

PEOPLE

**GOD CREATES
HUMAN BEINGS**



BAND

B

PLANNING GUIDE

PEOPLE



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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 creates human beings is one of twelve concepts covered by LIFE curriculum. This BAND B planning guide contains model units for three middle primary years.

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Published October 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 CREATES

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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 CREATES HUMAN BEINGS

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 creates and loves all people
2. God creates each person as a unique individual with characteristics and abilities
3. God creates all people to live in relationship with him

BACKGROUND NOTES FOR TEACHERS

GOD CREATES HUMAN BEINGS

Note: See also the BACKGROUND NOTES in *God created the universe*.

The Bible makes it clear that human beings are God's special creatures. Biologically they are related to animals, but they are more than animals. They are the climax and crown of God's creative work. In the creation of humans God most clearly and wonderfully expressed himself. Only of these creatures does God say 'my children' (Acts 17:28,29).

Human beings are unique, different from all other creatures God created. And within the human species each individual person is unique in the sense that, while there are many similarities between human beings, no two human beings are identical.

GOD CREATED HUMAN BEINGS IN A SPECIAL WAY

Human beings and animals were both formed from the ground (Genesis 2:7 and 19). The Bible also describes what was special in the case of humans: 'The Lord God . . . breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and man became a living being' (2:7). The life that God gives humans is special. Human beings have the 'breath of God' (spirit) in them. They are 'body and soul' — not just physical beings but also spiritual beings.

GOD CREATED HUMAN BEINGS IN HIS OWN IMAGE They were like God (Genesis 1:26,27). The Bible does not give us detailed information about this. 'The image of God' does not refer to the physical appearance of human beings. Rather it means that humans were created as beings who were able to relate to God and live in conscious relationship with God. Perhaps we can say that they were able to enjoy the 'godness' of God. They could know, believe in and love God and be aware of God's love for them. Especially 'the image of God' refers to the goodness and holiness (sinlessness) in which human beings were created, which they lost, and which God's Spirit is restoring in people who believe in Jesus Christ (see Ephesians 4:22–24, which talks about being 'created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness' NIV).

God's special creation was humanity. Human beings were formed in God's own image, so that they might live in a perfect relationship with their creator and in harmony with all other created beings.
(Theological Foundations of LIFE curriculum)

GOD GAVE HUMAN BEINGS SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Genesis 1:28 has sometimes been misunderstood to mean that human beings are allowed to exploit the environment and use the rest of creation for their own purposes. God certainly wanted human beings to enjoy his creation. But at the same time they were to be his agents to take charge of and look after the rest of creation (Genesis 2:15). Their ability to think rationally and to make decisions according to the will of the Creator equipped them for their role.

GOD GIVES HUMAN BEINGS THEIR ABILITIES AND INDIVIDUAL CHARACTERISTICS

God created human beings as male and female. The oneness of the two partners is stressed (Genesis 2:20–24). Human sexuality is a good gift of God to be used not just as a physical function, but as an expression of the closest human relationship. Sexuality and the ability to reproduce are under

God's blessing (Genesis 1:28).

We human beings should recognise that any distinctive qualities and abilities we have are gifts of the Creator (see Luther's explanation of the first part of the Apostles' Creed). These gifts do not establish our worth, because human worth does not depend on people's abilities, talents or achievements; nor is it diminished by illness, handicap, age, or failure of any kind. It certainly has nothing to do with race, colour, gender or anything else that distinguishes one human being from another. All people are of equal worth because they are creatures of God whom he loves equally (Acts 10:34: 'God does not show favouritism', NIV). This is shown most clearly in God sending his Son to be the Saviour of all people without exception.

Because human beings are God's special creatures, whom he not only created but also redeemed, they all have great worth and value in God's sight. The life of every human being is sacred, and our Creator demands that we value human life as he does.

HUMAN BEINGS ARE SPIRITUAL

God created humans as spiritual beings, beings who are able to relate to God and to respond to God's revelation of himself. We sometimes talk about every human being having a 'God-shaped hole' — a part of their being that can be filled only by God (Acts 17:27, 28; Romans 1:19,20). Humans seem to have an instinctive awareness of the existence of a Supreme Being. They have a 'natural knowledge' of God. Creation suggests the existence of a creator. God's operation in nature and human history point to his existence. So also does human conscience — the awareness of right and wrong.

The existence of various religions shows that human beings have a natural religious tendency and that they want to live in harmonious relationship with God — whatever their understanding of the deity may be.

As Christians we acknowledge that 'natural' religion is the human reaction to God's revelation of his power and wisdom. However, we also believe that only in Jesus Christ do human beings come to know God and live in harmonious relationship with him as our loving and merciful Father (John 14:6).

Note: The question of evolution is relevant to this unit and also to the unit on the creation of the universe. The Lutheran Church of Australia's statement on creation and evolution is in *Doctrinal Statements and Theological Opinions of the Lutheran Church of Australia*. The following is an excerpt:

While evolution as usually understood is . . . clearly contrary to Scripture, it may be asked whether each and every form of evolutionary speculation must be ruled out on biblical grounds. Actually, Scripture says very little about the mystery of the 'how' of creation, and where Scripture is silent the church cannot dogmatise. In such areas Christian thinkers suggest the possibility of some form or aspects of evolution as God's means of creating, then differences of opinion about such views should be treated as non-doctrinal and therefore not divisive of church fellowship. The clear limits of this sort of speculation are the authority of Scripture generally, and the historicity of Adam and Eve in particular . . .

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. In what ways is the Christian view of human beings at odds with the beliefs generally held in society (perhaps also in the families of your students)?
4. Is it appropriate to emphasise the uniqueness of each person at a time when there is a strong tendency towards individualism (eg 'You are the most important person in the universe')?
5. How do you explain the existence of various religions? Why is the idea that 'everyone finds their own way to God and salvation, no matter which path they take' (sometimes called 'universalism') not compatible with Christianity? What attitude should teachers of Christian Studies take towards non-Christian religions?

FOR FURTHER READING

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

Image of God: *Book of Concord* (Tappert) pages 102:18; 510:10

Sex as God's creation: *Book of Concord* p 240:7

Natural knowledge of God: *Book of Concord* p 562:22

Evolution: *Doctrinal Statements and Theological Opinions of the Lutheran Church of Australia* B4

Ethical issues re human life (birth control, abortion etc): *Doctrinal Statements and Theological Opinions of the Lutheran Church of Australia* Section H

Other religions: *Good Question*, ed B Schwarz, Openbook Publishers, p 101

BAND B STUDENTS

Christians believe that each person is created by God. Each student in your class is unique, with God-given talents and abilities, and each student is loved by God, regardless of physical appearance or performance.

The way students feel about themselves is influenced by their family, peers and the media. The family can nurture and support a positive self-concept. However, difficulties within families and unrealistic behavioural expectations can impact on students' self-concept in a negative way. Lack of self-esteem may show itself in a variety of behaviours, from withdrawal to aggression.

What teachers says to the students and **how** they say it, can have a major impact on the students' self-esteem. What teachers allow students to say and do to each other may have an even greater impact. In a large class it is extremely difficult for a teacher to make each student feel valued. Use teaching strategies which will assist in developing a positive classroom environment, eg teaching collaborative group skills, writing encouraging notes to students, using duty times to build relationships with students.

Resources such as *Friendly Kids*, *Friendly Classrooms* contain ideas on ways to develop positive self-concepts in students. Christians believe that the gospel, through which people are assured of God's unconditional love and acceptance, is the ultimate resource in developing a healthy self-concept.

DEVELOPMENTAL CHARACTERISTICS		IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHING
Students at this band level can be intolerant of perceived weaknesses in others.	➔	Assist students to identify unique talents of their peers and to identify ways of affirming those talents.
Winning and competition is a high priority and greatly valued.	➔	Assist students to see that their worth is not determined by being on the winning team or knowing the correct answers. Explore the Christian belief that all people are important to God.
Failure and lack of success can be very distressing.	➔	Affirm talents of each student as God-given. Assist students to identify and develop their talents.
The need for knowledge can result in students becoming highly absorbed in a subject area.	➔	Direct students to sources of information. Model and support research skills. Acknowledge the students' own knowledge of factual information about particular topics.
Students have large amounts of energy and a desire to be actively involved in tasks.	➔	Provide activities which utilise manual and motor skills.
Companionship and doing things with friends is extremely important.	➔	Help students to identify positive features of friendship. Provide opportunities for students to work with their friends or peers.
Sex-identity is becoming established and students prefer to be in single-sex groups.	➔	Assist students to explore the Christian teaching that male and female are equally valuable to God.

NOTES