

RESCUE

**GOD SAVES  
PEOPLE FROM**

**SIN AND EVIL**

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**BAND A  
PLANNING GUIDE**

RESCUE



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*God saves people from sin and evil* is one of twelve concepts covered by LIFE curriculum. This BAND A planning guide contains model units for the first three years of school.

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# **GOD SAVES PEOPLE FROM SIN AND EVIL**

## **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 SAVES PEOPLE FROM SIN AND EVIL**

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. Sin and evil ruin God's creation
2. God rescues people from sin and its consequences
3. God offers eternal life to all people

# BACKGROUND NOTES FOR TEACHERS

## GOD SAVES PEOPLE FROM SIN AND EVIL

**THE ORIGIN OF SIN** God could have created human beings as creatures for whom sin was an impossibility, but he did not want human beings to be puppets or robots. He gave them free will. Before they sinned, human beings could choose to obey or disobey God.

God put one restriction on Adam and Eve's life in the garden: they were not to eat the fruit of one tree (Genesis 2:15–17). The devil tempted them to question why there should be any restrictions at all. Why shouldn't they be on the same level as God? The first sin set the pattern for every sin — human beings wanting to be God, doing what they want instead of what God has commanded.

Sin is not just wrong actions, thoughts, words or feelings; it is above all a condition, a spiritual disease that infects every human being (Romans 5:12; John 3:6). The first (original) sin contaminated the whole human race; it corrupted human nature completely (Ephesians 2:1–3). By choosing to disobey God, human beings lost their free will; now we are by nature 'free' only to choose to go against God. The sinful nature we inherit from our parents is not just neutral towards God; it is actively opposed to God (Romans 8:7). We can never live up to the standard of goodness God expects: perfect love for God and for all people. As history and our own experience teach, any human being is capable of the greatest wickedness (Matthew 7:17).

**THE EFFECTS OF SIN** The fall into sin brought into the world guilt, disharmony, suffering, and death —spiritual, physical and eternal. It resulted in **broken relationships**

- **with God.** Adam and Eve tried to hide from God because they knew they were guilty and were afraid God would punish them (Genesis 3:7–10). Their sin put a barrier between them and God so that they could no longer live in fellowship with him. We are totally unable to do anything to repair our broken relationship with God.
- **with ourselves.** Guilt, bad conscience, fear, insecurity, despair and every other

negative aspect of human personality can be traced back to the fall into sin.

- **with other people.** Note how Adam and Eve fell out with each other as soon as they fell out with God. They were ashamed of their nakedness in front of each other. A pattern of blame, disagreement, strife, self-centredness, hatred, anger and violence was soon apparent (Cain and Abel [Genesis 4], Flood stories [Genesis 6 – 9]).
- **with nature.** Nature now tends to work against human beings (Genesis 3:17–19), and we exploit nature instead of faithfully managing it as God's servants.

**GOD DEALS WITH SIN** As God had warned Adam and Eve, the moment they sinned they began to die physically, but they

also plunged themselves into spiritual death (separation from God in this life) and eternal death (separation from God forever).

But God loved the human beings he had created. The Old Testament tells how God

graciously rescued his people again and again. Through the events of their history and through his prophets, God encouraged his people to look forward to the time when he would send a Saviour to forever rescue them and all people from sin and its consequences.

**WHY JESUS?** Because God is holy and just, he cannot simply shut his eyes and ignore human sin. God's demands have to be met. The penalty for sin has to be paid.

God planned to send someone to take the place of all human beings. The Saviour had to be

- a perfect human being, uncontaminated by the original sin and guilt;
- willing to take on the sin and guilt of the entire human race;
- willing to pay the penalty for all the sin and guilt of the human race;
- able to overcome death and all the consequences of sin.

God is not responsible for sin and evil. Everything God created was good. It is the fault of human beings that God's creation has been ruined by sin and evil. The story of the Fall (Genesis 3) explains why there is sin and evil in the world and in us.

No ordinary human being could meet these requirements. God so much wanted to save the world and bring people back to life with him that he sent his own Son (John 3:16). Born as a human being, but perfect, free from sin and guilt, Jesus Christ lived for us human beings the perfect life we are supposed to live. He also took the blame for our sins and was punished instead of us. He defeated Satan and death for us by rising again from the dead (2 Timothy 2:9,10). For Jesus' sake God has forgiven the sins of the whole human race completely and unconditionally. Everyone who repents of his/her sin, trusts God's mercy and believes in Jesus has the forgiveness of all sin.

**ETERNAL LIFE** Jesus reconciled the human race to God so that God's original intention for human beings could be achieved, namely, that we can live forever in perfect harmony and fellowship with God. Whoever believes in Jesus has eternal life (John 3:16) as a present reality (John 3:36; 5:24) and as a future hope (1 John 3:1–3; 1 Peter 1:3–9).

Eternal life is one of the gifts God gives in baptism. All who believe in Jesus and are

baptised are given new life as children of God (Galatians 3:26,27), and are no longer under the control of sin or under the threat of the law and judgment, but live under God's grace (John 3:18; Romans 8:1,2)

If we believe in Jesus we also have the certain and 'living' hope that life with God will continue beyond death. We will not 'perish'. Not even death can snatch us out of the Father's hand (John 10:28,29). We will still be in fellowship with God — which is what 'heaven' or 'paradise' means (Luke 23:43). Our 'perishable' bodies will be raised to life again to be like Jesus' glorious body (Philippians 3:20,21; 1 Corinthians 15:35–57).

The Bible uses picture language (eg in Revelation) to describe the bliss of heaven, which is beyond all earthly experience and human imagination (1 Corinthians 2:9). We will no longer be subject to the restrictions of physical laws (time and space; compare with Jesus' body after his resurrection) or to the things that now spoil our life — sin, evil, suffering, sorrow (Revelation 21:3–4). There will be only perfect joy (Psalm 16:11).

### 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. Comment on the following:  
*Adam and Eve together are the human race as God created it and as it turned away from its Creator — the human race as represented in every one of us.*  
*The story of Adam and Eve . . . the man and the woman, is the story of all of us and not only of two people who lived long ago in a day with which we have no connection . . . We know them well, not from archaeological excavations, but from ourselves. (The Church's Faith, Regin Prenter p 52, 53)*
4. 'There is no person so bad and sinful that his or her sins have not been forgiven.' Do you agree or disagree? Does this mean, for example, that God has forgiven the sins of people who go to hell?
5. Eternal life is both a present reality and a future hope. Do you think that in our church's teaching we emphasise both aspects sufficiently? Do we, for example, talk too little or too much about heaven? . . . too little or too much about life with God here and now?

### FOR FURTHER READING

Augsburg Confession  
 Article II (Original Sin),  
*Book of Concord* p29;  
 Apology p 100–107;

Article XVIII (Free Will), p39,40;  
 Apology p224–226;

Article XIX (The Cause of Sin),  
 p40,41;

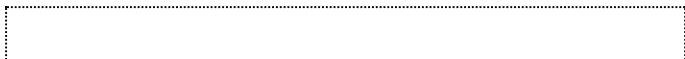
Article IV (Justification), p 30;  
 Apology P 107–168.

Also Article I of Smalcald  
 Articles and Articles I–III in the  
 Formula of Concord.

Luther's Large Catechism and  
 Small Catechism: the Second  
 Part of the Apostles' Creed.

*Good Question*  
 p 76,77 (Jesus' death);  
 p 80 (Life after death)

*Doctrinal Statements and  
 Theological Opinions* I 1–3 (the  
 body-soul question)



# BAND A STUDENTS

Your students' attitudes towards sin and forgiveness will tend to be a reflection of experiences in their own lives. You will find that already some students see themselves as being 'good', while others label themselves as 'naughty' and may even appear proud of being so. Some students may have already developed the concept that God will love them if they are 'good'. Be aware of the needs of specific students and be sensitive in your use of law and gospel. When dealing with student behaviour, either positive or negative, focus on the **behaviour** rather than on the student.

The emphasis in this band is on **God saves**. God's love does not depend on people's behaviour: it is only by Christ's life and death that people have been made acceptable to God.

Remember too that God's love and forgiveness is there for the teacher who makes mistakes, as well as for the students.

When teaching *God saves people from sin and evil* in your classroom, keep in mind these likely characteristics of your students:

<b>DEVELOPMENTAL CHARACTERISTICS</b>		<b>IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHING</b>
Students at this stage are unable to understand the concept of original sin.		Be aware that the way you understand and use the term 'sin' differs from the way students interpret it.
Students see sin as the 'bad' things that they are punished for. 'Good' is determined by what is permitted.		Avoid labelling actions as 'good' or 'bad'. Use language like: 'When you did that, I felt . . .'
God's punishment of Adam and Eve may seem severe and out of character for a loving God.		Use everyday examples to show that love and discipline can go together.
Students can identify with feeling uncomfortable, guilty and upset as a consequence of their sin.		Give students the reassurance that God loves and accepts them in spite of what they may do or how they may feel.
Students will use words like 'sin', 'cross', 'forgive' without necessarily understanding what they mean.		Avoid lengthy explanations of theological concepts. Give simple explanations, using examples appropriate to the age-level of your students.
Students are beginning to recognise and express their feelings more openly and honestly.		Listen to what students are saying. Be sensitive to students' feelings and encourage others to do the same.
Students' image of God is influenced by significant adults in their lives.		Take every opportunity to speak of God's love and show this love in your interaction with your students.

# NOTES