are encouraged to avoid any secular activities and to spend the day with their families, in nature and visiting those in need, among other activities. Adventists are encouraged to refrain from working during their Sabbath, if possible. If not, they are encouraged to do what they can to set the day apart from others.



#### Application activity 4.1

1. Identify the various forms of worship.
2. Explain how worshiping can improve one's moral values.

## 4.2. Importance of worship in the society

#### Learning activity 4.2



We often see many people going to Mosques on Friday and others to Churches on Saturday and Sunday. Do you think it is important to worship God? Discuss the importance of worshiping God.

Man, in general, has an inner need to express his love and gratitude to some deity and that someone is who determines his worship.

Believers can worship the Lord with all their heart and soul because they have already invited him into their lives; their spirits have already been united with and quickened by the Holy Spirit. In other words, believers in Christ can internally communicate their love of the Father through the spirit.

Nonbelievers, on the other hand cannot really worship the Lord in this way because their spirits are not yet united or quickened by God's Spirit. In other words they cannot internally communicate or fellowship directly with the Father. They can only have an external form of worship. It is true that without an intimate, internal relationship with Christ, nothing on earth will ever fill us.

Though God does not need our worship; He is seeking those who are worshipers. (John 4:23-24) thus, one of the reasons we worship is to minister and to bless Him. Worship is the time we forget about ourselves, concentrate on God and experience His presence.

The entire book of Revelation concerns the importance of worship and what God thinks of worship. Let us see what Revelation 4:8-11 says, “The four and twenty elders fall down before Him that sat on the throne, and worship Him that lives forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, you are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for you have created all things and for your pleasure they are and were created.” Other pertinent Scriptures are Revelation 11:16 and 19:4.

There are many other Scriptures in the Word that tell us God is seeking true worshipers. Scriptures like Psalm 95:6-7: “Oh, come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord our maker. For He is our God, and we are the people of His pasture and the sheep of His flock” And Psalm 99:5, “Exalt ye the LORD our God, and worship at His footstool; for He *is* holy.”

Worship is very important because it is the *key* to God’s presence. It is what brings us intimacy with the Father. In other words, worship is a two-way communication. We come into His presence by loving, adoring and exalting Him. He then makes Himself known by communicating His Love and His inspiration (and revelation) back to us. This, of course, results in inexpressible joy for us.

This daily communion is what allows us to endure difficult circumstances. If we are hearing from the Lord and keeping our eyes only on Him, we can withstand anything. Worship, then, is not only the *key* to intimacy; it is also the *key* to withstanding trials and problems and restoring the joy of our salvation.

### **Purpose of worship**

The goal and purpose of worship is to magnify, exalt, love and adore the only true God, Jesus Christ. In other words, *worship is simply a prayer of relationship in which the “created” magnifies the “Creator.”*

It is our expression of His worthiness. When we worship, we join in the angels, the cherubim, the seraphim, the prophets, the apostles and the host of heaven falling down on the faces and exalting the one and only true God. Revelation 7:11-12 says, “And all the angels stood round *about* the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshiped God, saying, Amen! Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might be unto our God forever and ever. Amen.”

It is truly believable that *if the church were really taught how to genuinely worship, it would revolutionize the Church.*

*Noah worshiped God, and as a result a brand new creation was born. (Genesis 6:9, 18; 8:16-9:3)*

*Abraham built an altar and worshiped the Lord and, again, a whole nation resulted.*

*Moses worshiped the Lord, and because of his obedience God freed an entire people from the bondage of slavery. (Exodus 34:1-8).*

*People have to note that prior to Moses' revelation of God's glory on Mount Sinai, he prayed, interceded, wept and pleaded with God, but he never worshiped. Exodus 34:8 is the first mention of Moses worshiping the Lord.*

Even though the Lord is a Spirit, He still is passionate and expresses emotion. Our worship should, also, be emotional and passionate as we express our love for Him. Worship is not simply an act of our willpower, but an all-consuming having a strong desire in our spirit, as well as an overflowing of our emotions of gratitude and love. Consequently, worship involves all of our mental, emotional and spiritual faculties, *but the specific place we worship and express our love is in our spirit.* John 4:23-24, “The hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth: and indeed the Father seeks such people to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who that worship Him must worship in Spirit and in truth.”



#### Application activity 4.2

1. With biblical references explain why worshiping God is important to the individuals practicing it and the society in general.
2. In what attitude people must worship God according to scriptures.

### 4.3 End Unit assessment



#### End of unit assessment

1. Define the concept worship.
2. Discuss the various forms of worship with biblical examples of people who used them.
3. Only believers can worship God. Explain why nonbelievers cannot worship God.
4. Explain this statement: “worship is a two-way communication.”
5. Do you think it is important to worship God? Explain why or why not.

# UNIT 5

## MARRIAGE AND PEACEFUL FAMILY

### Key Unit Competence:

Value the importance of marriage and family in the promotion of peace and values in the society



### Introductory activity

Then the Lord God said, "It is not good for the man to live alone. I will make a suitable companion to help him." So he took some soil from the ground and formed all the animals and all the birds. Then he brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and that is how they all got their names. So the man named all the birds and all the animals; but not one of them was a suitable companion to help him. Then Lord God made the man fall into a deep sleep, and while he was sleeping, he took out one of the man's ribs and closed up the flesh. He formed a woman out of the rib and brought her to him. Then the man said, "At last, here is one of my own kind, bone taken from my bone, and flesh from my flesh. Woman is her name because she was taken out of man." That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united with his wife, and they become one (Genesis 2:18-24).

### Question:

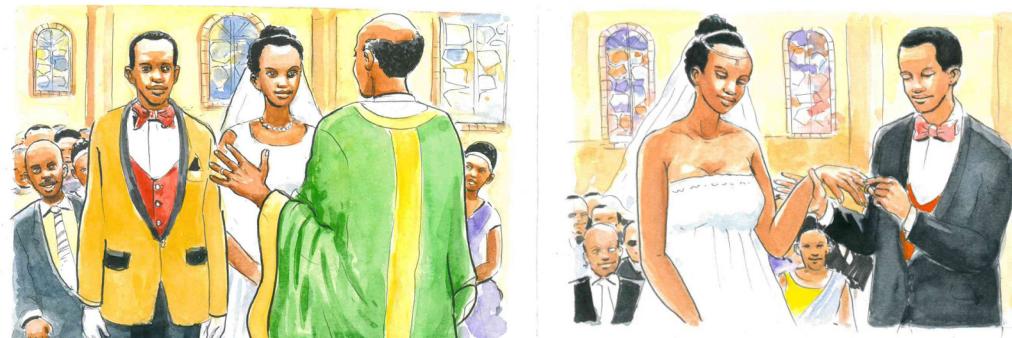
1. Read the biblical text above and discuss the origin and the importance of marriage and family in the promotion of peace.
2. Using internet and resources identify and explain the different types of marriage that you know.

## 5.1. Marriage in God's plan

### Learning activity 5.1



1. Define the term marriage.
2. What do you think was God's intention to marriage?
3. Make a comparison of monogamic marriage and polygamic marriage.



*Religious marriage*

### Meaning of marriage

Marriage is defined as an intimate and complementing union between a man and a woman in which the two become one physically, in the whole of life. The purpose of marriage is to reflect the relationship of the Godhead and to serve Him. Although the fall has marred the divine purpose and function of marriage, this definition reflects the God-ordained idea for marriage from the beginning.

Male and female in the marriage relationship are of the same nature and essence, equal as persons (Galatians 3:28), intimate in relationship, common in purpose, but distinct personalities with different roles: the husband leads and the wife submits to his leadership (Ephesians 5:31). Marriage appears designed to reflect the same relational unity-in-plurality as the Godhead.

Marriage, the most intimate relationship human relationship, was appropriately chosen to reflect this relational aspect of the divine image. Each sex alone incompletely exhibits this part of the divine image. This open intimate relational aspect of God's image, reflected in marriage, was marred by the fall (Genesis 3:7-10), causing each mate to hide (cover oneself) from each other and from God.

Marriage is the most basic and significant social relationship to humankind. This relationship must be nurtured and maintained for the welfare of all. Without marriage society will fall.

God's design for marital relationship is heterosexual, not homosexual, and monogamous, not polygamous. This relational aspect of God's image in marriage has analogues portrayed in Yahweh's relation with Israel (Isaiah 54:5; Jeremiah 31:32; Ezekiel 16:8-14; Hosea 2:14-20) as well as in Christ's relation with the church (Ephesians 5:21-33; 1 Corinthians 11:1-3; 2 Corinthians 11:2, Revelation 19:7-9). Israel is portrayed as Yahweh's wife. Her idolatrous unfaithfulness and disobedience to Yahweh are frequently depicted as spiritual adultery (Numbers 25:1-4; Judges 2:17, Jeremiah 3:20; Ezekiel 16: 15-59; 23:1-48; Hosea 1:2; 2:2-13; 3:3) for which she was punished by captivity. Yahweh divorced his unfaithful (Isaiah 50:1, Jeremiah 3:8; Hosea 2:2) but ultimately will have compassion and delightfully restore her to faithfulness and holiness (Isaiah 54; 62:4-5; Ezekiel 16:53-63; Hosea 2:14-3:1).

Marriage in the New Testament imagery describes the relationship between Christ and his Church (2 Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 5:21-33; Revelation 19:7-9). The church, Christ's bride, is sacrificially loved by Christ just as a husband should love his wife (Ephesians 5:25, 28-30, 33). The husband's love assists in becoming holy and blameless before God, even as Christ presents the church without blemish to the Father (Ephesians 26-28). Christ's relationship with the church becomes the functional model for a marriage relationship.

God commanded the male and female to perform two specific functions: procreation ("fruitful and multiply") and ruling over the earth ("subdue" and "rule") Genesis 1:28. These are functions that reflect God's image. Humankind (male and female) receive God-ordained authority to rule over the rest of creation, but not over each other.

Human reproduction comes through intimate sexual union designed only for the marriage relationship. Cohabitation abuses the procreative nature of the marriage relationship. While reproduction is a divine purpose of marriage, some couples are unable to have children for various physical reasons. This does not make their marriage second-rate or inferior. However, a married couple should desire to obey the divine injunction of procreation if possible. Children are one manifestation of the "one flesh" of marriage. The procreative command obviously prohibits homosexual marriages.

**The Marriage Union as God's Work.** God brings a man and a woman together in marriage (Matthew 19:6; Eve to Adam, Rebecca to Isaac). It is not humankind's prerogative to separate what God has chosen to put together (Matthew 19:6).

As creator of the marriage relationship, God becomes the essential supporting party to a marriage, giving wisdom, discretion, understanding, and love to protect the union and to enable it to honor God (Proverbs 2:6-16; 1 Corinthians 13). A marriage can glorify God and function properly only when both partners are

believers in the Messiah, Jesus. Then the Holy Spirit guides and enables them in their roles and functions. Continued reliance upon God is imperative for believing spouses.

Marriage as God's Norm for Humankind. God made man a relational being in his own image. Therefore, there is the need for intimate relationship within humankind (Genesis 2:18). Such a relationship is also necessary for the reproduction and multiplication of humankind. Without the fall, probably no one would have ever been single. Perfect people would have yielded perfect marriages. Sin brought flaws in humans that sometimes make it difficult to find or sustain a suitable marriage relationship. Being single for life is an exception and, therefore, is declared to be a gift from God (1 Corinthians 7:7). The single person is normally less encumbered in God's work. So, although marriage appears to be God's norm, singleness is neither more nor less spiritual than marriage (1 Corinthians 7:32-36).

The Nature of Marriage. Complementarity. The woman was created as "a helper suitable" for the man. A wife is a "helper" who "complements" her husband in every way. A helper always subordinates self-interests when helping another, just as Paul reminds us in Philippians 2:1-11. A helping role is a worthy one, not implying inferiority. The wife, therefore, helps the husband to lead their family to serve and glorify God. The husband also complements his wife so that together they become a new balanced entity that God uses in an enhanced way.

A new permanent union. "Cleaving" in Genesis 2:24 pictures a strong bond between the members of this union. The marriage bond was to be permanent. Separation or termination of the marriage union was not an option before sin entered the world and death with it (Genesis 3). All later revelation shows that separation and divorce was because of sin (Deuteronomy 24:1-4; Ezra 9-10; Malachi 2:14; Matthew 5:31-32; 19:1-12; Mark 10:1-12; Luke 16:18; 1 Corinthians 7:1-16, 39). God's ideal was for marriage to be permanent and exclusive.

## **Responsibilities of spouses**

A healthy relationship between spouses is not achieved or maintained without fulfilling their responsibilities towards each other. However, you cannot fulfill these responsibilities if you do not know what they are. Let us start by outlining them.

- **Fidelity:** It is your responsibility to be faithful to your spouse. Being married means you are in an exclusive intimate relationship with your spouse. This exclusivity must never be violated whether through an emotional or physical affair.

- **Trust:** In marriage, you are required to trust your spouse completely. Trust is not something that your spouse should have to earn, unless they have given you reason to believe they are not trustworthy. You cannot have a healthy relationship if you are constantly expecting your spouse to hurt you.
- **Affection:** It is your responsibility to be affectionate towards your partner and to keep the fires of love burning. You can do this through gift giving, acts of kindness, spending quality time together, complementing your spouse and physical intimacy. It is your responsibility to ensure that your partner is always feeling appreciated.
- Another way of showing affection to your spouse is by actively **avoiding hurting them**. This means directing clear of hurtful jokes and comments, friendships that your spouse does not approve of and things like that.
- **Friendship:** Spouses should be each other's best friends. They should plan and take on new challenges together, support each other and celebrate and reminisce together, just like best friends do.
- **Consultation:** Being married means that you can't just make major life decisions without consulting your spouse. Your spouse has chosen to share her life with yours and she deserves a say in any decision that might affect her. For instance, you can't just quit your job or take a job that requires you to move to another town without discussing it with your spouse.

These marriage tips are not complex science but they are great advice for newlyweds. If a person doesn't know his/her responsibilities towards his/her spouse, it can be very hard to have a healthy relationship.

### **Responsibilities of a husband towards his family**

A good husband and father makes time for both his children and his marriage, and contributes more to his family.

To truly be a good husband and father, you have to spend quality time with your family and strive to be a loving role model. When a man enters into a covenant relationship with his bride, he commits to the responsibilities of loving, honouring and cherishing her.

### **Responsibilities of a good husband**

A good husband plays various roles in the family. Here are the roles and responsibilities of a husband.

## **1. Role of provider**

Most men believe that being a good provider means supporting a family financially. It means much more than that. A man should also contribute to the emotional, spiritual, physical and mental well being of his family.

## **2. Role of protector**

This means protecting your wife's self-esteem and self-worth as well as your children's. It can also mean protecting your way of life and guarding against any threats to the things that you and your family value.

## **3. Role of a leader**

Instead of waiting for your wife to take the initiative when you are having problems, take the lead. Get in the game and create what you want in your family instead of complaining about your family situation. Marriage is not a fifty- fifty partnership, instead a 100/100 partnership.

## **4. Role of a teacher**

What do fathers teach those around them, especially their children with their behavior? It is important to provide a good example for your children, loved ones and community with both words and deeds. Set high standards and teach by doing.

### **Responsibilities of a husband to his wife**

Husband has great role and responsibilities to his wife. Here are duties and responsibilities of a husband to his wife:

1. A husband should be respected by his wife in every good way.
2. The husband has the right to a trustworthy and a honest companion. The same here goes for the wife too. For example, she should not lie about using birth control to stop him having a child.
3. The husband and wife should engage in sexual intimacy with each other at regular occasions. It is said, if you don't get any action at home, you are gonna play away. So this is in reality a right and responsibility for both the husband and wife.
4. If the husband doesn't like someone, then the wife shouldn't allow them to come to their house, she also shouldn't accept presents from such people. This is to avoid jealousy and friction between the couple.
5. The husband's possessions are his wife's trust. She needs to safeguard his property and possessions.

6. He must never ever divulge the secrets of the household and those of the married couple.
7. He must strive with sincerity to acquire her trust, and seek her welfare in the actions that pertain to her.
8. He must exercise patience and forgiveness in case of disagreement or dispute, and not rush to divorce.

### **Biblical responsibilities of a husband**

The culture has created much confusion about the roles of a husband and wife. Here are the Biblical calls for marital roles.

1. **To work:** The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it. (Genesis 2:15)
2. **To be courageous:** "Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go." (Joshua 1:9)
3. **To be strong:** Be watchful, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong. (1 Corinthians 16:13)
4. **To love:** And Jesus said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with your entire mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbour as yourself. (Matthew 22:37-39)
5. **To be a husband:** Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and holdfast to his wife and they shall become one flesh. (Genesis 2:24)
6. **To be the head of the wife:** For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Saviour. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands (Ephesians 5: 23-24).
7. **To serve sacrificially:** Husbands love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her. (Ephesians 5:25)

Greater love has no one than this that someone lay down his life for his friends. (John 15:13)

8. **To be the father:** The father of the righteous will greatly rejoice; he who fathers a wise son will be glad in him. (Proverb 23:24)

Fathers do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. (Ephesians 6:4)

It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline? (Hebrews 12:7)

**9. To be compassionate:** Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honour to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered. (1 Peter 3:7)

As a father shows compassion to his children, so the Lord shows compassion to those who fear him. (Psalm 103:13)

**10. To provide:** But if anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied that faith and worse than an unbeliever. ( Timothy 5:8)

**11. To be accountable:** But I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ, the head of a wife is her husband, and the head of Christ is God. (1 Corinthians 11:3)

**12. To be honourable:** The righteous who walks in his integrity, blessed are his children after him (Proverbs 20:7)

Finally, whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lonely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worth of praise, think about these things. (Philippians 4:8).

### **Role of wife in marriage**

It's important to look clearly at what the Bible says on this subject. And while the Bible doesn't apply our modern word "role" to marriage, the Scriptures are clear about the unique responsibilities God assigns to a wife.

*A wife's responsibilities can be properly understood only in the context of loving, servant leadership by her husband.*

#### **1. Be a helper to the husband.**

While all of us are called to be helpers to others, the Bible places a special emphasis on this responsibility for wives. Genesis tells us that God realized it wasn't good for man to be alone, and that He decided to make a "helper suitable for him" (Genesis 2:18). It is interesting to note that the Hebrew meaning of the word *helper* in this passage is found hereafter in the Bible to refer only to God as He helps us. The fact that this same word is applied to a wife signifies that women have been given tremendous power for good in their husbands' lives. God has designed wives to help their husbands become all that God intends for them to be.

## **2. Respect the husband.**

In Ephesians 5:33, Paul says, " ... the wife must respect her husband." When you respect your husband you reverence him, notice him, regard him, honour him, prefer him, and esteem him. It means valuing his opinion, admiring his wisdom and character, appreciating his commitment to you, and considering his needs and values.

Our husbands have many needs. The primary needs most men have:

- Self-confidence in his personhood as a man
- To be listened to
- Companionship
- To be needed

Meeting these needs is what respecting your husband all is about. For example, you try to encourage him by being his number one fan.

Every husband wants his wife to be on his team, to coach him when necessary, but most of all to be his cheerleader. A husband needs a wife who is behind him, believing in him, appreciating him, and cheering him on as he goes out into the world every day.

## **3. Love the husband**

Titus 2:4 calls for wives "to love their husbands." A good description of the kind of love your husband needs is "unconditional acceptance." In other words, accept your husband just as he is, an imperfect person.

Love also means being committed to a mutually fulfilling sexual relationship. I realize there is a whole lot more to love than sex, but we are looking at how to fulfil God's command to love our husbands. Therefore, we must look at love from their perspective, not just our own.

Surveys show that sex is one of a man's most important needs, if not *the* most important. When a wife resists intimacy, is uninterested, or is only passively interested, her husband may feel rejection. It will cut at his self-image, tear at him to the very centre of his being, and create isolation.

## **4. Submit to the leadership of husband**

Some husbands and wives actually believe submission infers that women are inferior to men in some way. Some women think that if they submit they will lose their identity and become non-persons. Others fear (some with good reason) that submission leads to being used or abused.

Another misconception is that submission means blind obedience on the part of the woman.

What does God have in mind? Here's a key passage from Scripture:

Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Saviour of the body. But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless.

So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church, because we are members of His body. (Ephesians 5:22-30)

### **Helping the husband become who God intended him to be**

These Scriptures make it clear that a wife should submit voluntarily to her husband's sensitive and loving leadership. Therefore, as you voluntarily submit to your husband, you are completing him. You help him fulfil his responsibilities, and you help him become the man, the husband, and the leader God intended him to be.

Building oneness in marriage works best when both spouses choose to fulfil their responsibilities voluntarily, with no pressure or coercion.

In one of his letters, Peter told us that even though Jesus suffered terrible pain and insults, He did not retaliate "but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously" (1 Peter 2:23). When you entrust your life to the Father, it's much easier to be the wife of an imperfect man, particularly when you may have disagreements.

Loving, forgiving, and submitting do not mean that you become a doormat or indefinitely tolerate significantly destructive behaviour.



### Application activity 5.1

1. What is the meaning of the term marriage.
2. Polygamy is not allowed by Rwandan laws. Outline the effects of polygamy.
3. Distinguish between religious marriage and civil marriage.
4. In marriage spouses have responsibilities towards each other. List some for the husband and some for the wife in order to have a happy family.

## 5.2. Traditional marriage in Rwanda

### Learning activity 5.2



Using internet and other references identify different phases of traditional marriage and explain how they contributed to the promotion of peace among Rwandans.

### Definition of traditional marriage



Rwanda traditional marriage

In Anthropology, traditional marriage is defined as the primary established form of marriage recognized in a given country or religious or social group at a given time: In that culture, traditional marriage requires the families of the future bride and groom to engage in ritual visits and exchange gifts.

Some people define traditional marriage as the marriage between one man and one woman (primarily used by opponents of same-sex marriage).

Marriage is considered the most basic social institution in Rwanda. Wedding traditions go back for many centuries and even though some westernization has crept into certain segments of the Rwandan society, a lot of these traditional weddings are still carried out today.

Traditional weddings have continued to be important family rituals.

In Rwanda marriage is a social institution which was accorded much respect and dignity, people desire to establish a family by getting married, raising children and establishing kinship systems. Rwandans used to believe that being single especially among women was considered strange and unacceptable.

### **Courtship (Gufata irembo)**

After the preliminary search for a woman and if two families approve of the relationship, this phase is locally known as 'Gufata irembo'. It is when courtship begins and culminates into marriage under traditional laws and customs.

It is said that this procedure of 'gufata irembo' consists of a set of rituals that involves negotiations for the bride price with representatives from the groom's family to the bride's family. The preparation for marriage takes a while in order to allow the prospective bride and groom to know each other better.

### **Introduction ceremony (Gusaba)**

At this time, preparations of the traditional introduction ceremony (Gusaba) are ripe. It is an occasion where the girl who is soon to be married introduces her future husband to her friends, parents and relatives.

Both families were required to have a spokesperson to represent them. The spokesperson takes the role of the final emissary on the day of the introduction. He is the one who is experienced of Rwandan traditions to engage or answer challenging questions from the other side's spokesperson.

Normally, the spokesperson had to be a member of the man's family to speak on behalf of the man's side. Today, few people remember prominently the cultural requirements and tongue twisting of old at these ceremonies, many people now offer the service at a fee.

## **Dowry (inkwano)**

During the introduction ceremony (Gusaba), a Rwandan man is required to pay dowry in form of a cow or money before the performance of the ceremony of marriage. Dowry carries the purpose of validating and legitimizing the relationship between a man and woman.

Rwandans gave great respect to the practice of dowry such that in cases of divorce it was usually returned. It is a way of assuring that a girl is properly treated; in case of mistreatment, she can always return home and be accepted by her parents and other relatives. The payment of dowry is still common practice in Rwanda.

## **Wedding (Ubukwe)**

In Rwandan culture and custom, marriage ceremonies (Ubukwe) are held at the residence of the groom's father, with the bride and groom beautifully dressed in traditional outfits. Family members and friends gather to witness the joyous occasion. During the ceremony, the family of the bridegroom will make statements of affection before the in-laws with promises to take care of the bride and to meet all the expected responsibilities. The bride is formally introduced to the family of the groom amid exchanges of friendly remarks.

## **Seclusion ceremony (Gutwikurura)**

After the reception party, some of the guests go to the couple's new home for the seclusion ceremony (gutwikurura). Traditionally, after marriage the newly-wed wife stays isolated for an undetermined amount of time. At the end of this period of seclusion, a ceremony is organized by her family and friends to visit her and bring her several items to stock in her home.

The husband is expected to furnish the home completely and new wife is expected to bring household goods (Ibishiyingiranwa) which include the wedding presents.

Additionally, the evening after the wedding at their new home the couple respects other rituals that have evolved over the years. Word is that in the past, wedding guests waited while the couple consummated the marriage to find out if the woman was a virgin.

Other rituals include the groom's aunt is cutting a piece of the bride's hair to symbolize that she belongs to him. In addition, a young bridesmaid is also given to the bride as a symbolic little sister to help her out for a few days. Also, an aunt or godmother was to put a mosquito net over the couple to symbolize their union.

## **Marriage forms**

Most Rwandan weddings have three parts: a traditional introduction ceremony done at the family level, a religious ceremony performed according to the spouses beliefs, and a civil ceremony performed by Government competent authorities. It is a means of keeping relations between the two families alive and strong. Basing on the traditions, parents played a huge role in assisting their daughter or son in selecting a marital partner or giving in approval to the relationship.

The involvement of parents and relatives emanated from their willingness to provide security and peaceful homes for their children. They used to carry out a background check on the family of the prospective bride or groom before establishing contacts.

Marriage is still considered the most basic social institution in Rwanda, unlike in the past; most couples today select their own mates, though approval of the family is expected.



### **Application activity 5.2**

Explain the different phases in traditional Rwandan marriage process.

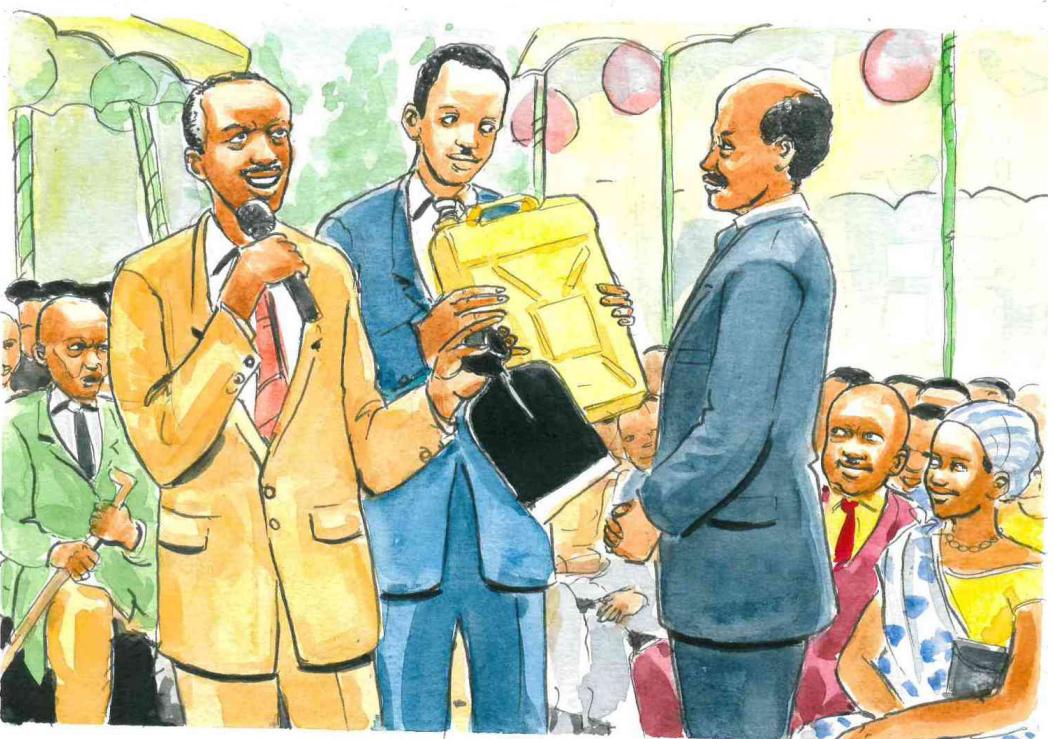
## **5.3 Dowry in traditional and modern marriage**

### **Learning activity 5.3**



Using internet and other written resources make a comparison between dowry payment in traditional marriage and modern marriage in Rwanda.

With supportive argument discuss if dowry is still relevant in Rwanda today.



*Introduction ceremony in Rwandan culture*

After Gusaba phase, the next phase would be the Gukwa , that is the payment of the dowry. The dowry was always strictly a cow or several cows because nothing else could ever be able to replace the void the departed daughter would cause.

Once the negotiations are over, the bride's side invites the groom's side to share a drink. Then, before the groom's side left, they would often be given a drink known as Impamba which they were to enjoy along their journey home. In modern times, if one side has travelled a great distance they may even be invited to share a meal together with their future in-laws before they return home.

Even though a lot has changed over the centuries and young Rwandans do not accept arranged love anymore, the communal aspect remains profoundly present.

In the present time a bride price is still given in Rwanda. This comes from Rwandan tradition, in which a bride leaves her family and becomes a part of the family of the groom after the wedding. In fact, in the past a bride was supposed to cry and be sad on her wedding day, since she was leaving behind the life and family she had always known. The bride price is like a repayment of the investment of the bride's family which was traditionally one or more cows, but today is often given in money instead. But there some families that still pay

dowry in form of cows. The amount paid normally corresponds with the wealth of the girl's family and her level of education. The girls from wealthier families and higher educational backgrounds receive higher bride prices.

The dowry ceremony is normally held at the house of the bride's family, and it begins with the entrance of the groom's family. The two families sit opposite and facing one another, and men normally wear suits and women wear dress in traditional Rwandan clothes, often a cloth draped over one shoulder and an undershirt. Normally the groom sits among his wedding party, and the bride stays inside the house with her bride's maids until later in the ceremony.

Each family has one representative chosen to speak for the family, and these representatives spend most of the ceremony bantering back and forth about the bride and groom to be married. Normally this will start with the groom's representative saying something like, "a boy from our family wants to marry a girl from your family," and the bride's representative intentionally misunderstanding. He will normally respond something like, "well, that is excellent, but our daughter is still in primary school. Your son will have to wait a few years before he can marry her." This banter continues until the families agree on which boy and girl from their families will be married, at which point the bride and groom are each presented to the other's family.

The dowry paying ceremony includes the exchange of small gifts, formerly local beer and honey, now normally fanta and coca-cola, as well as other things like carved walking sticks for the patriarchs. After exchanging gifts, the bride and groom sit at chairs placed in between the two families, and all the guests share a meal. After the meal, the bride and groom change into different clothes and the guests all walk or are transported to the church for the religious ceremony.



### Application activity 5.3

1. Define the word "dowry".
2. Discuss the role of dowry in traditional and modern Rwanda.

## 5.4 Role of the family in the promotion of peace and values

### Learning activity 5.4



Using the Bible, internet and other various written resources, discuss the role of the family in promotion of peace and values in the community and society.

#### Definition of family

According to Murdoc, family is a social group characterised by common residence, economic cooperation and reproduction.

Burges and Locke define family as a group of persons united by tie of marriage, blood or adoption, constituting a single household, interacting and communicating with each other in their respective social roles of husband and wife, mother and father, son and daughter, brother and sister, and creating and maintaining a common culture.

According to Murray and Zentner family is a social system and primary reference group made up of two or more persons living together who are related by blood, marriage or adoption or who are living together by arrangement over a period of time.

Family is the basic social institution and the primary group in society.

#### Composition of family

- **Nuclear family**

It is made up of a married couple and their children. This group lives together apart from other relatives, also called conjugal family.

- **Extended family**

It includes not only the nuclear family but also grandparents, uncles, aunts and cousins, also called consanguine family.

#### Impact of family to the promotion of peace and values

The family lays the foundation for the individual's development and happiness as well as society's cohesion and advancement. As a microcosm of the human race, the family is a key instrument for establishing peace through the encouragement of such virtues as love, unity, compassion, justice, respect and loyalty.

Attitudes and behaviours learnt in the home have a direct bearing on the order, prosperity and peace in our communities as well as the world at large. The habits and patterns of conduct nurtured in the home are carried into the work place, into the social and political life of the country, and finally into the arena of international relations.

In the world suffering from social and moral crisis, societies often overlook the importance of balancing individual and societal needs as well as reconciling the individual interest with the common good.

It is within the family that character is developed, moral and spiritual attitudes are formed and one learns to serve the common good. And it is with the family where the values of tolerance, peace and social responsibility can be initiated and taught. Success in this crucial matter requires fostering a loving and constructive environment at home, based on love of God and adherence to his laws.

Education requires for promoting peace must begin in the family where children of the earliest age learn about the fundamental oneness of humanity and overcoming prejudices that divide us whether based on race, religion, gender, class, or nationality.

It is within the family that children can be encouraged to associate with people of all races and religions. They also learn to appreciate the different cultures and the contributions different people have to make. It is with their families that they can be taught the concept of oneness of humanity.

We have to be mindful, however, that excessive attention to family interests would not lead to a narrow social outlook which could be harmful to the broader community.

Today, many stable and united families, because of intolerance towards one or another segment of society instil in their children prejudices that stifle their love for humanity and hamper their sense of justice.

Through such upbringing, our children can become indifferent to the suffering of others or to regard violence and oppression as justified even to contribute towards it.



### Application activity 5.4

1. Define the term family
2. Distinguish between nuclear family from extended family.
3. With example, explain how a family play an important role in promoting peace and values to society.

### 5.3 End Unit assessment



#### End of unit assessment

1. Define the term marriage.
2. What do you think was God's intention to marriage?
3. Make a comparision of monogamic marriage and polygamic marriage
4. Explain the different phases in traditional Rwandan marriage process.
5. After defining the term dowry, discuss the role of dowry in traditional and modern Rwanda.
6. Distinguish between nuclear family from extended family.
7. With example, explain how a family plays an important role in promoting peace and values to society.

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