



# Module 1: Your Life Journey

Content is explored through a mix of illustrated text, video and audio resources, guided reflection and discussion, and interactive or written activities – with the focus always on exploration and discovery, leading to personal growth and action.

## Module 1, Unit 1: Setting Out on Your Journey

### Learning Goal

- To recognise that life is a journey and to identify some of the elements of that journey in your own life.

### Faith Goal

- To become more aware that God has a plan for your life and that you are part of something greater than yourself.

### Icebreaker

- At this point in time, what do you think you would like to do with your life?

### Content Summary

- Introduction to five of the stages on life's journey identified by Joseph Campbell in *The Hero's Journey*
- Stage one: Setting out
- Pressure and challenges; hopes, fears and expectations
- Advice from Pope Francis
- Ups and downs on the journey of life
- A personal story of self-discovery
- A parable to ponder: The Tale of the Sands
- Closing reflection: Prayer

### Take-Aways

- When you look at your life through the lens of a journey, then life becomes full of wonderful possibilities. The menu of possibilities may be at its fullest during the 'Setting Out' stage of your journey. Enjoy exploring that menu and pondering on where it may lead you.
- Life will always have its ups and downs, but all these ups and downs contribute to the person you are and the person you will become.
- Know that as you journey through life, God is always with you. Everything doesn't have to depend solely on you. You are never on your own.



## **Module 1, Unit 2: Encounters Along the Way**

### **Learning Goals**

- To recognise and appreciate how the people you encounter on your life's journey influence and contribute to the paths you take on that journey.
- To recognise the role models, mentors and helpers in your life.
- To consider the role of social media and online influencers in your life.

### **Faith Goal**

- To reflect on what it is about Jesus that inspires so many people to follow him.

### **Icebreaker**

- Think of one person (dead or alive) that you would love to have just one good chat with. Who would you pick and what would you like to talk to them about?

### **Content Summary**

- Stage two on life's journey: Encounters along the way
- People who inspire us and the qualities in them that we admire
- Example of inspirational person: Jean Donovan
- The role of social media in our lives
- Online influencers and what attracts young people to them
- The influence of friends
- Jesus – the greatest influencer of all time?
- The role of a mentor
- An encounter with Jesus: The Woman at the Well (John 4:7-42)
- Closing reflection: Guided Gratitude Meditation

### **Take-Aways**

- We can learn a lot from the wisdom and life experiences of others.
- Meaningful encounters can happen at any time in our lives, and often when we least expect them.
- Be careful when choosing your role-models. Positive role models can be a rich source of inspiration in your life.
- Our connection with God and with others is what sustains us in life. We are social rather than solitary beings.
- Know what it means to be a good friend. True friendships make people feel good about themselves.
- There is always someone to help you on your journey. You are never alone.



## Module 1, Unit 3: Meeting the Challenges

### Learning Goals

- To explore how best to meet and engage with the challenges on life's journey.
- To identify some of the things that impede us on our journey, and how we can overcome these obstacles.
- To explore some examples of how people have dealt well with their challenges, or helped others to do so.

### Faith Goals

- To become aware that God is always with you, ready to support you through the challenges you will meet on your journey.
- To grow in your own faith by observing the example of others who have been motivated by their faith to do great things.

### Icebreaker

- If the average human life span was forty years, how might you live your life differently?

### Content Summary

- Stage three on life's journey: Meeting the challenges
- A story of triumph over adversity: Helen Keller
- Our mind can be our biggest obstacle
- Fear and suffering can be obstacles on our journey
- Managing our fears
- The experience of suffering
- The helpers are always out there!
- Faith can help us to face our challenges.
- All religions advocate love and care of one's neighbour.
- Turning difficult experiences into positive ones
- The role of prayer in dealing with life's challenges
- Finding our coping mechanisms
- Closing Reflection: *Lectio divina*

### Take-Aways

- Challenges are inevitable on life's journey. While some of these experiences can be unwelcome and unpleasant, the wisdom we gain from facing and dealing with them helps us to grow and develop. We can turn negative experiences into positive ones.
- Anxiety and worry are a normal part of adolescence, but there are many ways of managing stressful situations and maintaining balance in the various aspects of our lives.
- The approach we take to life's problems will determine the consequences that arise from them.
- Empathy, or the ability to understand and feel for what others are going through, can be a great motivator to taking action on behalf of others.



## **Module 1, Unit 4: Discovering the Real You**

### **Learning Goals**

- To explore who you are as a person, including identifying your personality type using the Enneagram.
- To recognise your unique gifts and characteristics, and identify how you can best use them to help you grow into the person you want to be.
- To explore the concept of happiness and to discover some of the secrets to happiness.

### **Faith Goal**

- To see the link between faith and happiness and to work on strengthening that link in your own life.

### **Icebreaker**

- How would you like other people to think about you?

### **Content Summary**

- Stage four on life's journey: Discovering the real you
- Exploration of story 'A Teaspoon of Oil' from Paulo Coelho's *The Alchemist*
- Our own search for happiness
- Personality types based on the Enneagram
- What we like about ourselves, and the characteristics we would like to have
- Exercises in self-love
- The concept of happiness
- Christianity and happiness: the Kingdom of God and the Beatitudes
- Pope Francis on happiness
- Buddhism and happiness
- Closing reflection: The Examen

### **Take-Aways**

- Having a sense of who you are as a person and of what is important to you can help you in your search for happiness.
- Appreciating what you already have and learning to enjoy the life you have been given, rather than always reaching for something more, can lead to a happier life.
- Setting aside quiet time in your day for prayer and reflection is central to getting to know yourself.
- Happiness is a habit we can all practise.
- Research shows that people who have religious faith are more likely to be satisfied with their lives, or happy.



## **Module 1, Unit 5: Finding Your Purpose**

### **Learning Goals**

- To reflect on where you were at when you started this module and to begin to think about the direction you will take from here.
- To identify the things that motivate you in life, which will help you to find your purpose.

### **Faith Goal**

- To recognise that, as a Christian, you are called to serve others, as Jesus modelled for us.

### **Icebreaker**

- If you could have any job that you can imagine, what job might you choose, and why?

### **Content Summary**

- Stage five on life's journey: Finding your purpose
- The concept of mission
- Fr Peter McVerry – example of a man with a purpose
- Christians are called to serve others
- Kindness is good for your health!
- Finding your purpose has a lot to do with what motivates you
- Setting short- and long-term goals
- Explore in your own time: recommended books, films and podcasts
- Closing reflection: Poem 'Discovery' by Toyohiko Kagawa

### **Take-Aways**

- We all want to do something worthwhile with our lives, to feel that we 'make a difference'.
- As Christians, we are called to serve others, just as Jesus served people during his time on earth.
- In order to discover our purpose, we must first be clear on what motivates us.
- Spending time identifying both your short- and long-term goals can help you to achieve them.
- Each of us can contribute to making the world a better place.





# Module 2: Climate Justice

Content is explored through a mix of illustrated text, video and audio resources, guided reflection and discussion, and interactive or written activities – with the focus always on exploration and discovery, leading to personal growth and action.

## Module 2, Unit 1: Setting Out with Wonder

### Learning Goals

- To be aware of the wonder of creation that is in evidence all around us.
- To learn some fascinating facts about our planet and the universe.
- To recognise the interconnectedness and interdependence of all the elements of creation, and our role in protecting these connections.
- To compare the religious and the scientific visions of the origins of the world.
- To explore the main causes of climate change.
- To consider the importance of hope in the context of the challenges posed by climate change.
- To explore what *Laudato Si'* teaches about how we are called to respond to the climate crisis.

### Faith Goals

- To see the wonder of creation as God's gift to us.
- To recognise our unique calling to be stewards, or caretakers, of this gift for future generations.

### Icebreaker

- What kind of world do you imagine when you look to the future?

### Content Summary

- The wonder of creation
- Facts and statistics about planet Earth and the universe
- 'Ode to the Wonder of Life' by Richard Feynman
- The religious vision of creation
- The scientific explanation for creation
- The climate crisis – causes and effects
- 2022 report of Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)
- Messages of hope in *Laudato Si'*
- Closing reflection: 'Miracles' by Walt Whitman



### Take-Aways

- When we look at the world with wonder, we will be more motivated to take care of it.
- We are called to be stewards, or caretakers, of creation.
- The religious and the scientific views of creation do not contradict each other.
- We are experiencing a global climate crisis, but this is not a hopeless situation. Much can be achieved by people taking the correct actions to combat global warming.
- *Laudato Si'* contains a message of hope that can inspire us to be true stewards of creation.



## **Module 2, Unit 2: Encountering Earth's Helpers**

### **Learning Goals**

- To know the meaning of the term 'climate justice'.
- To become aware of some of the people who are working to combat the effects of climate change and bring about climate justice.
- To become familiar with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals.
- To have a basic understanding of the key international initiatives and agreements relating to the climate crisis.
- To identify some of the things you can do to help in the battle against climate change.

### **Faith Goals**

- To grow in your faith by observing the example of others who are motivated by their faith to be good stewards of creation.

### **Icebreaker**

- Who do you think are the people and/or the organisations that are leading the battle against climate change?

### **Content Summary**

- Mary Reynolds and the 'We Are the Ark' Project
- The importance of awareness
- Trócaire's work in the area of climate justice; examples from Kenya, Mozambique and the Philippines
- The United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals
- Other key climate initiatives at international level
- Closing reflection: On opening our eyes to God's presence in the world

### **Take-Aways**

- When faced with a problem or crisis, you will always encounter those who are willing to help.
- There are 'helpers' all over the world who are working tirelessly to combat the effects of climate change on our planet and its people.
- There are many things that each of us can do to play our part in being good stewards of creation.
- Awareness is key! If we are unaware of or indifferent to what is happening in the world around us, we are unlikely to take the actions that are needed to bring about change.





## Module 2, Unit 3: Meeting the Challenge to Live Sustainably

### **Learning Goals**

- To reflect on your own patterns of consumption and use of technology and to identify changes you could make so as to live more sustainably and responsibly.
- To understand the meaning and the impact of fast fashion.

### **Faith Goals**

- To recognise that our call to be stewards of creation includes making responsible choices as consumers.
- To desire to follow the principle of non-attachment, which is reflected in Catholic teaching.

### **Icebreaker**

- How does buying new things make you feel? And for how long does that feeling usually last?

### **Content Summary**

- Throw-away culture and food waste
- Throw-away culture and technology
- Fast fashion
- Why do we buy?
- Non-attachment and happiness: The Buddhist perspective; the Christian perspective
- Closing reflection: Jewish folktale 'A Squash and a Squeeze'

### **Take-Aways**

- The amount we consume is having a devastating effect on the planet.
- We are all faced with the challenge of living a more sustainable life.
- Each of us has the ability to change the way we consume so as to contribute to a more just world.
- Learning to crave less and focus on more important things, such as people and experiences, will lead to a happier life.



## Module 2, Unit 4: Discovering New Possibilities for Action

### Learning Goals

- To recognise that learning about the climate crisis can lead us to new discoveries about ourselves and our place in the world, which can inspire us to take action.
- To discover things from and be motivated by the example of those whose actions are already helping to tackle the effects of climate change.

### Faith Goal

- To be inspired by Pope Francis and others to recognise our calling to play our part in solving the problems facing our planet.

### Icebreaker

- What aspect of the current climate crisis causes you most concern, and why?

### Content Summary

- Mary Reynolds' journey of discovery and how she has inspired others
- The global water crisis
- Pope Francis speaks about this crisis in *Laudato Si'*
- Aidlink and the global water crisis
- Journey of discovery of Anne Cleary, CEO of Aidlink
- Closing reflection: on Matthew 7:7-8, 13-14

### Take-Aways

- All knowledge and all journeys lead to discovery.
- Even when we discover something worrying or upsetting, it can motivate us to take action and make a difference, as happened with Mary Reynolds and Anne Cleary.
- Water shortage is a big concern for our planet; indeed, so concerning that Pope Francis mentions water forty-seven times in *Laudato Si'*. Being aware of how essential water is for life should motivate us to conserve it and use it wisely.
- Discovering and being aware of our own use of natural resources, including water, can lead us to take positive steps to consume in a more responsible way.



## Module 2, Unit 5: Becoming an Agent of Change

### Learning Goals

- To reflect on all that you have learned about climate justice, and to decide on some concrete things you will do to contribute to resolving the climate crisis.
- To participate in some 'action projects' with your class to raise awareness of the climate crisis in your school and community.

### Faith Goal

- To hear and respond to Pope Francis' call to 'listen to the voice of creation' and join with other Christians as they 'pray and work together to care for our common home'.

### Icebreaker

- If there was one thing you would change about the world, what would it be?

### Content Summary

- Guided reflection on what you have learned
- Becoming an agent of change
- A call to action from Pope Francis
- *Laudato Si'* film *The Letter*
- Ideas for 'Action Projects'
- Explore in your own time: recommended books, films and podcasts
- Closing reflection: sung version of St Francis of Assisi's 'Canticle of the Creatures'

### Take-Aways

- Every journey, no matter how difficult, has the potential to open our eyes to new possibilities.
- All knowledge can lead to new discoveries about ourselves and the world around us.
- Everything we do to act more responsibly towards the earth, no matter how small an act it is, will make a difference.



# Module 3: Finding Meaning Through Art

Content is explored through a mix of illustrated text, video and audio resources, guided reflection and discussion, and interactive or written activities – with the focus always on exploration and discovery, leading to personal growth and action.

## Module 3, Unit 1: Setting Out to Explore Art

### Learning Goals

- To appreciate how visual art can communicate meaning and take us on a journey of discovery.
- To discover some of the reasons why people paint.
- To recognise that works of art, like God's work of creation, are an ongoing process.

### Faith Goals

- To become aware of and value how art can help us to understand the transcendent, or that which is beyond the limits of ordinary experience.
- To see the human artist as a reflection of the first and ultimate Artist, God the Creator.

### Icebreaker

- When was the last time you were stopped in your tracks by something really beautiful?

### Content Summary

- Exploration of *Starry Night* by Vincent Van Gogh
- Encountering art: a journey of discovery
- Why people paint
- Creation - an ongoing process
- Why we look at art
- Closing reflection: Pope Francis' Prayer for Artists

### Take-Aways

- A work of an art is an invitation to an encounter, involving the artist, the artist's subject matter and the viewer. The viewer isn't just a passive spectator, but a participant.
- A moving piece of art can connect us with the transcendent, or that which goes beyond the limits of our everyday realities and experiences.
- The artist is an echo of God, the creator of all things. Unlike the artist, who creates using material objects and who takes inspiration from things already in existence, God created everything from nothing (*ex nihilo*).
- Like the work of an artist, God's creation is never truly 'finished'.



## **Module 3, Unit 2: Encountering Sacred and Devotional Art**

### **Learning Goals**

- To learn how to look at and analyse a painting.
- To understand the role of art in illuminating stories from Sacred Scripture and interpreting the mysteries of faith.
- To examine the nature and purpose of devotional art.
- To know what is meant by a religious devotion and to recognise the role that art can play in nurturing religious devotion.

### **Faith Goals**

- To contemplate the nature of religious mysteries depicted in art.
- To value how art can help us to grow in our understanding of the stories from Sacred Scripture and the mysteries of faith.

### **Icebreaker**

- Is a picture really worth a thousand words?

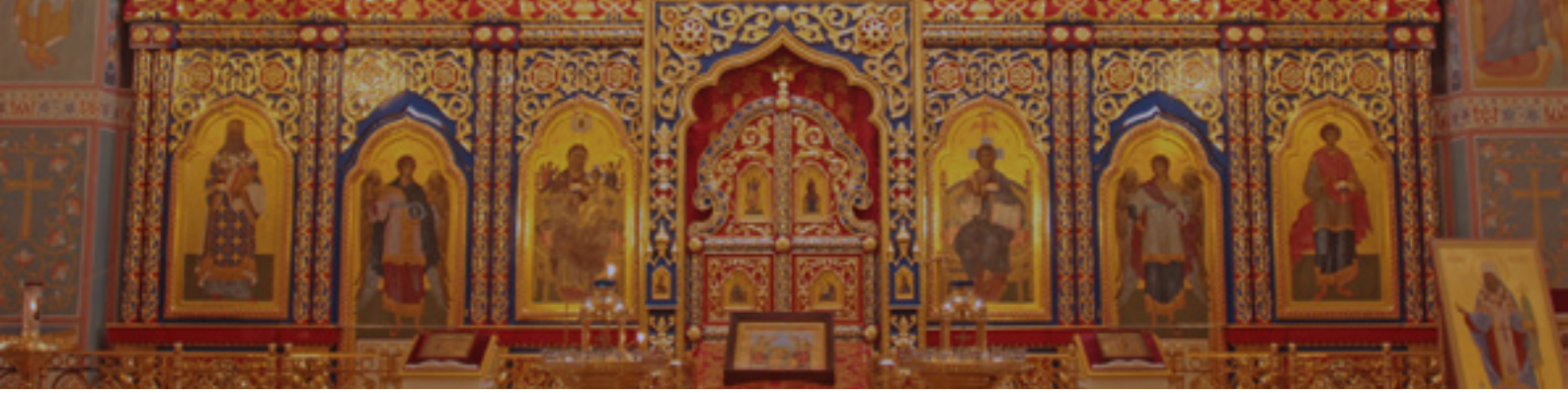
### **Content Summary**

- Suggestions for approaching works of art – with exercises based on virtual images from various galleries
- The role of sacred art
- Sacred art as illustration; *The Supper at Emmaus* (1601) by Caravaggio
- Sacred art as an aid to understanding mystery; *Paradise* by Giovanni di Paolo
- Devotional art: The Child of Prague
- Art and the inculturation of the Christian faith
- Religious tattoos
- Closing reflection: Prayer of Pope Benedict XVI to the Holy Child Jesus

### **Take-Aways**

- Looking at art can be intimidating at first, but practice makes it easier.
- Art can be an important part of religious experience because:
  - it can make Sacred Scripture clearer through illustration;
  - it can make complex or abstract ideas easier to grasp;
  - it can be used by believers to show devotion to God.





## **Module 3, Unit 3: Meeting the Challenges of Religious Images and Symbols**

### **Learning Goals**

- To recognise that art has played a role in the history of the Church from its earliest days.
- To understand the importance of symbol in art and to identify some early Christian symbols.
- To appreciate what sets the Orthodox icon apart from other art.
- To be aware of the opposition to religious images in the Church's history.

### **Faith Goals**

- To see the value of religious images as objects of both reverence and instruction.
- To recognise that sacred images can act as a pathway to God and provide us with rich spiritual experiences.

### **Icebreaker**

- How do the images that surround you – posters, artwork, phone wallpaper – impact your life?

### **Content Summary**

- Artists honour God.
- Larger than life art, e.g. *Cristo Redentor* in Rio de Janeiro and *Christ the King* in Świebodzin, Poland
- Art as a pathway to God
- Symbolism in early Christianity
- Icons, e.g. St Luke's *Theotokos of Vladimir*; *The Transfiguration* by Theophanes the Greek
- Opposition to religious images in the history of the Church; iconoclasm
- The Protestant Reformation and its challenge to religious images
- Religious images as objects of reverence and instruction
- Closing reflection: *Visio divina*



## **Module 3, Unit 4: Discovering Meaning through Art**

### **Learning Goals**

- To understand that the experience and process of creating a painting is a journey of discovery for the artist; and that journey of discovery is passed on to and continued by the viewer.
- To explore examples of how artists have used the techniques and skills they have discovered to communicate meaning and to express mystery through their art.

### **Faith Goals**

- To find inspiration and insights for our own spiritual journey from reflecting on sacred art.
- To experience prayer through drawing or doodling.

### **Icebreaker**

- 'Painting is self-discovery.' – Jackson Pollock

### **Content Summary**

- Art – Reflecting and promoting discovery
- Discovering Giotto
- Discovering Albrecht Dürer (1471–1528)
- Discovering Artemisia Gentileschi (1593–1652/3)
- Discovering Georges Rouault (1871–1958)
- Discovering Janet McKenzie
- Closing reflection: prayer with doodling

### **Take-Aways**

- For the past eight hundred years, artists have continued to make new discoveries – about art, about God and about themselves.
- Each time we view a work of art, we, too, have an opportunity to make similar discoveries.
- Even when we might think that God is distant from us, such as in times of personal or communal crisis, the gift of creating or interpreting art can bring us close to him.
- We can use art, such as drawing or doodling, as a means of prayer and self-discovery.



## **Module 3, Unit 5: Sharing the Faith Through Sacred Art**

### **Learning Goals**

- To reflect on how what you have learned in this module will change your relationship with art in the future.
- To acquire the knowledge and skills that will allow you to discover and also help other people to understand some of the meanings and mysteries in sacred art.

### **Faith Goals**

- To grow in your appreciation and understanding of images from sacred art that seek to represent the stories and mysteries of the Christian faith tradition.
- To respond to Pope Francis' call to make art an instrument of evangelisation, or a means of introducing others to Jesus Christ and his Gospel.

### **Icebreaker**

- Contact with beauty always lifts us up and helps us go beyond ... – Pope Francis

### **Content Summary**

- 'Reading' sacred images and teaching with them
- Saints – one of the most common themes in Christian art
- Recognising the saints in art, e.g. St Peter, St John the Baptist, St Mary Magdalene, St Paul
- Recognising the Evangelists in art
- Recognising Irish saints, e.g. St Patrick and St Brigid
- Blessed Fra Angelico: patron of artists
- Explore in your own time: Recommended books, TV series, videos, websites, Vatican documents
- Closing reflection: Activity based on Pope John Paul II's *Letter to Artists*

### **Take-Aways**

- Art can provide us with a window into spiritual experience, often with greater ease than can be achieved by words alone.
- Even a little knowledge about sacred art can provide great insight, and we can share such insight with other people.
- Art can be 'an instrument of evangelisation', an instrument for introducing people to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It can bring insight and understanding to the teachings and stories of the Gospel.