

**GOD HELPS
PEOPLE
BY HIS WORD**



BAND

**C
PLANNING GUIDE**



CONTENTS

Aims	3
Background notes for teachers	4
BAND C students	6
Goals	8
Menus	
Bible references	10
Introductory activities	13
Development activities	15
Response activities	19
Recommended resources.....	20
Planning pro-forma	23
Model unit for level 1	27
(with teacher resource sheets)	
Model unit for level 2	37
(with teacher resource sheets)	
Model unit for level 3	45
(with teacher resource sheets)	
Students and families	54

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 helps people by his word is one of twelve concepts covered by LIFE curriculum. This BAND C planning guide contains model units for three years covering the transition from primary to secondary school.

Writer: Anne Dohnt

Theological adviser: David Strelan

Editorial adviser: Mary Jo Zwar

Published December 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 HELPS PEOPLE BY HIS WORD

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 HELPS PEOPLE BY HIS WORD

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 reveals himself to people by his word
2. The Bible is God's word written by people whom God inspired
3. The Bible tells the story of God's plan for the salvation of his people through Jesus

BACKGROUND NOTES FOR TEACHERS

GOD HELPS PEOPLE BY HIS WORD

God does not leave us to work out for ourselves such important things as who God is, what kind of God he is, what he wants from us, how he feels towards us, and what he does for us. God graciously communicates with us. The 'word' of God is God's self-revelation; it makes God known to us so that we can honour, love and trust him as our God.

THE WORD IN VARIOUS FORMS

The word of God has come and still comes to human beings in different ways (Hebrews 1:1). God spoke through prophets, who did not preach their own messages, but proclaimed the warnings and promises of God 'as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit' (2 Peter 1:21). God's ultimate word — his most complete revelation of himself — was in the form of his own Son, Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh (John 1:1,14). Then Jesus' followers (apostles, evangelists, prophets etc) proclaimed the word of God as they had learnt it from Jesus and as they were led by 'the Spirit of truth' (John 14:26; 16:13).

GOD'S WRITTEN WORD So that we and all people of all times can know the word which God spoke through the prophets and apostles and through the Word who came in human flesh, God has also given us his written word, the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. The Holy Spirit inspired people to write the Bible. We cannot explain exactly how this inspiration happened. It was not some kind of 'dictation', but the writers wrote in their own style; we can recognise their pet words and expressions. 'The holy writers whom God used retained the distinctive features of their personalities (language and terminology, literary methods, conditions, knowledge of nature and history as apart from direct revelation and prophecy)' (*A Consensus Statement on Holy Scripture* A.2.3). Yet at the same time what they wrote was God's word.

HUMAN AND DIVINE So the Bible is both human and divine. We cannot separate the divine and human, however, or say that some parts are less the word of God because they seem to us to be contradictory or because they

deal with everyday matters that don't seem to have much bearing on our relationship with God (eg 2 Timothy 4:13). Rather, we should humbly marvel that 'it pleased God to give us his word under, or in the garb of, the human word of the biblical writers' (*Theses of Agreement* VIII 9).

ULTIMATE AUTHORITY The Bible does not merely **contain** the word of God; it **is** the word of God. Because the Bible is the word of God, it is true and should be the ultimate authority for what we believe and teach and how we should live. Lutherans say: 'The word of God is and should remain the sole rule and norm of all doctrine and . . . no human being's writings dare be put on a par with it, but . . . everything must be subjected to it' (*Book of Concord* page 505).

Luther said: '. . . the word of God shall establish articles of faith and no-one else, not even an angel' (*Book of Concord* p 295). This does not mean that the Bible is some kind of supreme textbook, which gives us

the answer to all our questions on any subject.

PURPOSE OF THE BIBLE In the Bible God makes known his marvellous plan for saving the fallen world. God called Abraham and gave him the promise that he would be the father of God's chosen people through whom God would bless all people. God rescued his people Israel from slavery and made his gracious covenant with them. Israel was not faithful to God, yet God remained gracious to them and preserved a 'remnant' from whom the promised Saviour would come.

God's saving plan reached its climax in the coming to earth of his Son, Jesus Christ, to live, die and rise again as the Saviour of all people. Jesus is the focal point of the Scriptures of Old and New Testaments. The Bible's chief purpose is to lead us to Christ, to 'make (us) wise enough to have faith in Christ Jesus and be saved' (2 Timothy 3:15 CEV). 'The essential purpose of Scripture is to reveal the Son and his work so that (human beings) might have salvation' (*Consensus Statement* Attachment I, Part I, b).

The Holy Spirit gave the word of God to people to speak and to write, so that today we have God's revelation of himself in the Bible.
Theological Foundations of LIFE curriculum.

LAW AND GOSPEL Lutherans see law and gospel as the central teachings of the Bible. The law of God tells us what God wants us to do and not to do and what kind of people God wants us to be. It is the bad news that shows us our sins and our need of a saviour, because we are helpless to save ourselves. The gospel is the good news that tells us that through Christ God has acted to save us out of undeserved love.

While all Scripture is the authoritative word of God, not all statements in the Bible are of equal value and importance. For example, while Old Testament dietary laws or family tree details have their place in the total message of the Bible, they do not have the same importance and value for us as do statements about Jesus' resurrection.

IS THE BIBLE TRUE? How do we know the Bible is true? Ultimately, this can't be proved but must be accepted by faith. When the Holy Spirit leads people to faith in Jesus as their Saviour, he at the same time gives them the confidence that the Scriptures — which Luther called the 'swaddling clothes and manger' where we find Christ — are indeed the word of God.

The Bible makes use of various literary forms in order to present God's word to people from differing generations, cultures and the like. For example, there are narratives, parables, pictures, visions, poetry and symbols. Some things we are meant to take literally, other things are obviously figurative.

INTERPRETING THE BIBLE Some basic guidelines for interpreting the Bible are:

- Let the Bible interpret the Bible. Look at clearer Bible passages to help interpret more difficult passages. Any interpretation of a particular Bible statement must agree with what the Bible teaches as a whole.
- Take the literal meaning of a passage, unless there are clear indications the passage is meant to be understood figuratively (eg the literary style).
- Look at the context and historical situation. What were the circumstances in which the Bible passage was written?
- Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you to recognise, accept and apply what the Bible passage says to you today, especially in terms of law and gospel.

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. The Lutheran church has often prided itself on being 'the church of the open Bible'. How appropriate is this title? How would you assess the place the Bible occupies in the Lutheran church?
4. What aspects of the Bible give you most difficulty? How should we respond to apparent contradictions in the Bible?
5. How can you tell whether something in the Bible is to be taken literally or figuratively? Give examples of Bible statements that you consider are in 'picture language'.

FOR FURTHER READING

Formula of Concord, Rule and Norm, *Book of Concord pages 464, 503–505*;

Doctrinal Statements and Theological Opinions of the Lutheran Church of Australia:

A17: Theses on Scripture and Inspiration

B1: The Theses of Agreement and Inerrancy;

B 9–14: A Consensus Statement on Holy Scripture.

Good Question, ed B Schwarz, Openbook Publishers p 18: *How do Christians know the Bible is true?*

Masterplan by Dr V Pfitzner, Openbook (an overview of God's plan of salvation in the Bible)

BAND C STUDENTS

The challenge for each teacher when using the Bible in the classroom is to develop an awareness of and respect for the Bible as God's word and at the same time develop a real love and familiarity with the Bible and its contents.

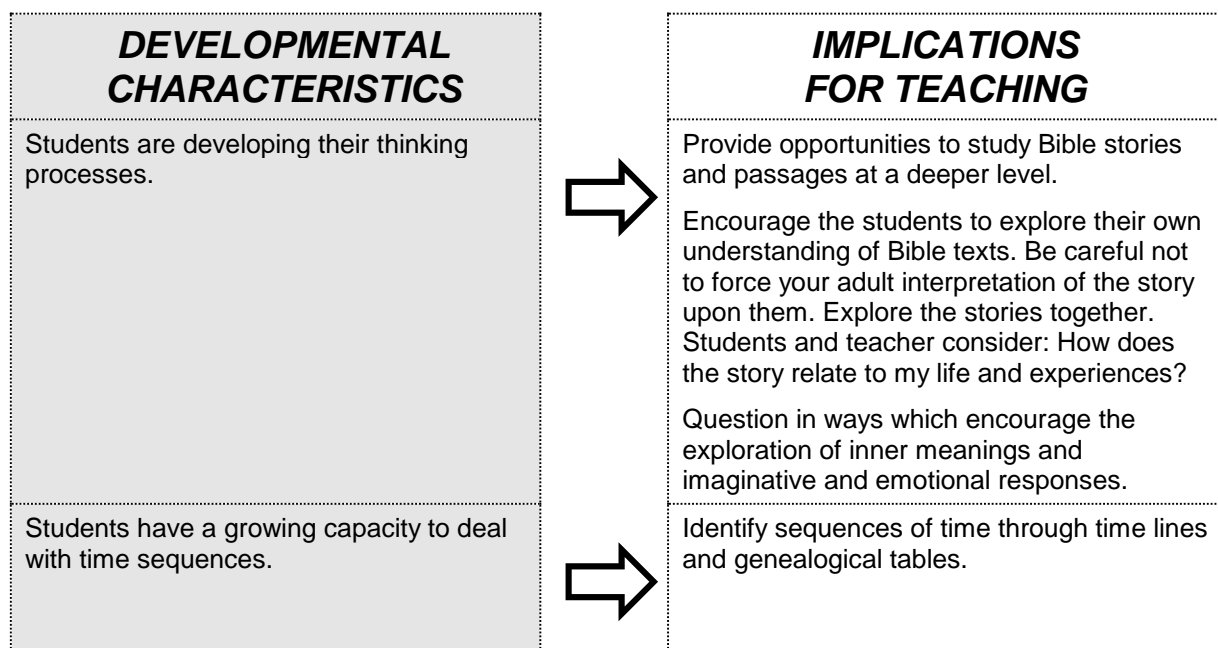
The students in your class will have diverse knowledge and understanding of the Bible. Some students will have a sound knowledge of Bible stories, while for others it may be the first time they have used the Bible and heard its stories. Be careful not to assume prior knowledge of Bible stories or Bible characters, and be prepared to discuss any questions the students may have about the stories. It is important to support and encourage students who are unfamiliar with the Bible so that these students do not feel overwhelmed by the structure and content of the book.






As you explore Bible stories with the students, encourage an atmosphere of discovery. Use questions such as: How do you think people in this story were thinking/feeling? What did the story mean to people at that time? What is the story saying to you? What would you have done if you were in the story?

Guided discussion and thoughtful questioning can assist students to explore Bible stories for themselves. It is important to allow students to hear the story as God's word to them. Don't rush in with your own interpretation and application, but help students to reflect on and explore God's message to them.

When selecting Bible stories to use with students in Band C, be aware of the following guidelines:

- Choose stories appropriate to the goals and purposes of the unit.
- Choose stories according to the students' ability. Not all Bible stories are appropriate for students at all levels.
- Provide students with an opportunity to explore the culture and beliefs of people in Bible times
- Emphasise the gospel in each story and avoid using Bible stories in a moralistic or legalistic manner.
- Encourage students to consider the meaning of the story for people in Bible times and people today.
- Use a Bible translation which the students can understand, eg Contemporary English Version (CEV). Also consider using children's Bibles such as Selina Hastings *Illustrated Children's Bible* when dealing with some of the lengthy biblical narratives.



<p>Students may focus on the law presented in Bible texts.</p>		<p>Provide a balance between law and gospel. Highlight God's loving concern for his people.</p>
<p>Students can often be fascinated by historic or romantic figures.</p>		<p>Provide opportunities for developing imagination by telling stories about biblical people who faced challenges.</p>
<p>Students experience anxieties about acceptance. The peer group exerts increasing pressure.</p>		<p>Emphasise God's unconditional acceptance. Use Bible stories to which students will be able to relate.</p>
<p>Students have a growing awareness of real-life issues.</p>		<p>Explore what guidance the Bible gives for dealing with these real-life issues. Explore a range of Bible passages on the issues and avoid using a single verse in isolation as proof of God's view of any issue.</p>
<p>Students have an increased sense of personal responsibility for their own beliefs and attitudes.</p>		<p>Provide opportunities for students to consider their personal response to Jesus, without forcing responses. Invite students to consider for themselves what it means to be a Christian. Accept responses such as: 'I'm not sure' or 'I don't understand'.</p>