

**MODEL UNIT
BAND C
LEVEL 3**

THE BIBLE: WHAT'S IT ABOUT?

LIFE CONCEPT: GOD HELPS PEOPLE BY HIS WORD

YEAR:.....SUGGESTED DURATION: 5 weeks (135 minutes per week)

DATE OF USE: FAITH STATEMENTS: ① ② 3

UNIT-SPECIFIC GOALS (highlighted)

1. GOD REVEALS HIMSELF TO PEOPLE THROUGH HIS WORD

- 1a investigate what Christians believe God reveals about himself through the written (Bible) and living word (Jesus)
- 1b investigate the key messages of the Bible: God's warnings and promises (law and gospel)
- 1c investigate the impact of the Bible in the lives of people

2. THE BIBLE IS GOD'S WORD, WRITTEN BY PEOPLE WHOM GOD INSPIRED

- 2a investigate the Christian belief that the Bible is God's word inspired by the Holy Spirit
- 2b explore the historical development of the Bible into its present form
- 2c develop strategies for working with the Bible, eg using cross references and concordances

3. THE BIBLE TELLS THE STORY OF GOD'S PLAN FOR THE SALVATION OF ALL PEOPLE THROUGH JESUS

- 3a investigate the important people and events in the salvation plan in the Old Testament
- 3b explore the New Testament teaching that Jesus completed God's plan of salvation

STUDENT ASSESSMENT

ASSESSABLE STUDENT OUTCOMES
Identify the message of the Bible from a selection of Bible verses. (1a,1b)
Interview Christians to explore their beliefs about the Bible. (1c)
Record what Bible passages teach about the writing of the Bible. (2a)
Record facts about the historical development of the Bible. (2b)
Demonstrate strategies for working with the Bible, eg locating books, chapters and verses, using encyclopedias and handbooks. (2c)

ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES
⇒ TRS C3/1
⇒ discussion and observation
⇒ group discussion and work sample
⇒ work sample
⇒ observation and checklist

UNIT SUMMARY

Students investigate different views about the Bible. They explore the historical development of the Bible, the message of the Bible, and what Christians believe about the Bible. Students use the information they gather to prepare a *Guide to the Bible*.

UNIT NOTES

In preparation for writing *A Guide to the Bible*, students survey students their age to establish what they know about the Bible. The survey may guide the topics investigated. Students can study different Bible handbooks, eg *The Adventure Bible Handbook* and *The Lion Handbook to the Bible*, and shorter tracts about the Bible to see what is included and how it is presented.

INTRODUCTION

1. WHAT DO PEOPLE THINK ABOUT THE BIBLE?

This activity assists the teacher to gauge the students' attitude towards, and knowledge of, the Bible. Encourage the students to express their views freely without challenging them at this stage. Their views may be based on misinformation.

Each student creates a collage showing what they believe different people would say about the Bible. Students cut pictures from magazines of a variety of people and paste these onto the collage. Students draw speech bubbles for each person and write what they think each person might say about the Bible in the speech bubbles. Discuss:

- What do you think most people think or believe about the Bible?
- Why do you think elderly people would say the Bible is . . . ?
- What do you think people your age would say about the Bible? What has led them to hold these views?
- How much do people your age know about the Bible?
- What questions do you have about the Bible? (These responses could be used to guide the investigation.)

Suggest that some people may hold views about the Bible that are based on lack of knowledge (or misinformation) about the Bible and its contents. Ask the students how they might inform themselves and others about the Bible. Tell the students that they will be investigating the Bible in order to develop a computer multimedia *Guide to the Bible*. They will need to keep a file containing the information they gather during the investigation.

Students develop a survey to ascertain what Year 8 students know about the Bible.

DEVELOPMENT

2. WHO WROTE THE BIBLE?

Lead the students to understand that God worked through people to write the Bible. Christians believe that the Bible is God's word and that it tells us everything we need to know about God.

Write the words of 2 Peter 1:21 on the board. Students discuss what they think the verse means.

Students work in groups to read the following Bible passages and record what the Bible says about how God gave his word to people and how the Bible was written.

Luke 1:1–4	Acts 28:25
1 Thessalonians 2:13	2 Timothy 3:15–17
Hebrews 1:1,2	1 Peter 1:10–12
2 Peter 3:15	

Discuss:

- What does the Bible say about how it was written?
- Is the Bible like other books? Why or why not?
- Why did people write the Bible?

Invite a pastor to share information about the Christian belief that the Bible was inspired by God.

Students record information about how the Bible was written to include in their *Guide*.

3. THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE BIBLE

Choose from the following activities to assist students to research and record information for their guide about the historical development of the Bible into its present form. Key words to guide students' research might include: Codex Sinaiticus, Dead Sea Scrolls, canon, Old and New Testament.

- Use the *Lion Bible Encyclopedia* and *Handbook*
- View a video such as *Messages from the Memorybanks* (available from the Bible Society)
- Surf the Internet

To guide their research use questions such as:

- Who wrote the Bible?
- How did the Bible develop into the book we have now?

Students record information about the development of the Bible to include in their *Guide*.

4. BIBLE TRANSLATORS AND TRANSLATIONS

Provide students with a range of resources such as Bible encyclopedias. Students work in groups to list five facts about people involved in the translation of the Bible such as John Wycliffe, Jan Hus, William Tyndale, Martin Luther.

Students bring Bibles from home or gather a range of Bibles in different translations, eg Today's English Version (Good News), Contemporary English Version, New International Version. Students work in groups to look at at least three different Bible versions. They read any information they can find about the translation in the introduction or forward section of the Bibles.

Read the same story, eg the Good Samaritan Luke 10: 25–37, in each translation to compare and discuss:

- What is similar and different in the translations of the story?
- Which version do you prefer? Why?

Students record information about Bible translators and translations to include in their *Guide*.

Students use their preferred version for the Bible meditation in #5.

5. THE BIBLE MEDITATION

Distribute TRS C3/1 and explain to the students the routine for the Bible meditation sessions.

At the start of each session indicate which passages are to be dealt with. If students have the same Bible version, you may indicate page numbers for the passages. Students work through the three steps:

1. quiet reading
2. quiet reflection
3. group discussion.

To create a reflective mood consider playing some quiet music. The suggested readings and questions are listed on TRS C3/1.

After all the meditation sessions are completed, ask the students to consider what they have read in the Bible and respond individually to:

- What is the Bible about?
- What do you think is a most important message of the Bible?
- What do you think is the 'must know' Bible verse for Year 8 students?

- How could the Bible help students in Year 8 today?

As a class discuss their responses.

Students may choose to investigate the message of the Bible, using Christian reference texts such as *User's Guide to the Bible*, *Key Christian Beliefs Finding Faith*, *God for Us*, *Growing as God's People*.

Students record information about the message of the Bible for their *Guide*.

7. WHAT DO CHRISTIANS BELIEVE ABOUT THE BIBLE?

Choose from the following activities to investigate the two questions:

- What do Christians believe about the Bible?
- How do Christians use the Bible?

INTERVIEW Arrange to interview Christians of different ages and denominations and ask them to focus their talk on the two questions.

READ AND DISCUSS Read TRS C3/2 and discuss comments made by Christians about the Bible. Study the statistics and discuss why the students think Christians read the Bible.

BIBLE Look for answers in the Bible:

John 20:31	Romans 1:16,
Romans 15:4	2 Timothy 3:16,17
Hebrews 4:12	1 John 5:13.

MAGAZINES Use contemporary Christian magazines, such as *Australian Sports Focus*, to explore what the Bible means to Christians.

MUSIC Listen to contemporary Christian songs that have Bible references. Read the Bible passage, listen to the song and study the lyrics to consider the Bible's importance for Christians, eg *Thy Word* and *In A Little While* by Amy Grant (*The Collection* CD).

As a class develop a list of Christian beliefs about the Bible and ways Christians use the Bible to include in the *Guide*.

RESPONSE

8. BIBLE GUIDE

Students individually write their own *Guide to the Bible*. They use the information gathered during the unit and link it to what they uncovered in the survey (Activity 1) to create a guide book that has everything students their age would need to know about the Bible. See TRS C3/3.

YOU WILL NEED

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> magazines and paper for collages <input type="checkbox"/> Bibles (a range of versions) <input type="checkbox"/> Videos of Bible stories and <i>The Messages from the Memorybanks</i> available from the Bible Society <input type="checkbox"/> Bible handbooks and encyclopedias | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> to arrange interviews with Christians of different ages who are willing to share their beliefs about the Bible <input type="checkbox"/> possibly to arrange an interview with the local pastor who can share information about the historical development of the Bible <input type="checkbox"/> Christian reference texts such as <i>Finding Faith, Christian Beliefs</i> (see Recommended Resources Menu) |
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INTEGRATING INTO OTHER CURRICULUM AREAS

ENGLISH: *Literature:* Develop an understanding of why readers' interpretations of texts may vary. Explain and justify own opinions about texts. Find and cite elements of a text to support a point of view. Read and retell. Experiment with a range of vocabulary, punctuation, grammar. *Everyday Texts:* Select appropriate spoken text types for particular speaking purposes. Consider the needs of the audience when speaking and writing. Develop discussion and problem-solving skills. Use strategies for gathering, recording and reporting data.

SOCIETY AND ENVIRONMENT: *Investigation, Communication, Participation:* Reflect on knowledge and understanding. Formulate questions. Draw conclusions. Consider appropriate ways of presenting information. Contribute to decision-making. Cooperation skills. *Place and Space:* Consider the similarities and differences in ways of life and living standards in other countries and times. *Culture:* Consider the customs and traditions across cultures.

from the National Statements and Profiles

UNIT EVALUATION

Which activities worked well in this unit?

Which resources were useful in the implementation of this unit?

How did I respond to the range of students' prior knowledge about the Bible?

How did I respond to the range of students' biblical literacy skills (eg their ability to find books, chapters and verses)?

What would I do differently if I was teaching this unit again?

How will I use and build on knowledge, understandings, skills, attitudes, and values students have developed in this unit?

What is the Bible about?

That's a good question!

It's a question you need to consider carefully as you prepare to write your own *Guide to the Bible for Year 8 Students*.

The best way to find out what the Bible is about is to read the Bible, so we will be exploring a number of different passages from the Bible.

We will use the following steps to allow you to explore and reflect on the passages:

1. QUIET READING

You will be given time for quiet reading of the Bible verses. Read each passage two or three times. You might like to repeat some verses quietly in your head.

2. QUIET REFLECTION

You will have a chance to write a personal reflection on the passage using the key questions:

- What does this passage say to me?
- What does this passage say about God?

3. GROUP DISCUSSION

You will have an opportunity to discuss in groups what you have read, using the key questions and your responses to the questions. Consider:

- Based on these passages, what is the Bible about?
- Which of the passages should be included in the *Guide to the Bible*? Why?

BIBLE PASSAGES THAT HELP EXPLAIN WHAT THE BIBLE IS ABOUT

Deuteronomy 4:32–40

Job 38:1–24

Psalms 139:1–19

Ecclesiastes 12:9–14

Isaiah 43:1–4

Matthew 5:43–48

Matthew 13:1–9; 18–23

Matthew 22:34–40

Luke 12:22–31

Luke 15:1–10

Romans 3:21–26

Romans 8:31–39

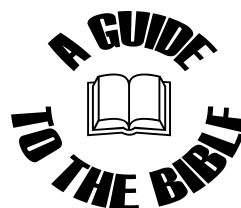
1 Corinthians 13

Ephesians 3:14–21

Colossians 3:12–16

Hebrews 13:1–8

1 John 4:7–21



What Christians say about the Bible

‘Sometimes when we first start out on the track with God, the Bible is a bit like a love letter. You know when you first fall in love with someone they send you notes and letters. You hang on every word. Everything they say applies to your relationship and you interpret it into everything that is going on around you.

The Bible can be like that sometimes. You pick it up and read a passage and say ‘Whoa! Yea, that’s like what’s happening to me, that’s a big help’. Sometimes Bible verses will feel as though God gave them just for you and your situation.’

John Smith and Fuzz Kitto in *Something You Can Stand for*

Statement	Percentage of teenagers who agreed with the statement	
	Christian	Not Christian
‘The Bible provides a clear and totally accurate description of moral truth.’	91	62
‘The Bible is totally accurate in all of its teachings.’	85	46
‘The Bible does not provide practical standards for living in today’s world.’	14	33
‘Anyone who relies upon religious faith or the Bible for moral guidance is foolish.’	6	12

based on a nationwide survey in USA among a random sample of 723 teenagers aged 13 to 18.
from *Generation Next* by George Barna,

‘More than half of all church attenders read the Bible at least several times a week (58%); 41% read it every day/most days and 17% read it several times per week. Another 6% read the Bible once a week.’

From *Views from the Pews*, The National Church Life Survey in Australia 1995

‘Some people say the Bible is boring. I don’t. It has mystery, adventure, sex, violence and intrigue. But the most amazing thing is the message of the Bible, that God loves me as I am and more than I can imagine. That’s what the Bible means to me.’

Anon

‘I read the Bible to get encouragement and perspective on life. I don’t find it easy to read the Bible. I like to read a little bit and to ponder on what it is saying to me.’

Anon

‘The Bible is a really surprising book. You know I can hear or read the same story a hundred times and yet I always find something new in the story to think about. You know, I have never thought about it like this before!’

Anon



Guide to the Bible

You will be writing your own
Guide to the Bible for students your age.

You will need to consider carefully
what students your age need and want to know
about the Bible.

Your Guide must include:

- ◆ Important Bible verses for students your age
 - ◆ The message of the Bible
 - ◆ The importance of the Bible for Christians
- ◆ How the Bible was written and came into its present form

Think carefully about how you will
make your guide
informative and appealing to students.
Study other guides to the Bible to gain ideas.

Try to make the guide something
you would read and use
to find out about the Bible.





THE OLD TESTAMENT

There is not a great deal of information about who wrote the books of the Old Testament and how they came to be put together. Many of the writings were a part of the Jewish people's oral tradition long before they came to be written down. Christians believe that God worked through people to record his message for all people.

- ◆ Important things have always been recorded in writing or drawings and kept in special places. In the book of Exodus the Lord said to Moses, 'Write an account of this victory, so that it will be remembered'. (Exodus 17:14)
- ◆ Moses wrote down God's instructions in 'The Book of Law'. These special writings were given to the priests to keep beside the covenant box in the sacred inner room of the tabernacle. The Ten Commandments were carved in stone and they were kept inside the covenant box. (Exodus 34:27,28; Deuteronomy 10:5)
- ◆ The words and writings of God's prophets were written down from about the time of Samuel. 'Samuel explained to the people the rights and duties of a king, and then wrote them in a book, which he deposited in a holy place.'
(1 Samuel 10:17–25)
- ◆ David wrote many of the songs and prayers in the book of Psalms. This collection of writings were added to over the years and used in temple worship.
- ◆ God chose prophets to be his messengers. They were filled with the Holy Spirit and delivered God's message to his people. It is uncertain if the prophets actually wrote these books or whether someone remembered their words and wrote them down. However, they were widely accepted as a part of the Scriptures by the time of Jesus.
- ◆ 'The Scriptures', the Old Testament, was already in use and a central part of Jewish worship in Jesus' time. They would probably have consisted of the Books of Law, the writings of the prophets and the Psalms and Wisdom. Luke records Jesus reading from 'the Scriptures'. 'Then Jesus went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath he went as usual to the synagogue. He stood up to read the Scriptures and was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah' (Luke 4:16–21).



The New Testament

There is some evidence about how the books of the New Testament came together. Thousand of manuscripts, which are dated in the early centuries AD, have been preserved and have helped historians piece together what must have happened. Christians believe that God has guided the development of these writings too so that all people may come to know him.

- ◆ The early Christian churches continued to read from the Old Testament. People who had known Jesus also spoke, telling others about what he had done and taught. The first written documents circulating among the churches were the letters written by Paul. These were treasured by the churches Paul had written them to, and copies were made and distributed to other churches.
- ◆ As time passed and eyewitnesses died, Christians realised that accounts of Jesus' life and work needed to be recorded. This lead Matthew and John, Mark (probably working with Peter) and Luke to write the gospels. They wrote accounts of Jesus' life.

'In his disciples' presence Jesus performed many other miracles which are not written down in this book. But these have been written in order that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through your faith in him you may have life.' John 20:30,31.

'Dear Theophilus, Many people have done their best to write a report of the things that have taken place among us. They wrote what we have been told by those who saw these things from the beginning and who proclaimed the message. And so, Your Excellency, because I have carefully studied all these matters from their beginning, I thought it would be good to write an orderly account for you. I do this so that you will know the full truth about everything which you have been taught.' Luke 1:1–4
- ◆ At first there were many other accounts of Jesus' life circulated, but by the second century AD the leaders of the churches agreed that only the accounts by Matthew, Mark, Luke and John were truly inspired by God.
- ◆ The list of New Testament books was determined on the basis of the following two questions:

Does this book teach what the eyewitnesses, particularly the disciples of Jesus, taught?
Does it encourage and strengthen Christians in their faith?
- ◆ The original manuscripts of the Bible were in the form of scrolls and are no longer in existence. However copies of the manuscripts have been found. Two famous discoveries of manuscripts were the discovery of the Dead Sea scrolls and the Codex Sinaiticus. Amazingly, these manuscripts are all virtually identical to each other. To historians this means that they are all virtually identical to the original manuscripts.
- ◆ The Old and New Testaments were eventually put together into book form.

The Bible (or parts of it) has been translated into 2,167 different languages. Translating the Bible into different languages continues today. (Bible Society, 1997)