

**GOD SAVED  
PEOPLE  
THROUGH  
JESUS**



**BAND**

**A**

**PLANNING GUIDE**



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*God saved people through Jesus* is one of twelve concepts covered by LIFE curriculum. This BAND A planning guide contains model units for the first three years of primary school.

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# **GOD SAVED PEOPLE THROUGH JESUS**

## **AIMS**

The ultimate aim of LIFE curriculum is that

- students will come to know God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit
- students will have faith in God as their Father, Saviour, and Helper.

We understand that faith is entirely a gift of the Holy Spirit.

We teach in obedience to Jesus' command to go and teach.

*How can people have faith in the Lord  
and ask him to save them,  
if they have never heard about him?  
And how can they hear,  
unless someone tells them?  
Romans 10:14 (CEV)*

## ***GOD SAVED PEOPLE THROUGH JESUS***

As Christians we believe this and are compelled to tell others.

Our aim in teaching this concept is that students

- hear,
- explore and
- reflect on

these faith statements:

1. God's Son became a human being to save the world
2. Jesus brought God's loving rule into the world
3. Jesus died and rose again to save all people from sin and death

# BACKGROUND NOTES FOR TEACHERS

## GOD SAVED PEOPLE THROUGH JESUS

**Note:** *There is naturally some overlap between this concept and the RESCUE concept. The Theological Perspectives for RESCUE (God saves people from sin and evil) should be read as background also for this present concept.*

Jesus and the good news of his saving work are central to every LIFE concept. In this concept, however, we have a special opportunity to tell the story of Jesus. Our aim will surely be to help students meet Jesus — not just as a figure from ancient history, a character in a book or the centre of a set of doctrines, but as a real living person.

The four Gospels give us a portrait of Jesus, each highlighting certain features, but all confronting readers with the questions: Who is this Jesus? What is the point of his story? One of the most important ways for teachers to prepare to teach this concept is to read at least one of the Gospels with these questions in mind.

**TRUE GOD** Jesus is true God. This is what makes Jesus unique. He is more than a great teacher, wonderful model and inspiring spiritual leader. He is the Son of God ‘from eternity’. That means, there has never been a time when Jesus did not exist as God’s Son (‘the Word’, John 1:1–3).

Jesus is ‘God incarnate’, that is ‘God in the flesh’ (John 1:14). If we want to know what God is like, we look at Jesus (John 14:9). He shows us the power, glory, wisdom of God, and especially the love of God (John 1:17,18).

**THE KINGDOM OF GOD** When Jesus began his ministry, he announced that the kingdom of God was here. In his person the loving, saving rule of God had come to human beings. Jesus taught people about God’s kingdom. In parables about the kingdom he told people what it is like when God rules with his grace. People were impressed by Jesus’ teaching (eg the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 5 – 7); he obviously knew what he was talking about. Jesus’ miracles were ‘signs of the kingdom’. God’s loving rule was in action when Jesus healed the sick, raised the dead, forgave sinners and accepted outcasts.

It is important that we and our students recognise Jesus as truly God. This means that it is no mere mortal but God himself who is our Saviour. The Son of God ‘humbled himself’; he did not always and fully use his divine qualities (power, glory etc). In order to save us, ‘*he gave up everything and became a slave, when he became like one of us*’ (Phil 2:7). So great was his love for sinful human beings, that the Son of God put himself through all the misery, pain, and suffering of sinful human existence and through hell itself (Matt 27:46) in order to rescue us from sin and its consequences.

**A REAL HUMAN BEING** Jesus is truly human. We need to be sure of this. The Son of God became a human being **for us**, to take our place — to live the perfect life we are supposed to live but can’t, to take our sins on

himself and pay the penalty we deserved. As a human being he died our death and went through the hell of being forsaken by God.

### CONCEIVED AND BORN

It was a truly human foetus that spent nine months in Mary’s

womb, and — despite the haloes on the Christmas cards — it was a truly human baby whom lowly Mary gave birth to and nursed. The big difference was that he was born without sin; he did not inherit the sin and guilt of his human parent.

Jesus lived a truly human life. He developed physically and mentally (Luke 2:40). He went through normal human experiences. He got tired, he was hungry and thirsty, happy and sad, pleased and angry. The one difference was that he never thought, did or said anything wrong. His life was perfect; he obeyed his Father in absolutely every respect, even though he knew all the time that this would mean sacrificing his innocent life to pay for the guilt of the whole human race.

**SUFFERED AND DIED** Jesus’ suffering and death were real. He felt what any of us would feel. In Gethsemane, for example, he was ‘deeply distressed’ and said: ‘*I’m so sad that I feel as if I’m dying*’ (Mark 14:34). He felt the shame of the soldiers’ mockery and the pain of their scourging, the weight of the cross,

Jesus opened the way to God which had been blocked by sin. That way is now open for all people through him.  
Jesus is the Saviour who shows us the loving heart of God.  
Theological Foundations of LIFE

the agony of crucifixion and the torture of being forsaken by his Father.

**ROSE AGAIN** Jesus' resurrection was real. The same human body that suffered, died and was buried became alive again. More than 500 eyewitnesses said they saw the risen Jesus, and they were ready to die for what they claimed. In the forty days after Jesus' resurrection his followers saw how Jesus' body was no longer restricted by the physical laws of time and space. Jesus' self-humbling for us is over. Now he is in an 'exalted' state; he always and fully uses his attributes (power, glory etc) as God.

Jesus' resurrection is central to the Christian faith. It shows that he is truly God, that God has accepted Jesus' perfect sacrifice for the sins of the world, and that death can no longer hurt human beings as the punishment for sin.

## AT THE FATHER'S RIGHT HAND

Still today Jesus is God in human flesh. A human being — one of us — is forever at God's right hand, as the advocate who intercedes for us, as the Lord who rules all things for our benefit. We can follow him through suffering, death and resurrection to live forever with bodies that will be glorified like his (Phil 3:20,21; 1 John 3:1–3).

**FAITH IN JESUS** To believe in Jesus means more than just acknowledging that what the Bible says about Jesus is true. It means **trusting** Jesus as our only hope of being rescued from our guilty condition and from the punishment we deserve. More than that, it means living and dying with the confidence that because of Jesus God is always for us and nothing can separate us from God's love (Romans 8:31–39).

## FOR REFLECTION AND/OR DISCUSSION

1. What questions do the *Background Notes* raise for you? What questions do you think your students will have on this topic?
2. Why is this an important topic to teach to your students? What implications might the topic have for the life of your school?
3. Discuss:
  - a) Christians (and Christians schools) can regard the fact that many children have never heard of Jesus, or know very little about him, as a plus rather than a minus.
  - b) How should teachers of younger children handle the difficulty children often have when we talk about Jesus as both God and a human being?
4. Comment on the following:
  - a) The great thing about Jesus' death was that it was **God** who died for us. The great thing about Jesus' resurrection was that it was **a human being** who rose again from the dead.
  - b) We Christians often say 'Christ **died** for us. Christ **rose again** for us.' We sometimes forget also to say 'Christ **lived** for us'. All the time Jesus spent on earth was important for our salvation.
5. Discuss the appropriateness of using Christian creeds or Luther's explanation of the second part of the Apostles' Creed in worship if there are non-Christians in the class/school.

## FOR FURTHER READING

Luther's explanation of the second part of the Apostles' Creed in the Large and Small Catechisms

Augsburg Confession Art II (*Book of Concord* p 29)

(See also the index of the *Book of Concord* pp 657–659)

*One in the Gospel*, by Friedemann Hebart, Openbook Publishers, chapter 12: *And there's no other God*.

*Good Question*, ed B Schwarz, Openbook Publishers, p 71: *Was Jesus God?*; p 76 *Jesus' death; Reality of the resurrection* p 110.

# BAND A STUDENTS

Students will come to your class with a range of understanding about Jesus. Some will already be familiar with the stories of Jesus; others may equate Jesus with fictional characters like Father Christmas; others may never have heard of Jesus except as a swearword.

The images the teacher gives about Jesus will greatly influence the students' understanding. Avoid presenting a stereotypical image of 'gentle Jesus meek and mild' walking around dusty Palestine in a spotlessly white robe. Instead, challenge students to come to know Jesus as someone who loves and cares for them and can identify with them and their life experiences.

This unit provides the teacher with opportunities to witness about his/her personal relationship with Jesus. The words you speak and the things you do can tell your students more about Jesus than directives in any curriculum.

<b>DEVELOPMENTAL CHARACTERISTICS</b>		<b>IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHING</b>
Students are developing the ability to identify the characters and the parts of a story. They will not yet be able to identify deeper meanings of a story and apply them to other situations.	➡	Strategies for telling and developing stories in other curriculum areas, eg English, can be applied to the Bible stories told in Christian Studies. When sharing parables or stories Jesus told, do not attempt to explain the meaning of the story at this stage. This will be developed in later bands.
Students have a limited attention span.	➡	Help students 'enter' the story by making it come alive for them. Use a variety of approaches to tell the stories of Jesus, eg story props, video, songs, rhymes, computer, picture books.
Students have not yet developed abstract thinking skills.	➡	Do not attempt to explain the Christian belief that Jesus is God and human in one person.
Students may have a fascination with the supernatural power of cartoon heroes or interpret unexplained events as happening by 'magic'.	➡	Put less focus on the actual miracles that Jesus performed, and more on his love and concern for the people in need. Be prepared for questions like 'Why doesn't Jesus . . . ?'
Students will use the names of God and Jesus interchangeably.	➡	Accept this as part of normal development. Be consistent in the language you use. Avoid complex explanations.
Students have a vivid imagination.	➡	Students may use the term 'cross' without knowing what it is. Avoid graphic descriptions of the suffering and death of Jesus. This may upset some students.

# NOTES