

## 5.4 ROYAL COMMISSION



### CONCEPT:

The 'Royal Commission' allows students to adopt the role of lawyers cross-examining key characters in a significant scriptural event. Students are asked to examine a scriptural passage which highlights some form of conflict or unusual event and to devise a series of questions that will probe the facts, feelings and future intentions of the characters. The 'Commission' endeavours to probe the reasons as to 'Why' a particular event unfolded in the manner in which it was presented in the Scriptures.



- D:** Encourage students to disclose their own understandings
- E:** Provide choice as to how the task can be accomplished
- E:** Acknowledge the role of emotion in learning
- P:** Develop collaborative and social skills

### PROCESS:

1. Explain the nature of a 'Royal Commission'. A legal process whereby the circumstances surrounding an unusual occurrence are investigated by interrogating the various witnesses as to the facts of events, their feelings, motivations and responses to the event in question. Essentially the process attempts to understand 'Why' various characters reacted in particular ways. Examples from current news stories may be helpful, such as corruption in some branch of the public service or an investigation into some disastrous event.
2. Select a scripture passage that involves some form of conflict between the characters or an unusual interaction such as in the Miracle stories. Conflict stories could include: Moses and the Egyptian Pharaoh; Jesus before Pilate; Jesus and the Pharisees; Stoning of Adulterous woman; St Paul's persecution of the Early Christians ....

3. The class selects the characters who will be interrogated by the 'Royal Commission'. Allocate roles for the class role-play presentation. Key roles could include: Nominated Characters from the scripture passage (real or imaginary); The Royal Commissioner; Counsel assisting the Commissioner...
4. The students with the allocated roles are given time to study the passage and immerse themselves in the story in preparation for interrogation at the Royal Commission. Where ever possible students should endeavour to integrate their knowledge and understanding of the Jewish culture of the time in their responses.
5. The remaining students are placed in learning teams and given a potential witness (one of the characters from the story). The teams complete an 'Inquiry Brief' worksheet for their witness. In the 'brief' the students formulate questions to be asked of the witnesses to the inquiry. The questions are categorised into 'Factual information'; 'Feelings, observations, thoughts... about the event'; 'Reasons for acting in a particular manner'; and 'Reactions after the event'.
6. One team member is selected to cross-examine their nominated witness at the Royal Commission.
7. The whole class engages in the Royal Commission simulation. At the conclusion of the evidence the Royal Commissioner briefly summarises the evidence and draws conclusions as to the motivation of the witnesses and comments on whether their actions were 'reasonable and fair' in the circumstances.
8. **Reflective Moment:** Learning teams are given the opportunity for a 'short buzz' session to discern whether they concur with the analysis presented by the Royal Commissioner.

### TIP:

- The allocation of character roles is crucial. When first exposed to this strategy it is suggested that the teacher assume the role of Royal Commissioner. Where possible more capable and articulate students should be given the roles of potential witnesses.

## EXAMPLES:

Possible briefs for the Royal Commission could include:

- 'The Empty Tomb' – what really happened to Jesus Christ? – The events of Holy Week
- 'Little Boy Lost' – who was really responsible for Jesus' disappearance and subsequent location in the temple?
- 'The Conversion of Saul' – what really happened on that road to Damascus?
- 'Ten Lepers' – why did only one return to say thanks?
- 'The Adulterous Woman' – why was there such a sudden change of heart?

Example:

### Royal Commission – Inquiry Brief

**Scripture Passage:** Acts 22

**Witness:** St Paul

Questions	Possible Responses
<p><b><i>Factual information:</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Where were you heading when the accident occurred?</li> <li>● What was your business in Damascus?</li> </ul>	
<p><b><i>Feelings about the event:</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● How did you feel about your blindness?</li> <li>● What was your reaction when your sight was returned?</li> </ul>	
<p><b><i>Reasons for acting in a particular manner:</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Why were you persecuting the Christians?</li> <li>● Didn't you feel you betrayed your friends when you became a Christian?</li> </ul>	
<p><b><i>Reactions after the event:</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● How did this event change your life?</li> <li>● Why did it cause you to believe Christ was the Son of God?</li> </ul>	

# Royal Commission - Inquiry Brief



Scripture Passage: \_\_\_\_\_ Witness: \_\_\_\_\_

Questions	Possible Responses
Factual information:	
Feelings about the event:	
Reasons for acting in a particular manner:	
Reactions after the event:	

**Response to the Royal Commissioner's Findings:**

# Royal Commission - Inquiry Brief



Scripture Passage: \_\_\_\_\_ Witness: \_\_\_\_\_

Questions	Possible Responses
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Reasons for acting in a particular manner:	
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**Response to the Royal Commissioner's Findings:**