

The Culture of the Bible – the setting in Jesus' Day

Domestic Life

Housing

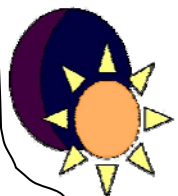
Houses today are made of timber, fibro, brick etc. In Jesus' day they were made of mud, stone and some people lived in tents made from hides of goats.

Describe the typical house for today; number of rooms, furniture etc. Draw a picture or use a photograph.



Research a typical house in Jesus' time. Draw a picture and describe its main features.

Climate



Climate had a great effect on housing. Most of the year it was hot and dry: rains occurred during autumn and spring; water was scarce.

Food

Think about where the average family gets their food today. We earn an income and buy our food.

For the families of the New Testament, life was very different.

Members of the family were involved in:

- drawing and carting water from the well
- sorting grain
- tending crops
- grinding grain to make flour
- baking bread
- milking goats
- herding animals
- etc

Some purchases could be made in the market place
Their diet was fairly limited.

- Where does your family shop?
- How often do you go out for takeaway?
- Describe a typical evening meal.

Find other examples of food eaten by people of the New Testament.

Describe a typical evening meal of the average family.

Clothing

was dependent on their limited money supply and the climate:

Long flowing robes to keep cool.

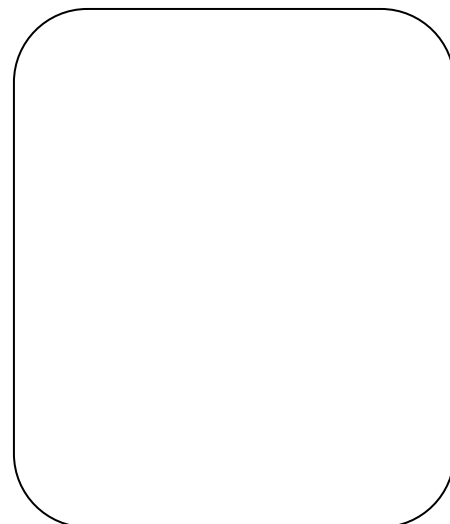
Loin cloths and outer garments.

Cloth was probably made at home.

The wealthy could afford coloured cloth.

Sandals were worn.

Turbans or head cloths – protection from the sun was important.



Draw a picture of a typical garment worn by the average person during Jesus' time.

Religion

- *Centred on the temple and the local synagogue.*
- *Many regulations about sacrifices and offerings.*
 - *Great interest in festivals – for example - the Passover*
- *People had to attend three festivals a year.*
- *People stopped work on the Sabbath and attended worship.*
- *Religion was an accepted part of life. Everyone believed in God.*

How does this compare with us today?

Make a list of the important events in the Church's calendar and which we celebrate.

Working Life

In Jesus' time boys learnt a trade from their father. Every boy had a trade.

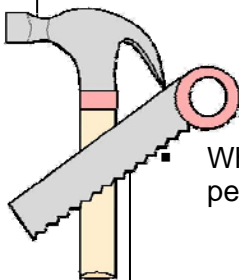
Jesus was a carpenter- like his father, Joseph. Paul was a tentmaker.

There were farmers, fishermen, shepherds and craftsman.

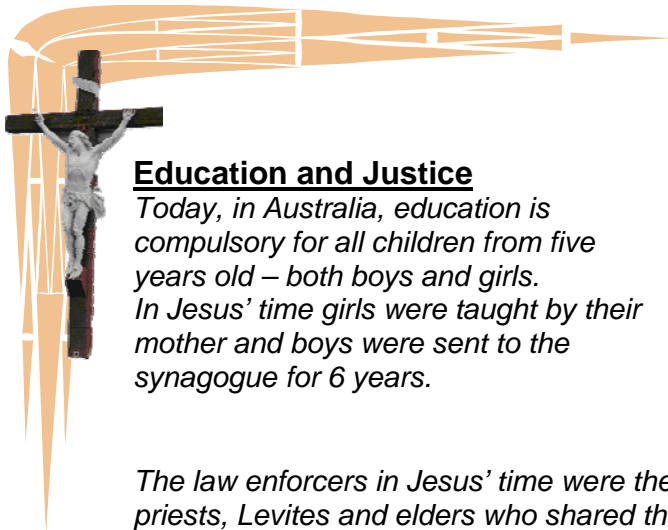
List the different types of crafts that men practised during Jesus' time.

What was the role of women during this time?

What did young girls learn?



- What are the job opportunities for young people living in your home town?
- What jobs do your parents do?
- What trades are popular today?
- How does this differ to Jesus time?



Education and Justice

Today, in Australia, education is compulsory for all children from five years old – both boys and girls. In Jesus' time girls were taught by their mother and boys were sent to the synagogue for 6 years.

The law enforcers in Jesus' time were the priests, Levites and elders who shared the task. The Sanhedrin was the Supreme Court.

- How many people made up the Sanhedrin and what roles did they serve?

What did girls learn?

What did boys learn?

Did all children have similar opportunities?

Social Customs

Birth

- no hospitals
- born at home – midwives
- Who were most important - boys or girls?
 - Give reasons
 - How does this compare with our attitude today?
- What was the role of daughter and mother?

Marriage

Research marriage customs during Jesus' time:

How were marriages decided?

Who made the decision about who to marry?

Describe the marriage ceremony.

Who officiated?

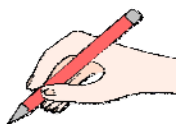
etc.

How does this differ to marriages today?

Death

In general, for Christians, what is the procedure when someone dies today?

How does this compare to Jesus' time?



Activity

Imagine that you are a teenager in Jerusalem during the time of Jesus.

Write a letter to a friend describing a typical day in your life.

Include all the different aspects of life mentioned in the above worksheet.

