RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

FOR

STANDARD 7

BY ZIKOMO MASESE BANDA 0999246769

TABLE OF CONTENTS

UNIT	**PAGE**
UNIT 1 GOD'S MESSENGERS	3
UNIT 2 TYPES, CHOICE AND QUALITIES OF GOD'S MESSENGERS	4
UNIT 3 THE ROLES OF GOD'S MESSENGERS	6
UNIT 4 THE CONCEPT OF MARRIAGE AND FAMILY LIFE	8
UNIT 5 THE TEACHINGS OF SOCIETY ON MARRIAGE AND FAMILY LIFE	10
UNIT 6 RELIGIOUS TEACHINGS ON MARRIAGE AND FAMILY LIFE	11
UNIT 7 THE IMPORTANCE OF MARRIAGE AND FAMILY LIFE	13
UNIT 8 GOD'S CREATION	14
UNIT 9 THE RELATIONSHIP AMONG GOD'S CREATION	15
UNIT 10 THE IMPORTANCE OF TAKING CARE OF GOD'S CREATION	16
UNIT 11 THE RESPONSIBILITIES OVER GOD'S CREATION	17
UNIT 12 PROJECT WORK TO TAKE CARE OF GOD'S CREATION	18
UNIT 13 THE CONCEPT OF POVERTY	19
UNIT 14 HOW INSTITUTIONS DEAL WITH POVERTY	21
UNIT 15 PROJECT ON HELPING THE POOR	23
REFERENCES	20

FIRST EDITION 2019

WHATSAPP #s 0991295167/0993559114

GOD'S MESSENGERS

A messenger is one who passes a message from one person to another.

People send messages in different ways.

They may send messages through letters, telephones, faxes, emails and through other people.

It is important that people send messages through appropriate means to ensure effective delivery.

Similarly, God sends messages to people through his messengers.

God’s messengers are people who receive messages from God and pass them to people on earth.

Some of these God’s messengers are Moses, Elijah, Isaiah, Jeremiah Muhammad, Amos, Ezekiel, Mbona Makewana and other religious leaders.

UNIT 2 TYPES, CHOICE AND QUALITIES OF GOD'S MESSENGERS

GOD'S MESSENGERS

God speaks to people through his messengers.

These messengers are of two types.

TWO TYPES OF MESSENGERS

- Spiritual messengers
- Human messengers

Spiritual messengers are ancestral spirits in African Traditional Religions, and angels in Christianity and Islam.

In African Traditional Religions, God is believed to communicate to people through ancestral spirits, for instance, the spirit of Mbona.

In Christianity and Islam, Gabriel, God's angel, spoke to the Virgin Mary on the birth of Jesus Christ (Luke 1:26-38; Quran 3:45-47; 19:16-21).

The whole Quran was revealed to Prophet Muhammad through Angel Gabriel (Quran 81:19-20).

Human messengers are persons who are chosen and appointed by God.

Some of the messenger are:

- Moses in Exodus 2:23, 4:1-31
- Muhammed in Quran 19:52; 20:9-47
- Elijah in 1 Kings 17,18,19
- Samuel in 1 Samuel 3:1-25
- Isaiah in Isaiah 6:1-13
- Jeremiah in Jeremiah 1:4-10, 11-19; 2:1-18
- Amos in Amos 1
- Ezekiel in Ezekiel 1:1; 3:1-27
- Mbona and Makewana in oral traditions

God chooses anybody to be his messenger.

No excuses would stop God to appoint his chosen messengers.

He always promises to be with his messengers and helps them.

They are to deliver the messages of freedom, forgiveness, reconciliation, love of God, faith, hope and salvation.

SOME OF THE QUALITIES OF GOD'S MESSENGERS

- faith in god
- love of prayer
- readiness to suffer physical pain or any other trouble because of love of god
- truthfulness
- moral integrity
- cheerful
- obedience to God's message
- humility

UNIT 3 THE ROLES OF GOD'S MESSENGERS

THE ROLE OF GOD'S MESSENGERS

Messengers have different roles in everyday life.

They deliver letters, parcels, post cards and messages.

Messengers unite people separated by distances.

They ensure timely and efficient delivery of messages.

Similarly God's messengers ensure efficient communication between God and people.

THE ROLES OF GOD'S MESSENGERS

- to announce God's message
- to pray for others
- to worship and praise God
- to perform miracles and wonders
- to tell people what God wants
- to tell people that God is present in their lives and is in control of events
- to call people to conversion
- to preach justice, kindness and compassion
- to help the people to honour and obey God
- to keep his commands and be faithful to him
- to guide people in moral behaviour
- to help people know what is right and wrong, what is good and evil

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE WORK OF GOD'S MESSENGERS

- It helps people to know God, his will and plans
- It helps people to express their thoughts, challenges, successes, failures and needs
- It creates good relationship between God and people
- It makes salvation possible to all who hear God's message and act upon it

THE CHALLENGES FACED BY GOD'S MESSENGERS

- Rejection
- Persecution
- Discouragement
- Fear

Here are some examples of the messengers who experienced such challenges

When the people of Israel became rebellious and refused to listen to God's message, Ezekiel ran away and became a refugee (Ezekiel 12:1-7).

When the Israelites complained in the desert saying '…But you have brought us out into this desert to starve us all to death,' Moses was discouraged (Exodus 16:3).

The people of Anathoth threatened to kill Jeremiah if he continued proclaiming God's message and this brought fear to the messenger. God told Jeremiah not to fear the people because God was going to punish them (Jeremiah 12:18-23).

UNIT 4 THE CONCEPT OF MARRIAGE AND FAMILY LIFE

THE CONCEPT OF MARRIAGE AND FAMILY LIFE

Marriage is the union of a man and a woman by a legal ceremony.

Or

Marriage is a union between a man and a woman who become husband and wife.

People get married in different ways.

Some register their marriage in a court of law or appropriate government office.

People may also get married through traditional customs that include the use of marriage advocate (ankhoswe).

Christians marry in church.

In Islam, all details of marriage are set out in an agreement between the parents of the bride and the groom. The religious ceremony is called nikah.

Sometimes, marriage may be by repute or by permanent cohabitation, for example, a couple may generally be considered to be married if they live together permanently as husband and wife without necessarily being ceremoniously married to one another.

There are advantages in religious marriages.

In Christianity, the holy matrimony reflects the union of Christ with his followers (Ephesians 5:25).

Couples are encouraged to be faithful to each other in their sexual relationships.

In upbringing their children, couples experience God's love for creation.

They promise to remain married until death. Hence, divorce is discouraged or forbidden.

In ATR, ankhoswe ensure some security to married couples. Ankhoswe play many roles including that of advisors

TYPES OF MARRIAGES

- Civil marriage
- Religious marriage
- Traditional marriage
- Cohabitation
- Elopement

THE CONCEPT OF FAMILY

The family is the basic unit of society.

The family members are related by blood, marriage or adoption.

The family systems can be nuclear, extended and single parent family.

UNIT 5 THE TEACHINGS OF SOCIETY ON MARRIAGE AND FAMILY LIFE

THE TEACHINGS OF SOCIETY ON MARRIAGE AND FAMILY LIFE

Society looks at marriage as one of the rites of passage.

During the marriage ceremony, some symbolic rituals are performed to teach the bride and the groom about love, faithfulness, obedience, interdependence, headship of the family and lifelong partnership.

For example, the ritual of exchanging rings symbolises love and faithfulness.

Similarly, the ritual of exchanging live chickens symbolises headship of the family life-long partnership and roles of the husband and wife in the family.

The family is a basic unit of society.

Society believes that family members are related by blood, marriage and adoption.

There is also a belief by the society that chicken are a blessing to the family. A husband and a wife are expected to perform their respective duties in the family as well as treat their relations fairly.

UNIT 6 RELIGIOUS TEACHINGS ON MARRIAGE AND FAMILY LIFE

RELIGIOUS TEACHINGS ON MARRIAGE AND FAMILY LIFE

The scriptures state that marriage is a gift from God in which a man and a woman become one flesh (Genesis 2:18).

Marriage brings people together.

Christians get married in a church.

Marriage is covenant of generous love (Ephesians 5:25-32), and once contracted, it remains for life.

ISLAM
Islam looks at marriage as a strong bond. It teaches that every Muslim should get married in order to attain mutual love, harmony and respect. Muslims are encouraged not to marry unbelieving women (idolaters). Since it is not an Islamic practise to establish boy-girl relationship, those intending to marry are only allowed to meet in the presence of their relatives.

ATR
In ATR, followers believe that to marry is God's plan. They are taught to trust one another, to tell the truth, to be hardworking and generous. The parents may advise their son or daughter who to choose for marriage. Marriage arrangements are made during the *chinkhoswe* ceremony

CHRISTIANITY
Christians regard the family as part of God's plan for the protection of people and for the rearing of children. Loyalty and faithfulness are stressed in a Christian family. Parents are encouraged to love and respect their children. The scriptures also teach children to honour and obey their parents (exodus 20:12)

THE CONCEPT OF FAMILY

ISLAM
Muslims believe that the idea of family comes from the Quran and the prophet's tradition. The prophet Muhammad says that the best Muslim is the one who is best to his or her family and that the greatest and most blessed joy in life is righteous wife. The role of the husband includes caring for the wife and the

children. Both parents are responsible for the care and upbringing their children. Children should also obey and honour their parents. Muslims treat parents and other relatives as part of the family (Quran 17:23-24)

ATR

In ATR, a family has always been an important and respected social unit. In the family, people share the work and other responsibilities. Every adult has the responsibility of bearing and raising children. Children help parents in the running of day-to-day family matters. Initiations help to educate young people in traditional and cultural customs.

FAMILY PLANNING

All religions have teachings on family planning. The Roman Catholic Church prescribes natural family planning, that is, using the fertile and infertile cycles. Hence, it forbids the use of artificial methods of birth control such as condoms and the pill. It considers loving union and procreation as inseparable.

The Anglican and Protestant churches allow contraception. They maintain that sexual union should not always lead to precreation. In Islam, children are seen as a blessing from Allah, while in ATR, having many children is also encouraged.

UNIT 7 THE IMPORTANCE OF MARRIAGE AND FAMILY LIFE

THE IMPORTANCE OF MARRIAGE AND FAMILY LIFE

Christians, Islam, and ATR believe that marriage is important to their members.

The importance of marriage include:

- moral safeguard
- lessening temptations
- bearing children
- experiencing love, trust and a sense of belonging

The family is important because:

- it protects family members
- it provides an opportunity for sharing sexuality with a wife and husband in an exclusive relationship
- it provides care for those members who are sick or disabled, old and young
- it provides material support, making sure children have food and clothing and access to education and health care
- It is an agent of character formation

CHALLENGES OF FAMILY LIFE

- misunderstandings
- lack of education
- loss of loved ones
- poverty
- illness
- unhappiness due to forced marriage

UNIT 8 GOD'S CREATION

GOD'S CREATION

According to creation stories both in the Bible and the Quran, people learn that God created the universe which includes the following: night and day (darkness and light); the sky; water in seas and the land we call earth; plants that bear grain and those that bear fruit; the sun; the moon and the stars; all living creatures in the water and all kinds of birds; all kinds of animal life: domestic and wild, large and small; insects that fly and those that crawl; wind and air. Lastly, God created man, male and female (Genesis 1 and 2; Quran 7:54; 2:21; 2:164; 3:49).

In African Traditional Religions, there are many creation stories one of which is the creation of the first man and woman as narrated in the story of the 'Chameleon and the first man'.

The story says:

> *In the beginning, there was only God and the animals on earth. One day, the chameleon was fishing and caught two strange creatures in his woven trap. He sought advice from God on what to do with them. He was told to spare them and let them live on land and they grew to their full size as man and woman.*

REASONS FOR GOD'S CREATION

God created people in his likeness. He blessed them and told them to have many children, so that their descendants would live all over the earth and bring it under their control. He also put them in charge of the universe. (Genesis 1:26-29). The people were asked to worship God (Quran 2:21-22). Islam adds that the cattle were created for mankind; from them mankind would derive warmth and numerous benefits (Quran 16:5-8).

Also God created birds to add beauty, and provide food. (Genesis 1:19-22). By creating fish and other sea creatures, God wanted the waters and the air to be filled with life (Genesis 1:20-22). God also created insects that fly and those that crawl. For instance, bees make honey which is useful to people (Quran 16:68-69).

It is the Lord who sends rain clouds and showers, making the fields green for everyone (Zechariah 10:1).

UNIT 9 THE RELATIONSHIP AMONG GOD'S CREATION

THE RELATIONSHIP AMONG GOD'S CREATION

God created a man and said: ‘I am putting you in charge of the other creation'. (Genesis 1:26-29; Quran 2:21-22).

Humanity would derive warmth and numerous benefits from the creation.

For example, birds add beauty and some are for food. (Genesis 1:19-22).

There is some inter-relationship between people and other creations.

People get food, water, firewood, timber and so forth from the environment.

The environment also benefits from people such as through deliberate afforestation and applying manure.

Animals get food and shelter in the same environment.

Therefore, people should take more care of the environment by avoiding bush fire, avoiding cutting down trees carelessly and avoiding polluting water and air.

People should conserve water by not cultivating along rivers and hills.

By doing these, humanity fulfils its responsibility of stewardship over creation.

UNIT 10 THE IMPORTANCE OF TAKING CARE OF GOD'S CREATION

THE IMPORTANCE OF TAKING CARE OF GOD'S CREATION

God's creation meets many challenges.

Some of them are:

- drought
- floods
- earthquake
- construction of buildings
- construction of bridges
- construction of roads
- overgrazing of animals
- cutting down trees carelessly
- the bush fires

There are many reasons for caring God's creation.

Religions encourage their members to care for God's creation.

Through this, members demonstrate their obedience to God's word.

They fulfil their goal of being true stewards of God's creation.

It is also important to care for God's creation in order to sustain it.

This sustenance will provide food, shelter and protection to other creatures.

Furthermore, God's power is seen through his creation.

UNIT 11 THE RESPONSIBILITY OVER GOD'S CREATION

THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF PEOPLE OVER GOD'S CREATION

God's creation is the environment including living things.

Religions are equally concerned with the great damage which is done to the environment (Quran 2:21-22; 44:39: Ephesians 4:28-30).

As such, different religions have made various contributions towards environmental conservation.

Some of their contributions in sensitising people on the need to conserve the environment are as follows.

CHRISTIANITY

Christianity teaches its members that they are men and women who are the stewards and curators not exploiters of God's creation (Genesis 1:26-29). As such, Christians must support those working for the conservation and improvement of God's creation. It also teaches that the earth and all life on it is a gift from God given to people to share and develop, not to dominate and exploit.

Other Christian organisations such as the Christian Ecology Link, the CADECOM, Christian Aid and World Vision also sensitise people on the need to preserve God's creation. Apart from running conferences and producing newsletters and publications, they also equip people with skills on how they can sustain the environment. In most cases, they participate in planting trees.

ISLAM

The Muslim Declaration on nature states, 'His trustees are responsible for maintaining the unity of his creation, the integrity of the earth, its flora and fauna, its wildlife and natural environment (Quran 21:16-17, 15:85).

ATR

Similarly in ATR, members are forbidden from tampering with places which are believed to be inhabited by spirits such as graveyards, bodies of water and forests. As such, ATR forbids its members from setting bush fires, polluting water and cutting down trees carelessly.

UNIT 12 PROJECT WORK TO TAKE CARE OF GOD'S CREATION

PROJECT WORK TO TAKE CARE OF GOD'S CREATION

The responsibility of looking after the world is still the same as that which God gave to Adam and Eve in the Bible. Many religions teach the need for taking care of God's creation.

In Christianity, the Methodist Conference (1991) urges its followers to support those working for conservation of God's creation.

The Roman Catholic Statement (1991) stresses that God gave people the earth and all life on it to share and develop and not to exploit it.

The Muslim Declaration says God's trustees must maintain the unity of his creation.

The ATR forbids people from tempering with places inhabited by spirits such as graveyards and forests.

Learners are expected to care for God's creation.

One way of doing this is to carry out a project of taking care of God's creation.

However, they need to plan and carry out the project properly.

They can do this by identifying the need, listing people, material, time monetary resources.

The learners must also assess and evaluate their activities during and after the work.

UNIT 13 THE CONCEPT OF POVERTY

THE CONCEPT OF POVERTY

Poverty is lack of basic needs.

Basic needs are essentials that a person cannot live without.

They include food, accommodation and clothes.

If one does not have them, one is regarded as a poor person.

There is also spiritual poverty which includes not having the needs of mind or soul.

People may become poor for different reasons.

FACTORS THAT LEAD TO POVERTY (CAUSES OF POVERTY)

- not earning enough money to buy basic needs
- unemployment
- lack of entrepreneurship
- losing property through calamities
- ignorance
- laziness
- lack of creative thinking

The holy Bible and the holy Quran have addressed poverty.

In Christianity, it is stated that when one gives to the poor, it is like lending to the Lord, and the Lord will pay the giver back (Proverbs 19:17).

Islam enjoins its followers to practise regular charity for the benefit of the poor. It is an obligation for the rich to take part of their wealth and give it to the poor. This obligation is the third pillar of Islam (Quran 2:273, 2:110).

Being in a state of poverty does not make one have no honour or respect in the sight of God.

The most honourable people in the sight of God are those who are God-fearing (Quran 49:13)

In ATR, the practice of generosity is encouraged as depicted in the proverb '*kupatsa n'kuika* (giving is saving)'. However, the poor are encouraged to develop the spirit of self-help.

THE CHALLENGES FACED BY POOR PEOPLE

- They have insufficient food
- Illiteracy is common among them
- They stay in poor houses.
- They lack self-esteem
- Leading some of them to indulge in bad deeds in order to earn money

UNIT 14 HOW INSTITUTIONS DEAL WITH POVERTY

DEALING WITH POVERTY

In society, people are expected to help those in poverty.

In Malawi, a group of people may assist the poor by weeding their gardens or the poor may work for others for payment in kind.

Contributions of money, clothes and food assist victims of disasters caused by floods or fire.

Individual efforts cannot manage to provide a sufficient solution to poverty.

The government through the Ministry of Agriculture empowers the poor locally by offering them subsidised fertilizer so that they can produce enough food.

Every District Assembly has within it a social welfare department that is responsible for helping the needy.

The government also has a department that assists people who have lost their property through natural disasters such as floods.

One Village One Product (OVOP) promotes local products in rural areas.

There are other institutions that deal with poverty.

For instance, there are orphanages to help orphans who lost their parents.

Some organisations support elderly people who cannot manage to work, and others help needy students.

To respond to God's call to help the poor, religions form organisations to deal with poverty among the people.

These religious organisations assist orphans in education and relief activities.

For instance, there is the Islamic Zakat Fund (IZF) that sponsors needy students studying tertiary education while the African Development and Education Fund (ADEF) sponsors needy students at secondary school level.

AL-Barakah Charity Trust and Asian Muslim Relief Agency (AMRA) work in education and relief. They also empower women with skills such as tailoring.

In Christianity, there are also organisations working for the interest of the poor.

The Christian organisations include the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA), Catholic Development Commission in Malawi (CADECOM), World Vision, Christian Hospitals Association in Malawi (CHAM) and Digitals International.

These organisations work in several areas.

The World Vision, for instance, works in food security by training people in farm projects to reduce poverty.

CHAM is a Christian health organisation that helps the poor to have access to good medical treatment. Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) assists the poor and teaches the people to avoid contracting HIV and AIDS and STIs.

UNIT 15 PROJECT ON HELPING THE POOR

PROJECT ON HELPING THE POOR

Various religions accept responsibility towards their neighbours and those in need.

Christians accept that they are the children of the same heavenly father.

Jesus had set standards of loving and caring for everyone.

Christians believe that whenever they feed the hungry, give a drink to the thirsty, receive strangers into their homes, clothe the naked and visit prisoners, they do it for Jesus (Matthews 25:35-40).

Similarly, Muslims regard all followers as being members of one big family.

Most Muslims live in extended families and family ties are often very strong.

This element of assisting the poor in Islam is one of the five pillars, that is, alms giving (Zakat).

According to Islamic teaching, every Muslim has an obligation to assist the poor.

This is also demonstrated during the festivals of Idi-ul-fitr and Eid-ul-adha where food is distributed to the poor.

In ATR, members are encouraged to assist the poor.

This is shown in a number of songs and proverbs such as *Kupatsa n'kusunga* (giving is investing) and *Mnzako akapsa ndevu m'zimire* (if your neighbour's beard is on fire, extinguish it because tomorrow he will extinguish yours)

The learners must not only be heard talking about helping others, they must be seen helping the needy. To succeed in this, there is need to plan and implement the task well.

The process involves identifying needs, tasks and resources before implementing the project.

The learners also need to evaluate the project continuously.

GLOSSARY

Messenger – one who passes a message from one person to another

Dutifulness – showing proper respect and obedience to authority

Perseverance – continue steadily with determination in spite of difficulties

Adoption – taking someone's child into one's family with full legal and parental responsibilities

Contraception – the prevention of pregnancy by use of drugs or pills

Moral safeguard – preventing someone from bad behaviour

Prudence – thinking carefully before taking action

Descendant – a person that has grandparents or great grandparents

Universe – space and everything that exists in it

Steward – a person employed to manage another person's property

Curator – a keeper or custodian

Evaluation – assessment or appraisal, judging the value of something

Trustee – a person given control of property in trust with a legal obligation to administer it solely for the purposes specified

Self esteem – one's good opinion of one's own worth

Subsidy – money paid by government or institutions to make prices of basic commodities low.

TYPING BY SHADRACH CHABWERA (BROTHER-IN-LAW)

EDITING BY ZIKOMO MASESE BANDA

REFERENCES

MIE: (2009) Religious Education Teachers' Guide for Standard 7. Domasi; MIE