

**GOD CREATED
THE UNIVERSE**



**BAND
A
PLANNING GUIDE**



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This planning guide is a part of LIFE, a Christian Studies curriculum developed for Lutheran schools.

LIFE is a joint project of the Board for Lutheran Schools of the Lutheran Church of Australia and Openbook Publishers.

God created the universe 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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Published: March 1998

© Board for Lutheran Schools, Lutheran Church of Australia, 197 Archer Street, North Adelaide, SA 5006

Printed and published by Openbook Publishers, 205 Halifax Street, Adelaide, South Australia 5000

GOD CREATED

THE UNIVERSE

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 CREATED THE UNIVERSE

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 created all things
2. God takes care of his creation
3. God wants people to take care of his creation

BACKGROUND NOTES FOR TEACHERS

GOD CREATED THE UNIVERSE

God is the creator of all things . . . All that God created was wonderfully designed and intricately connected in a way which would bring glory and honour to its maker.

God in his grace continues to work as creator by preserving and caring for the world which he made, providing rich resources and sustaining the wonderful natural orders and design by which creation is held together. (Theological Foundations of LIFE Curriculum)

(In this concept we do not deal with the creation of human beings. See the background notes for *God created human beings* — also for further comment on evolution.)

All life and all existence begin with the ever-living Creator. 'In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth' (Genesis 1:1).

It is not hard to believe that some supreme power created all things. The beauty and order of the universe tell us that. But even the most advanced study of the universe cannot tell us

who its creator is. We can know the creator only because he has made himself known to us in his word — especially through the Word who became a human being, God's Son, Jesus Christ.

Faith in creation is a happy and grateful affirmation of life in opposition to all forms of anxiety concerning life and all forms of denial of life.

Regin Prenter, The Church's Faith, p 25

The Bible tells us that the creator of the universe is not some impersonal force, but God, our wise and loving heavenly Father. What makes Christian teaching about creation different from any other is that we view the creation of the universe with the eyes of faith in Jesus Christ. The Bible tells us that Jesus is the focus also of the creation story (John 1:2, Colossians 1:15–17, Hebrews 1:2). We really get to know and believe in God as our creator only when the Holy Spirit has led us to know and believe in Jesus Christ as our Saviour.

Our students — and we ourselves — may have many questions about the how and when of creation. We may wonder, for example, about the age of the earth and about how scientific discoveries and Bible statements relate to each other. The Bible does not answer all our questions. It is more concerned to lead us to know the Creator of all things than it is to teach us to know everything about the creation.

The Bible tells us the following quite clearly:

- **GOD CREATED THE UNIVERSE OUT OF NOTHING.** The universe is not eternal, matter is not eternal. God created the primeval material — the atoms and molecules (Genesis 1:1,2).
- **GOD CREATED ALL THINGS 'BY HIS WORD'.** They came into existence because God wanted them to and because God used his power (Psalm 33:6). 'The

word with which God called all things into being out of nothing is the expression of his eternal love, his only begotten Son' (Prenter: *The Church's Faith* p 24).

The Bible does not offer scientific explanations of the 'how' of creation; it simply tells us that God is the Creator. The universe is God's (Psalm 24:1,2).

- **GOD CREATED IN AN ORDERLY WAY.** First, God created 'formless' matter. Then God brought order into creation by separating light from darkness, water from dry land. Then in the creation of life God began with the simpler forms and proceeded to the more complex. Genesis 1 brings out the 'rhythm' and orderliness of God's creative work: in each stage of creation, God speaks, something is created, God sees that his creation is good. At some stage — we are not told when — God created his invisible spirit-messengers, the angels.
- **GOD'S CREATION WAS GOOD.** There was perfect harmony in God's creation. Everything was just the way the Creator wanted it to be. God is not

responsible for the disharmony, disorder and evil we observe and experience now.

- **GOD LOOKS AFTER THE UNIVERSE HE CREATED.** God set up the laws of nature (day and night, the seasons, the laws of physics etc) by which the universe continues to exist in an orderly way. God is not limited by these laws, however; he may use his power to bring about 'supernatural', miraculous events.
- **GOD STILL PRESERVES HIS CREATION**
 - a) by providing for the needs of all creatures, especially human beings (Psalm 145:15,16; Matthew 6:25–34). This includes things like medicine and technology;
 - b) by protecting his creatures, especially human beings (Matthew 10:29,30). The Bible says that the angels have the special work of protecting people (Psalm 91:11,12);
 - c) by making humans caretakers of God's creation (Genesis 1:28, 2:15). We are

to value and preserve the environment God allows us to enjoy.

If God provides and protects, why do some people miss out? Why do some suffer hunger, illness and the like? The Bible doesn't give us all the answers. We know that this was not the Creator's intention. In some cases, suffering is due to the selfishness and mismanagement of human beings. Or it can be the natural consequence of living in a fallen world, a world that has been corrupted by sin. Whatever the cause of suffering, Christians believe that God is always in control. If we trust God as our heavenly Father, who through Jesus has shown that he loves us perfectly, we believe that he will never let anything harm or destroy us.

The Bible tells us about the creation of the universe so that we — and the children we teach — can join in its chorus of praise to the Creator and so that we can trust him as our almighty loving Father (see Luther's explanation of the first part of the Apostles' Creed).

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 the topic of the creation of the universe?
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. How would you answer a student who asks: 'How come the Bible doesn't mention dinosaurs? Did God create them?'
4. What do you make of the fact that in Genesis there are two different accounts of creation (1:1 – 2:3 and 2:4 –25)?
5. How do you see the relationship between the findings of science concerning the origins of the universe and the biblical account of the creation?

FOR FURTHER READING

Luther's Large Catechism (Book of Concord, Tappert ed pp 411–413; Hebart translation pp 110–113)

Luther's Small Catechism (Book of Concord p 344f; Openbook ed p 11)

Teaching Luther's Catechism, H Girgensohn pp131–149

Doctrinal Statements and Theological Opinions B2–5 (statements on interpreting Genesis 1–3 and on evolution)

Good Question ed by Brian Schwarz, Openbook Publishers, *Environment* pp 41f; *Evolution* pp 46–49

NOTE: *Living Faithfully in God's Creation* is an excellent set of six studies on Christian life in the environment by Pastor Aubrey Podlich, which would be very suitable for staff Bible studies. Available from the National Lutheran Schools office.






BAND A STUDENTS

Not all the students in your class will come to this unit of work from a Christian background. Your students' attitudes towards the environment and its Creator will be a reflection of their family's attitude. Likewise, their knowledge of the environment will be a reflection of their family situation — whether they live in the city or country, whether they have travelled widely or stayed in one location.

Because students come from a variety of backgrounds, give attention to the following:

- Actively listen to the students' ideas and encourage questions.
- While it is our aim that students will believe in God as Creator, be sensitive to responses which may not reflect a Christian belief.
- Take advantage of opportunities to share your personal faith with the students.

When teaching *God created the universe* in the BAND A classroom, keep in mind these characteristics which are likely to be found in your students:

DEVELOPMENTAL CHARACTERISTICS		IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHING
Students have a natural curiosity and keen interest in exploring the physical world.		Use real items from the natural environment and allow time for students to explore them.
Students are excited by experiences adults take for granted.		Provide opportunity for freedom of expression through art, music, drama, etc.
Students are physically active with a short attention span.		Keep lessons short and include songs, rhymes, movement.
Older students are becoming increasingly aware of events around them.		Use real-life, practical examples, eg environmental issues in your local community.
Older students are beginning to ask more complex questions.		Allow time for questions and discussion, so students can talk through their ideas.

NOTES