

**MODEL UNIT
BAND C
LEVEL 2**

ONE CHRISTIAN CHURCH, MANY DENOMINATIONS

LIFE CONCEPT: GOD GATHERS PEOPLE INTO THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH
YEAR: **SUGGESTED DURATION:** 6 weeks (135 minutes per week)

DATE OF USE: **FAITH STATEMENTS:** ① ② 3

UNIT-SPECIFIC GOALS (highlighted)

1. THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH IS THE COMMUNITY OF BELIEVERS CREATED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT

- 1a** investigate the Bible's descriptions of the Christian church
- 1b** explore similarities and differences in local Christian denominations
- 1c** explore how God's word and the sacraments are central to the life of Christian congregations

2. GOD HAS GATHERED HIS PEOPLE TOGETHER THROUGHOUT HISTORY

- 2a** investigate important events and people in the development and history of Christian denominations
- 2b** investigate the history of the Lutheran church in Australia
- 2c** explore what has been constant and what has changed in the Christian church

3. LUTHERANS IN AUSTRALIA WORK TOGETHER IN MINISTRY AND MISSION

- 3a** investigate ways the Lutheran Church of Australia carries out its mission and ministry in the world
- 3b** investigate the work of an organisation of the Lutheran Church of Australia in the world

STUDENT ASSESSMENT

ASSESSABLE STUDENT OUTCOMES

- Describe one of the Bible's images of the church. (1a)
- Record and give an oral report of information relating to the history, beliefs, practices and activities of Christian denominations. (1b,2a)
- Describe the importance of the word and sacraments to different Christian denominations. (1c)
- List the similarities and differences between the Christian churches today and the early Christian church. (2c)

ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES

- ⇒ TRS C2/1
- ⇒ observation of oral report
- ⇒ observation of oral report
- ⇒ work sample TRS C2/5

UNIT SUMMARY

Students investigate the Christian church as described in Acts and as present in the local community. Students interview and research to gain information relating to the history, beliefs, practices and activities of the Christian denominations.

UNIT NOTES

To prepare for this unit of work, arrange visits to local churches representing at least four Christian denominations. Include churches of which students in the class are members, and, if possible, an Eastern Orthodox church. It may be possible to walk to the local church buildings or hire a bus and visit three or four in one day. Before the visit, send to your host at each church a list of questions that the students are researching. See TRS C2/3. Alternatively, arrange for representatives of the congregations to visit the class.

During this unit tell or read stories of great people from different Christian denominations, eg Martin Luther, John Calvin, Pope John XXIII. Discuss their denomination and what they believed.

INTRODUCTION

1. WHAT IS THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH?

This activity will provide information about the students' concept of the Christian church. It will probably reveal that many people consider the church to be the building rather than the worldwide community of Christians. Acknowledge any negative images that the students may have developed and pose questions to broaden their thinking.

Write *CHRISTIAN CHURCH* on the board. Students brainstorm what this phrase means to them.

Discuss their responses and sort them under headings such as: worship, members, building, all Christians.

'Christian church', like many other terms, has a number of different but related definitions. Work together to write definitions of the Christian church.

Students keep their brainstorming to review at the end of the unit. Students could clarify their definitions as the unit progresses.

DEVELOPMENT

2. BIBLICAL DESCRIPTIONS OF THE CHURCH

These activities develop an awareness of the biblical descriptions of the church, its beliefs and practices. Assist the students to identify the common faith shared by the early Christians and the common practices of gathering to receive the word and sacraments and to love and serve one another.

Common beliefs

To explore what early Christians believed, read

Philippians 2:6–11	Ephesians 4:5,6
1 Timothy 4:6	2 Timothy 1:8–10,
1 Corinthians 12:3	1 Corinthians 15:1–4
1 Timothy 2:1–6	The Apostles' Creed
The Nicene Creed	

Students list the central beliefs of early Christians.

Common activities

Provide the students with information about the early Christian church, eg Acts 2:42–47 (and other references in the Bible References Menu), non-fiction texts (see Recommended Resources Menu).

Students record the practices and activities of the early church.

Students summarise in drawings or writing what the Bible says about the Christian church and display them next to their own definition. They may want to make some alterations to the definitions.

3. BIBLICAL PICTURES OF THE CHURCH

Tell students that the Bible uses a number of word pictures to describe the church.

Provide students with TRS C2/1 which lists Bible references for images of the Christian church. Students work with partners to investigate some of these images and to create their own.

4. WHAT IS A DENOMINATION?

The activities encourage students to develop the understanding that the Christian faith is the unifying aspect of the Christian church. The differences are in the denominational interpretation of the Bible, traditions and rituals.

Students in small groups use dictionaries to find an appropriate definition of the word 'denomination'. They then brainstorm a list of Christian denominations.

Where there is uncertainty, use the common beliefs and creeds of the early church as criteria for deciding which are *Christian* denominations.

Use the following question to gauge students' knowledge of the development of the Christian denominations:

- If the Christian church began as one group, why are there now so many Christian denominations?

Students use TRS C2/2 as an overview of the development of Christian denominations. After reading the TRS, students may want to list more Christian denominations.

Provide students with a map of the local area. Identify the symbol used to show churches on the map. Place flags or tags to show the local Christian denominations on the map.

5. RESEARCH DENOMINATIONS

Introduce the two parts of the research project.

- A. The whole class will visit the representative congregations of four or five different denominations.
- B. Students will work individually or in small groups to further research and prepare a report on one of these denominations.

Students use TRS C2/3 as a guide for collecting information as they visit local churches and/or interview representatives of the churches. Students will gather information on the history, beliefs and practices and activities of the different Christian denominations.

A. Visiting churches

(See Unit Notes about preparing for the visit.) On arrival at the church, students answer as many questions as they can by looking at the church signboard.

During the visit, take photos of the congregation's signboard, the building, the people at work in the church buildings.

Interview the pastor or another representative of the congregation (use questions on TRS C2/3) and ask for a tour through the building. Ask for samples of the congregation's newsletters, membership packs, brochures, orders of service.

B. Preparing and making reports

Students select one of the denominations to research further.

Ensure that each denomination visited will be reported on. Encourage students who belong to the denominations to include personal statements about their own involvement.

Students prepare a poster display summarising the research and using the photos and pamphlets gathered. Students prepare a short oral presentation about their posters. Allow time for questions and comments.

After each presentation summarise the information on a chart, either as a class or individually. See TRS C2/4.

Use the chart to discuss:

- What is important to all Christian denominations?
- What do the differences relate to?
- What aspects of the early Christian church are still evident in the church today?

Provide time for students to individually reflect on what they have learnt, using TRS C2/5.

6. DENOMINATIONS WORK TOGETHER

Write the word 'ecumenical' on the board. Students use dictionaries to define the term. Ask students if they know of activities in the local community that show the Christian churches working together.

Students work in groups to brainstorm ways in which the local churches do and could work together. Record these as a class on a chart.

Revise the class definitions of Christian church.

RESPONSE

7. AN ECUMENICAL EVENT

Organise an event titled 'One Christian church, many church denominations'.

Invite the parents and representatives of local congregations to attend the event.

Display the students' completed work. Groups of students could present their oral reports about the denominations researched. Students could highlight the factors which unite the churches rather than the differences.

Possibly close the event with a shared meal or afternoon tea.

YOU WILL NEED

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> non-fiction resources about Christian denominations <input type="checkbox"/> non-fiction resources about Christians in the early church <input type="checkbox"/> to arrange visits to the local Christian denominations (it might be possible to walk to one each day, or alternatively, hire a bus to visit three or four in one day) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> information about great church leaders, eg Martin Luther, John Calvin, the pope, Mary MacKillop, John Wesley. Encyclopedias or CD-ROMs such as <i>Encarta</i> are useful resources. <input type="checkbox"/> to invite parents to attend the presentations about the denominations |
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INTEGRATING INTO OTHER CURRICULUM AREAS

ENGLISH: *Literature:* Explain and justify own opinions about texts. Find and cite elements of a text to support a point of view. Directed reading, reading alone. Editing skills. *Everyday Texts:* Consider needs of audience when speaking. Develop discussion and problem-solving skills. Use strategies for gathering, recording and reporting data. Report findings in speech and writing. Plan, prepare and present short talks. Use subheadings and diagrams in informational texts. Consider how factors (eg information, pronunciation) influence the way audiences receive texts.

SOCIETY AND ENVIRONMENT: *Investigation, Communication, Participation:* Formulate questions, reflect on knowledge and understanding. Identify information sources. Gather, organise and interpret information using diagrams. Identify similar data. Draw conclusions. Identify, analyse and clarify values. Consider audience in presentation. Cooperation skills. *Place and Space:* Explore aspects of heritage. Identify groups in the community. *Culture:* Examine belief systems.

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' knowledge about Christian denominations?

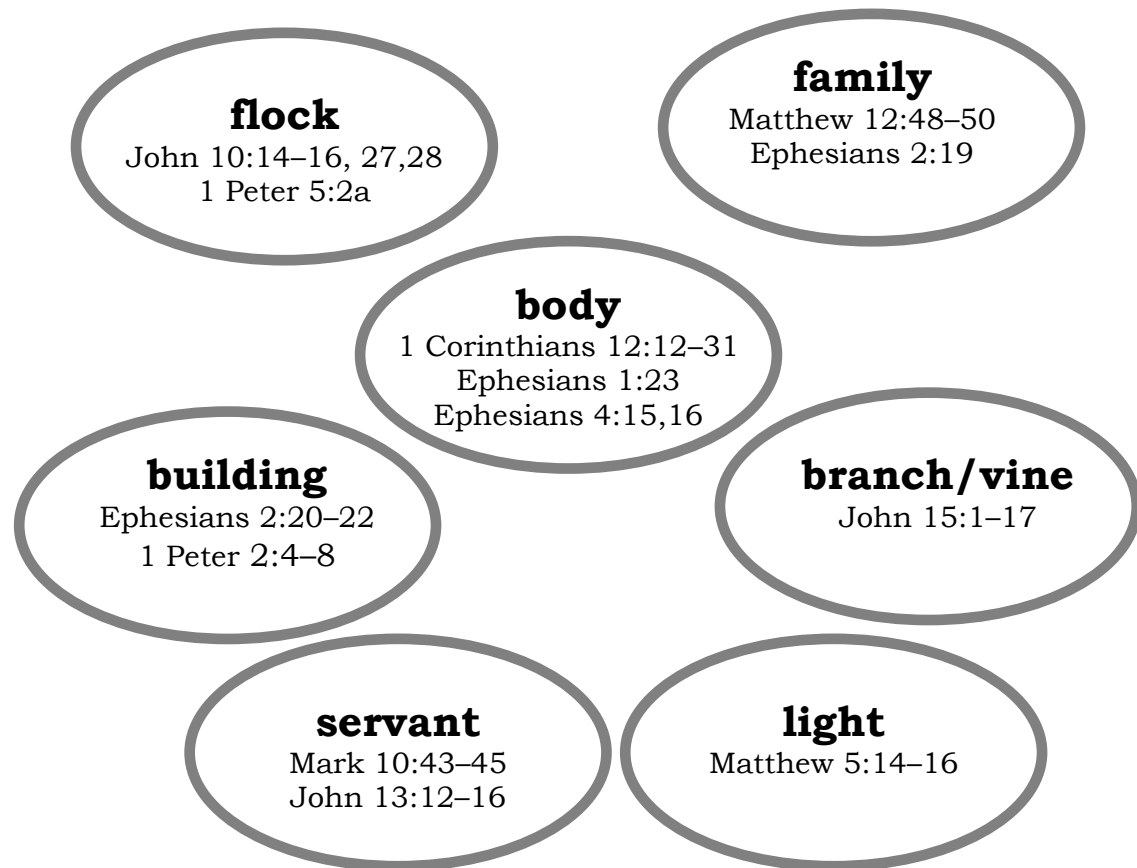
How did I encourage students who belong to Christian denominations to share their knowledge and experiences?

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?

IMAGES OF THE CHURCH

Choose one of these images of the church to explore.

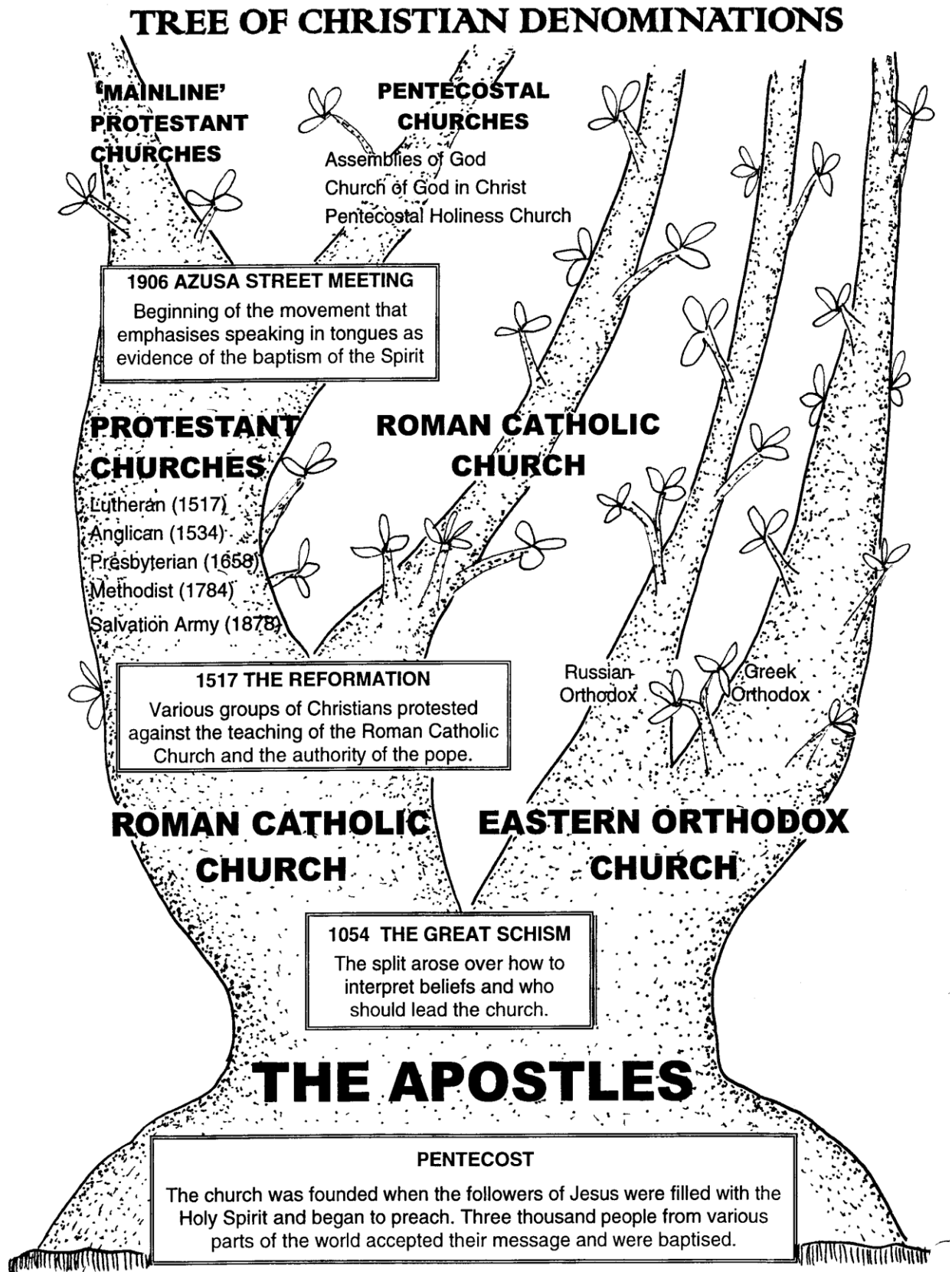


1. Read the passage carefully at least two times.
2. Draw the image of the church that comes to your mind from reading this passage.
3. Explain how this image helps you understand the church.



Draw or write about your own image of the church.

Try to find an image that reflects the aspects of unity and diversity in the worldwide community of Christians, the church.



VISITING A CHURCH

See how much you can learn from the church signboard.

The name of the denomination

The name of the local group

The minister's name.....

The time/s for worship services

Other activities that are advertised on the church signboard

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Make a quick sketch of the building/s (here or on another paper).

Make your notes about these interview questions in a notebook:

History

- ▲ How did the denomination begin?
- ▲ Who is an important person in the denomination's history?
- ▲ Who is the leader of the denomination in Australia?
- ▲ Does the denomination belong to a worldwide organisation? Which? How?

Beliefs

- ▲ What is your definition of the Christian church?
- ▲ What do you think is the most important aspect of your congregation's work?
- ▲ How does your congregation use God's word or the Bible?
- ▲ What do you believe about baptism?
- ▲ What do you believe about holy communion?
- ▲ What do you use as a common statement of belief?

Activities

- ▲ Does your congregation have a mission statement? If so, what is it?
- ▲ What are the weekly activities of the congregation?
- ▲ How is your congregation involved in loving and serving others?
- ▲ What does the minister's role involve?
- ▲ What activities does your church provide for people our age?
- ▲ How is your church involved with other Christian denominations?

Be sure to thank your host at the end of the visit.

DENOMINATIONAL BELIEFS AND PRACTICES CHART

DENOMINATION				
Congregation's name				
Denomination's leader				
Beliefs about God's word				
Beliefs about baptism				
Beliefs about holy communion				
Common statement of belief				
Activities of love and service				
Activities for people our age				

REFLECTIONS ON CHRISTIAN DENOMINATIONS

Reflect on these questions individually and make notes about what you think about them. Then discuss the questions in groups:

1. What are the common beliefs of all Christian denominations?

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2. What are the different practices among these Christian denominations?

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3. What features of the early Christian church are still prevalent in the church today?

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4. Why do you think Christian denominations have developed?

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5. Do you think the diversity of denominations has a positive or a negative effect on the Christian church? Why?

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6. What kind of relationship do you think Christians should have with Christians of other denominations? Why?

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GOD GATHERS PEOPLE INTO THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH