

MENU

BIBLE REFERENCES

1

The Christian church is the community of believers created by the Holy Spirit

Solomon's temple 1 Kings 6; 1 Kings 9:3
 The great commission Matthew 28:18–20
 The events of Pentecost Acts 2:1–41
 Saul persecutes Christians Acts 7:54–8:3
 Saul's conversion Acts 9:1–31

Early church communities

Acts 2: 38–47 Acts 4:32–35
 Acts 11:27–30 Acts 13:1–3
 Colossians 3:12–17 Philemon
 Jerusalem
 Acts 2:36–42, 43–47 Acts 6:1–7
 Damascus Acts 9:1–26
 Antioch
 Acts 11:19–30 Acts 13:1–3
 Ephesus
 Acts 18:18–21 Acts 19; 20:17–38

Activities of the early church

Baptism Acts 2:38,39
 Holy communion ('broke bread') Acts 2:42
 Helping and encouraging Acts 2:44–47
 Searching the Scriptures Acts 17:10,11
 Teaching and preaching about Jesus
 Romans 12:6–8 1 Corinthians 15:1–8
 Timothy 4:8–11,13

Activities of people in the early church

Peter and John Acts 3:1–10
 Stephen and other deacons Acts 6:1–7
 Dorcas Acts 9:36–42
 Saul and Barnabas Acts 13:1–5
 Lydia Acts 16:14,15
 Luke Colossians 4:14

Description of the church 1 Peter 2:9

2

God has gathered his people together throughout history

God's free gift of forgiveness through faith in Jesus

John 3:16 Romans 1:17
 Romans 3:23,24 Romans 5:1,8
 Romans 6:23 Romans 10:9
 Ephesians 2:8,9 1 Timothy 1:15

Trust in God Psalm 46

God gathers his people

1 Peter 1:1,2
 The parable of the great banquet
 Luke 14:16–23

3

Lutherans in Australia work together in ministry and mission

A widow's offering Luke 21:1–4
 Christian motivation for caring
 John 3:16 John 15:12
 Romans 5:8 2 Corinthians 9:12
 1 John 3:11 1 John 4:19

KEY BIBLE VERSES TO HEAR AND REMEMBER

But you are God's chosen and special people.
 1 Peter 2:9a (CEV)

Each one of you is part of the body of Christ, and you were chosen to live together in peace.
 Colossians 3:15a (CEV)

By faith we have been made acceptable to God.
And now because of our Lord Jesus Christ, we live at peace with God.
 Romans 5:1 (CEV)

MENU

INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITIES

1

The Christian church is the community of believers created by the Holy Spirit

COMMUNITIES As an introduction to the concept of a Christian community, students choose a particular community to illustrate, such as a neighbourhood, a school, a cultural community. Show the common interests which bring people together, the different roles of individuals in the community and what is achieved by the community that couldn't be done by individuals. List the advantages of being a part of this community. (1a,1b,1c)

BECOMING A MEMBER Discuss the different ways people become members of groups. Look at the criteria or fees for membership and what membership entitles you to. Use this as an introduction to investigating membership of the Christian church. (1a)

BENEFITS OF BEING PART OF A GROUP Students share with the class the various hobby or sporting groups they belong to and describe the activities which take place. Students record and illustrate the benefits of belonging to the group. This can be used as an introduction to the benefits of belonging to a local Christian church. (1c)

WHAT IS CHURCH? Students record their personal thoughts about what 'church' is. Discuss the responses as a group. Record initial responses on a class list and add new information about the Christian church as the students investigate the topic further. Direct students to resources, such as the *Introduction* section of *A First Look: The Church* (L Rock) which introduces students to the concept that 'church' is people not just a building. (1a)

MAP OF LOCAL CHURCHES Students make a map of the local area and plot the churches in this area. Students indicate on the map if they attend or have visited any of these churches. (1a,1b,1c)

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God has gathered his people together throughout history

THE CHURCH AND THE REFORMATION Students research what life was like

- in the community at the time of Luther, eg forms of communication, superstitions;
- in the church, eg the status of the Bible, the power of the church in the community, how the church obtained money.

Present this information as an interview, drama, visual display, or rap. (2a,2b)

LIFE IN MONASTERIES Students research what life was like in monasteries at the time of the reformation. Students devise a timetable which describes the sorts of activities people living in a monastery would be required to do. (2a)

LUTHER RESOURCES Students begin collecting a range of resources about Martin Luther. Students examine the illustrations and photographs in these resources and discuss and record what information they provide about such things as the setting where Luther lived, events which were taking place at the time, activities Luther was involved in. (2a)

GOD'S LOVE AND FORGIVENESS As a class, compile a list of concerns or fears people may have about God. Tell students that in his early years, Martin Luther was very afraid of God. See TRS B3/3. Identify and list some of the fears Martin Luther had about God. (2a)

3

Lutherans in Australia work together in ministry and mission

WORKING TOGETHER Give students a challenging technology or mathematics task to do individually. After a period of time, arrange for them to work in groups on the same challenge. After the task has been completed, ask the students to identify the benefits of working together with others on the project.

Students work in groups to create posters which illustrate the benefits of working together on tasks at school, at home and in the community. This can be used as an introduction to Lutherans working together in mission and ministry. (3a,1c)

DENOMINATIONS Students go for a walk around the local area and record the names of the various Christian churches. Include a drawing of any logos which may be included on the sign. As a class, make a list of the various denominations the students identified, eg St Aidan's *Anglican* church, Pius X *Roman Catholic* church, St John's *Lutheran* church. Students include names of other denominations they may be familiar with. (3a)

MISSION STATEMENTS Show students mission statements from a supporting congregation of the school, other local Christian churches and from their school. Students work in pairs with one of the statements. They summarise what is the important aim for that particular church or school. (3a,3b)

LUTHERAN CHURCH OF AUSTRALIA Students list some of the organisations of the Lutheran Church of Australia (LCA) by looking in the telephone book under *Lutheran*, checking the home page of the LCA on the Internet, using the *Yearbook of the LCA*, or viewing the LCA video *Hand in Hand*. (3a,3b)

LCA LOGO Show students the LCA logo. Students give their own explanation of the different elements of the logo. Compare these with the LCA's explanation of the logo (see *Introducing the Lutheran Church*). (3a)

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DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

1

The Christian church is the community of believers created by the Holy Spirit

SONGS ABOUT CHRISTIAN BELIEFS

Investigate a song which expresses what Christians believe about God, such as *We believe* (155 *All Together Again*), *I believe in Jesus* (536 *Praise and Worship, Volume B*). Students write their own song which expresses what Christians believe about God. Alternatively, students could write two new verses for the song *I believe in Jesus*. These verses would express what Christians believe about God the Father and God the Holy Spirit. (1a)

APOSTLES' CREED Students investigate the Apostles' Creed to discover some of the main things Christians believe. Divide the class into three groups and give each group a part of the creed. The groups illustrate what their part of the creed means and write it in their own words. This could also be an opportunity for students to learn the creed, particularly the third part. (1a)

THE STORY OF PENTECOST

Christians believe that at Pentecost the Holy Spirit established the Christian church. Students research the story of Pentecost (Acts 2) to identify

- what brought the people together
- unusual events which took place
- who belonged to the church
- what they believed
- the activities of the people belonging to the Christian church (verses 42–27).

Students create a multimedia presentation which describes the Bible story. (1a)

COMPARE COMMUNITIES Students read

Acts 2:38–47	
Acts 4:32–35	Colossians 3:12–17
Philemon	Matthew 28:18–20.

They imagine that they were a part of the first Christian community. Identify and role-play activities which took place in the first Christian community.

Illustrate the similarities and differences between their school community and the first Christian community. (1a,1b,1c)

CONVERSION OF SAUL Students read in Acts 7:54 – 8:3 about Saul's persecution of Christians and then in Acts 9 about his conversion. Make two character profiles of Saul, one before his conversion and one after his conversion. Illustrate his relationship with the church before and after his conversion. (1a)

SONGS ABOUT THE CHURCH

Students examine songs from the 'Together' section of the *All Together* song book series or songs about the church in other Christian song books or the hymnal. Students choose their favourite song and make a list of the important things this song says about the church. Create a painting or a model which summarises the main idea in this song. (1a,1b,1c)

EARLY CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES

Students investigate the early Christian church communities in Jerusalem, Damascus, Antioch and Ephesus (see Bible References Menu). Divide the class into four groups. Each group investigates one of these church communities, identifying important people, and events and activities which took place in these communities.

As a whole class, identify the common important features of the four churches. Create a mural with four parts, each representing one of the church communities investigated. (1a,1b,1c)

PEOPLE IN THE FIRST CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES

Students investigate roles and abilities of people in the early church (see Bible References Menu). Compile a directory of people involved in work for the early church, illustrating and describing their activities and including appropriate Bible references. (1b)

BANNERS Students use *Luther's Small Catechism* to identify the importance of God's word, baptism and holy communion to the Christian church. Make banners which illustrate their importance. (1a)

BELONGING TO A LOCAL CHURCH

Students construct, present and collate surveys to discover the reasons people are members of a local Christian church. Report findings to the class. (1c)

WORKERS FOR THE CHURCH Invite a pastor and other people who work for a local church (paid and unpaid) to talk to the students about their work, the reasons they do it and how their work contributes to the life of the church. Make cut-out shapes of these people. Decorate and display the figures around the school or the local church with information about the work that these people do. (1b)

VISIT A CHURCH Organise a visit to a local Christian church. Ask the pastor to give a guided tour of the building/s. Before they undertake the visit, students decide what information they are seeking and the questions they would like to ask. (1a,1b,1c)

CHURCH BUILDINGS Students research information about places people gathered for worship in Old Testament times (eg Tabernacle, Solomon's temple) and New Testament times (eg Herod's temple, houses) and where they worship today (eg cathedrals, worship centres). Students use Bible encyclopedia and other non-fiction resources which provide drawings and details about these buildings. They make a model of one of the meeting places they have investigated. (1b)

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God has gathered his people together throughout history

LUTHER AND THE GOSPEL Students investigate the life and work of Martin Luther, using resources such as TRS B3/4, to identify the changes which took place in his life as a result of the Bible's message of God's forgiveness through Jesus.

They make a poster which contrasts what Luther believed about God before he became aware of God's love and forgiveness through Jesus and after he became aware of it. Show how what he believed affected his life and his actions and eventually affected the whole church. (2a,2b)

LUTHER'S CONCERNS Students make a list of the concerns Martin Luther had about the church. Discuss and illustrate possible solutions to these problems.

As a class identify the positive things the church does in the community today, as well as any concerns students have about the church.

Make a list of suggestions of ways the church can demonstrate the Christian message of God's love in the community today. (2a,2b)

TIME LINE Students create an illustrated time line of the life and work of Martin Luther. (2a)

LUTHER'S NINETY-FIVE THESES

Students role-play, illustrate or make a storyboard of Luther nailing the ninety-five theses to the door of the church. Include Luther's reasons for writing the ninety-five theses. Also include the feelings and responses of Luther, people in the street, Luther's friends and leaders of the church. (2a,2b)

MARTIN'S DIARY Students imagine they are Martin Luther. They write diary entries which illustrate important events in his life, beginning with his school days. Students continue the diary entries as they learn more about Luther and his work. (2a,2b)

BIBLE TRANSLATION Martin Luther translated the Bible into the language the people spoke in his country. Discuss:

- What problems might a church have if they do not have Bibles available in the language spoken by the people?
- How do you think Luther's translation helped the German church in his day.
- How do you think having a contemporary English translation of the Bible helps the church in Australia today?
- How do you think having a translation of the Bible in their own language might help an Aboriginal community in Australia today?

Students research and report on the work of Bible translators in Australia and overseas. Students identify ways they can support this work. (2b)

HISTORY OF THE LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AUSTRALIA

Students research the history and development of the Lutheran church in their community or state or in Australia, using resources such as *The Story of Lutherans in Australia* (prepared by LTC Curriculum Centre). Students can research information about

- regions of the world the first Lutheran settlers in Australia came from and reasons they chose to come to Australia;
- what life was like in the community and the church for the first Lutherans in Australia;
- historical sites (eg cemetery) and information from and about these sites;
- reasons people established a Lutheran church in their area and the history of that church. (2b)

LUTHERAN CHURCHES

THROUGHOUT THE WORLD Students identify and research Lutheran churches throughout the world. Write and illustrate information and attach it to the appropriate country on a world map. (2b)

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Lutherans in Australia work together in ministry and mission

WHAT DO CHRISTIANS WANT TO

DO? Students refer to Bible stories of the first Christian church (see Bible References Menu) to identify the activities the people were involved in and their motivation.

Compare these activities and motivation with the activities Christians are involved in today. Interview a pastor, church worker or other Christians to identify things Christians want to do locally, nationally and globally, as a response to the Bible's message about God's love, eg tell people in their community and in overseas countries about Jesus, help poor people, teach children about Jesus, train pastors and church workers, care for elderly people. Sort these activities into two categories:

- those things which small groups of Christians can do on their own (congregations)
- those things which are best done by groups of Christians joining together (the wider church).

Students justify classifications. (3a,3b)

LUTHERAN SCHOOLS IN

AUSTRALIA Make available to the students a list of the Lutheran schools in Australia. Students mark the location of the schools on a map of Australia.

They choose a school and write a letter or send an e-mail to the principal, asking for a school prospectus. Students identify what the prospectus says are the important aims (mission statement) of the school. Identify the similarities and differences of their own school's aims. (3a 3b)

ACTIVITIES OF THE LCA Groups of students each choose one of the activities of the LCA (see TRS B2/3). They research information about the activity and prepare a visual display and a brief oral presentation to the class. The information from all the groups can be assembled as

- a visual display
- a video
- a booklet. (3a,3b)

MISSION STATEMENTS Students write to various LCA organisations to obtain their mission statements. They compare the mission statements and identify common features of them. (3a)

INTERVIEW A LUTHERAN CHURCH WORKER

Interview a person who is working (either in a paid position or voluntarily) for a caring organisation of the Lutheran church, eg aged care, Lutheran community care, visiting sick people. Invite them to talk about their work and their motivation for caring. Alternatively, organise a visit to an agency of the Lutheran church.

Summarise information about the organisation and prepare a presentation for a school assembly. (3a,3b)

CONTRIBUTING TO THE CHURCH

Read the Bible story of the widow's offering (Luke 21:1–4). Students imagine they were in the temple, standing near Jesus, watching and listening when this incident took place.

Students draw a picture of the story showing the main characters, including Jesus and themselves. Write speech- or thought-bubbles for each person in the story. Discuss the value Jesus saw in the widow's offering. List ways people can give assistance to others which do not involve giving vast amounts of money. (3a)

RADIO MINISTRY Teacher tapes a Lutheran radio program such as *Face to Face*. Students listen to the tape and discuss what they liked/disliked about the program and who they think the target audience would be. Students write and tape their own radio segment which contains the Christian message of God's love through Jesus. The segment needs to appeal to students of their age. (3a,3b)

GENERAL ACTIVITIES

BIBLE VERSE Students learn an appropriate Bible verse (see page 10)

SONGS Students learn songs about the church.

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RESPONSE ACTIVITIES

1 The Christian church is the community of believers created by the Holy Spirit

CLASS CREED As a class students write a creed that tells what Christians believe. (1a)

SECRET SYMBOL Show students the fish symbol associated with the early Christian community. Explain that the Greek word for fish, ICHTHUS, can show what Christians believe, ie Jesus Christ, Son of God, Saviour. Students make an acronym for CHRISTIAN or JESUS which summarises the importance of Jesus to the Christian church. (1a)

PLANS FOR IDEAL CHURCH

Students draw plans for an 'ideal' church building. Include spaces or areas in the plan for the various activities which can take place in the church. (1b)

INFORMATION BOOKLET ABOUT THE LOCAL CHURCH Students create an information booklet about the Lutheran congregation(s) affiliated with their school. Students work in groups. Each group chooses one activity of this congregation, eg kids' club, craft or youth group.

Each group prepares a section of an information booklet about the church with such items as

- pictures and descriptions of the activity
- pictures and profiles of the leader/s
- quotes from people who attend
- contact names and phone numbers for further information or enrolment.

Include a plan of the church building/s with all features labelled, so that visitors can easily find their way around.

The booklet could be photocopied or printed and distributed to all families in the class or school. (1a,1b,1c,3a)

STAINED-GLASS WINDOW Students make a 'stained-glass window', using coloured cellophane and black cardboard, which expresses the work, activities or focus of the local church. (1a,1b,1c)

CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

BROCHURE Make a brochure with information about membership in either the holy Christian church or in a supporting congregation of the school. Include information, such as how to become a member, what membership entitles the person to, what the benefits of being a member are. (1a,1c)

2 God has gathered his people together throughout history

THIS IS YOUR LIFE Students use the information they have gathered about the life and work of Martin Luther to make a *Martin Luther, This Is Your Life* presentation. This presentation could contain information about the impact Luther had on the church during his life, but also the influence he still has on the church today. (2a,2b)

WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED?

Tell students that some people say: *To be a Christian and go to heaven you have to do 'good' things.* Record what you imagine Martin Luther would say about this. Include Bible verses he could use which describe God's forgiveness and acceptance of people (see Bible References Menu). (2b)

CHRISTIAN BELIEFS *Luther's Small Catechism* helps people to understand important Christian beliefs about God. Students make a picture book or computer presentation which could help younger students to learn and understand important Christian beliefs about God. Use the catechism as a resource. (2a,2b)

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CORRESPONDING WITH

LUTHERAN SCHOOLS Students establish correspondence either by letter or by e-mail with students in Lutheran schools in Australia or in other countries. Share information, and discuss similarities and differences between schools. (3a,3b)

DESIGN A LOGO Students investigate the logo of their school or of an organisation of the LCA. Devise a new logo which expresses the unique nature of this organisation. Include an explanation of the different symbols. (3a)

SUPPORTING LUTHERAN CHURCH ORGANISATIONS Students brainstorm and record ways they could support the caring work of a Lutheran church organisation. Make a mural which illustrates ways and includes the Bible verse 1 John 4:19. (3b)

A DIARY OF CARING Read the story *Penny Pollard's Diary* to the class. If students are involved in regularly visiting a Lutheran church organisation involved in caring, they can begin a personal diary expressing their thoughts and feelings as they are involved in caring. Alternatively, students write a story from the perspective of someone who has been helped by a Lutheran church organisation. (3a,3b)

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RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

The introduction to LIFE contains suggested general resources for all LIFE concepts. The following resources may be used in a unit about *God gathers people into the Christian church*.

Some of these resources may be out of print.

They are listed because they (or others similar to them) may be found in school libraries.

Preview these and any other resources you intend using to be sure that they are appropriate for your students.

LITERATURE — NON-FICTION

The church

Abingdon's Book of Buildings (Seven Biblical Buildings) 1996 Abingdon Press

Berthier R *The Birth of the Church* 1980 Hodder and Stoughton

Bradley C *Let's Discover Churches* 1993 Watts Books

Drane J *Christians* 1994 Lion

Drane J *Mission Extraordinary: The First Christians in Action* 1995 Lion

Nystrom C *What Is a Church?* 1981 ANZEA Books

Rock L *A First Look: The Church* 1994 Lion

Rock L *A First Look: The Christian Life* 1996 Lion

Wangerin W *Oh Happy Day! The story of Pentecost* (Arch Series) 1975 Concordia

Saul/Paul

Butcher G *Paul the First Missionary* 1984 Hodder and Stoughton

Kohlbrek L *Paul Believes in Jesus* (Arch Series) 1972 Concordia

Kohlbrek L *The Man Who Changed His Name* (Arch Series) 1973 Concordia

The Miraculous Change Words of Wisdom Series 1988 Hong Kong Bible Society

Scrimshire H *Postcards from Paul* 1994 Christian Focus Publications

Martin Luther

Davey C *Martin Luther Hero of the Reformation* 1992 Hunt & Thorpe

Nohl F *Martin Luther Hero of Faith* 1962 Concordia Publishing House

Lutheran Church of Australia

The Story of Lutherans in Australia prepared by Lutheran Teachers College Curriculum Centre 1988 Lutheran Publishing House

General

Luther's Small Catechism Openbook Publishers 1996

Weiss N *Follow Me* 1982 Lutheran Publishing House

Van der Maas M (ed) *Adventure Bible Handbook* 1994 Zondervan Publishing House

LITERATURE — FICTION

Community

Adams J *Pigs and Honey* 1989 Omnibus

Cummings P *Midge, Mum and the Neighbours* 1992 Random Century

Cummings P *Marty and Mei-Ling* 1996 Red Fox

Graham B *Rose Meets Mr Wintergarden* Viking, Ringwood, Vic 1992

Tulloch R *Stories from Our House* 1987 Cambridge University Press

Tulloch R *Stories from Our Street* 1990 Cambridge University Press

Wheatley N & Rawlings D *My Place* 1987 Collins Dove

Caring

Klein R *Penny Pollard's Diary* 1983 OUP

MUSIC

What Christians believe

Great Gifts 1997 Willow Connection (book, CD, tape)

I believe in Jesus, Praise and Worship Volume B, 1992 Resource Christian Music 536

Robin Mann *GOD VERSION 1.0* 1998 Openbook (book, CD, tape)

Martin Luther

Hymns by Luther in *Lutheran Hymnal with Supplement* 1989 Lutheran Publishing House

AUDIO-VISUAL

VIDEO

Lutheran Church of Australia

Hand in Hand—LCA Congregations' Joint Ministries Irwin Traeger, Lutheran Church of Australia

The Christian church

Children's Heroes from Christian History North Ryde NSW: Christian Multimedia

AUDIO

Face to Face Lutheran Radio (see *The Lutheran* or local radio guides for times)

TELEVISION

Important people

Australians ABC Education television (a series of short documentaries that present biographical accounts of important Australians)

OTHER

COMPUTER

Home page of the Lutheran Church of Australia
<http://lca.org.au/>

BROCHURE

The Lutheran church

Introducing the Lutheran Church Openbook Publishers Adelaide

TEACHER RESOURCES

Bainton R *Here I Stand: A Life of Martin Luther* 1978 Abingdon Press

Schild M & Hughes P *The Lutherans in Australia* 1996 Commonwealth of Australia

Put a plastic sleeve in this section of your LIFE binder to keep your own collection of clippings, cartoons, stories, photos, etc which you can use for these units. Add to your collection whenever you come across something that might be useful.

GOD GATHERS PEOPLE INTO THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH