

Religious Experiences

The following describes a series of three seminars originally designed and run for an undergraduate module on 'Religious Experience'. Each seminar is linked to a learning outcome. Lesson plans are included below.

Session 1

Aim: To explore 'Religion as Common Experience'

Learning Outcomes: by the end of the session, learners will be able to:

- Appreciate how some aspects of Religious Experience are considered 'common' to all religions.
- Relate the abstract discussion of 'common experiences' to their own faith community
- Appreciate the role of Interspirituality

Time	Content	T&L Method	Resources	Assessment
12.10	- Introductions - Review aims & outcomes - Explain session structure	Presentation	Text & Questions made available, in advance, on Blackboard	Observe reactions and general attitudes
12.20	Discussion of set questions	Groups of ~5 (1 Welsh medium) to consider	Flip-chart	Listen to discussions in each group
12.35	Feedback from each group to plenary discussion	Student from each group to present	Flip chart	Questions and answers
12.50	- Summing up, conclusions - Preparation for next session (Wk 21)	Presentation		Post-its / Thesis Questionnaire

Text: Wayne Teasdale 'The Mystic Heart' pp22-30

Questions:

What features of Mystical Experiences, according to Teasdale, are common to all faith traditions? To what extent would you agree with him?

Teasdale sees interspirituality as the 'religion of the third millennium': How, in practical terms, might the interspiritual experience provide benefits to humanity?

Share examples of similar practical activities (to those identified above) within your own faith community. If possible, identify events or actions, in which you have been personally involved.

Session 2

Aim: To explore the value of personal Religious Experiences

Learning Outcomes: by the end of the session, learners will be able to:

- Appreciate how a Religious Experience might be of personal value
- Relate the abstract discussion of 'value' to their own personal Experiences and lives
- Appreciate that the value of Experiences might come through a willingness to explore and share feelings as well as ideas

Time	Content	T&L Method	Resources	Assessment
12.10	- Introductions - Review aims & outcomes - Explain session structure	Presentation	Text & Questions made available, in advance, on Blackboard	Observe reactions and general attitudes
12.20	Discussion of set questions	Groups of ~5 (1 Welsh medium) to consider	Flip-chart	Listen to discussions in each group
12.35	Feedback from each group to plenary discussion	Student from each group to present	Flip chart	Questions and answers
12.50	- Summing up, conclusions - Preparation for next session (Wk 23)	Presentation		Post-its / Thesis Questionnaire

Text: Jung "Memories, Dreams, Reflections" pp320-329

Question:

Jung claims that his best work came after his Near Death Experience. Why might this be the case? Discuss how religious experiences and other transcendent experiences might help to bring out the best in us. Is this your own personal experience? In discussing the value that Jung seems to attribute to his transcendent experience, compare this with your own transcendent experiences and any value you might attribute to them.

Session 3

Aim: To explore the place of silence in Religious Experiences

Learning Outcomes: by the end of the session, learners will be able to:

- Appreciate how silence and solitude are important within Celtic Spirituality and Experience.
- Relate the above discussion to their own spiritual practices and lives
- Appreciate how silence and solitude might enhance the value of religious experience

Time	Content	T&L Method	Resources	Assessment
12.10	- Introductions - Review aims & outcomes - Explain session structure	Presentation	Text & Questions made available, in advance, on Blackboard	Observe reactions and general attitudes
12.20	Discussion of set questions	Groups of ~5	Flip-chart	Listen to discussions in each group
12.35	4-5 minutes of silence (in one big group)			Observe reactions
12.40	Feedback: - of period of silence - from each group to plenary discussion	- Personal Reflections - Scribe from each group to present	Flip chart	Questions and answers
12.50	- Summing up - Conclusions	Presentation		Feedback Form

Text: John O'Donohue 'Anam Cara' pp135-146

Question:

Silence is seen as a powerful force within Celtic Spirituality: why is this? How might silence and solitude assist religious experience and/or add to the value of transcendent experiences? Compare and contrast the theory from Celtic Spirituality with your experience from your own spiritual practice.

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