

**MODEL UNIT
BAND C
LEVEL 2**

RECONCILIATION

LIFE CONCEPT: GOD CALLS PEOPLE TO BE JESUS' DISCIPLES

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

DATE OF USE: FAITH STATEMENTS: ① ② ③

UNIT-SPECIFIC GOALS (highlighted)

1. GOD CALLS PEOPLE TO FOLLOW JESUS

1a explore Jesus' teachings about the cost and rewards of discipleship

1b explore the relationship Jesus wants to have with people

1c investigate the cost and rewards of discipleship for Christians throughout history (martyrs)

2. JESUS' DISCIPLES ARE FORGIVEN AND FORGIVING

2a investigate biblical descriptions of God's forgiveness and reconciliation with people

2b explore the importance the Bible places on forgiveness and reconciliation between people

2c identify issues and relationships which would benefit from Christian forgiveness and reconciliation

3. JESUS' DISCIPLES LIVE BY GOD-GIVEN VALUES AND ETHICS

3a explore ways Christians determine their values

3b compare and contrast Christian values and ethics with the values and ethics of contemporary society

3c identify ways people can demonstrate and promote Christian values

STUDENT ASSESSMENT

ASSESSABLE STUDENT OUTCOMES

Describe the impact of forgiveness and reconciliation on people in Bible stories. (2a)

Record the Bible's teaching about how Jesus has brought about reconciliation between God and people. (2a)

Record Jesus' teaching about reconciliation and forgiveness. (2b,3a)

Describe the role Jesus gives his followers to work towards forgiveness and reconciliation. (1b, 3a)

List issues or relationships which would benefit from forgiveness and reconciliation. (2c)

ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES

⇒ work sample

⇒ TRS C2/2

⇒ journal entry

⇒ work sample

⇒ work sample, observation of group discussion.

UNIT SUMMARY

Students explore the concept of Jesus' followers being agents of reconciliation. They investigate the Bible's message that Jesus has brought about forgiveness and reconciliation between people and God. Students investigate Jesus' teaching about forgiveness and reconciliation and consider issues and relationships which would benefit from Christian forgiveness and reconciliation.

UNIT NOTES

This unit is about forgiveness and reconciliation. Christians believe Jesus came into the world to bring about reconciliation. His disciples have experienced reconciliation with God and each other. They now work for reconciliation — of people to God and of people to one another. Forgiveness is a basic ingredient of reconciliation. Students will keep a journal during the unit, recording their thoughts and questions.

During the unit, survey the newspapers for articles which lend themselves to discussions about reconciliation and forgiveness in relationships. This unit could be taught to coincide with Reconciliation Week, 24–30 May.

INTRODUCTION

1. FORGIVENESS AND RECONCILIATION

Use these activities to gauge students' understanding of forgiveness and reconciliation

Students work in groups. Use dictionaries to find the meaning of 'reconcile' and 'reconciliation'. Each group develops a role-play to show their understanding of reconciliation.

After the role-plays discuss:

- What does it mean to be reconciled with someone?
- How does it feel when there is a reconciliation in a broken relationship?
- Do you think forgiveness and reconciliation are connected? Why or why not?

Students work in groups to make a thought web of words or ideas that are connected to their concept of forgiveness.

Tell students that they are about to explore what reconciliation means to Christians whom Jesus calls to work for reconciliation.

DEVELOPMENT

2. OLD TESTAMENT STORIES OF FORGIVENESS AND RECONCILIATION

Use Old Testament stories to develop students' understanding of reconciliation and the importance of forgiveness. Provide students with Teacher Resource Sheet (TRS) C2/1. Students work in groups to read the

stories listed on TRS C2/1 in children's Bibles such as Selina Hastings' *Illustrated Children's Bible* or from the Bible depending on the time available.

Each group prepares a dramatisation of the story to present the Bible's message about reconciliation. Groups must be prepared to answer questions about how each person in the story might have felt at different stages.

Discuss:

- What caused the breakdown in relationships?
- What made reconciliation possible?
- How was forgiveness expressed in each story?
- What do you think the Bible is saying here about forgiveness and reconciliation?

Journals Students record what the Bible teaches about reconciliation and forgiveness.

3. JESUS' DISCIPLES EXPERIENCE RECONCILIATION THROUGH JESUS

Depending on students' knowledge, the teacher may need to provide or revise basic information about sin, eg Christians believe all people have sinned and cannot mend the relationship with God by themselves. Sin acts as a barrier in the relationship between God and people.

In this section highlight the Bible's message that God wanted peace and reconciliation. He dealt with the barrier of sin by forgiving people for Jesus' sake. The forgiveness Jesus offers brings reconciliation to the relationship between God and people.

Tell students that Jesus' followers have experienced reconciliation between themselves and God. Christians believe Jesus brings reconciliation because everyone who believes in Jesus has the forgiveness of their sins. Students explore Jesus' mission of reconciliation. See Bible readings on TRS C2/2.

Discuss students' responses as a class:

- How do Jesus' followers believe he has brought about reconciliation between all people and God?
- What do you think reconciliation with God means for the lives of Jesus' disciples?

Students search through Luther's *Small Catechism* to find out what it teaches about the reconciliation Jesus brings between God and people. See in particular:

- The Apostles' Creed: explanation of the second part
- The Lord's Prayer: explanations of the introduction, the third prayer and the fifth prayer.

You may also discuss baptism and holy communion as ways Christians believe God gives forgiveness and brings and keeps people into a reconciled relationship with God.

Journals Students record what Christians believe about the reconciliation Jesus brings between people and God.

4. JESUS' DISCIPLES LEARN RECONCILIATION FROM JESUS

Tell students that Jesus wants his followers to bring reconciliation into the world. So he teaches them about forgiveness and reconciliation.

Students read the story of the unforgiving servant in Matthew 18:21–35 and work in groups to give a presentation of the story, making explicit what the story says about God forgiving people and people forgiving each other. They may choose to

- dramatise the story in a modern day setting;
- create a series of pictures to retell the story;
- develop a story map of the story

Discuss as a class:

- What was Peter's understanding of forgiveness?
- What did Peter and the other disciples learn about forgiveness?
- What motivation do Jesus' disciples have for forgiving others?

Divide the following readings among groups. Each group must read and report on Jesus' teaching about forgiveness and reconciliation.

Luke 6:27–36	Matthew 5:21–26
Matthew 5:38–42	Matthew 7:1–5
Mark 11:25	John 13:34,35

Journals Students record what Jesus teaches his disciples about forgiveness and reconciliation.

5. JESUS' DISCIPLES WORK TOWARDS RECONCILIATION

Tell students that Jesus wants his followers to carry on his work of reconciliation. In groups students read and report on the following Bible selections to answer the question: How does the Bible describe the way Jesus' followers are to work towards reconciliation?

Matthew 5:9	John 20:21
Romans 12:17–21	2 Corinthians 5:20
Colossians 3:13	

Students read the stories on TRS C2/3 to explore ways Christians have experienced and worked towards reconciliation. Discuss:

- What do these stories teach about reconciliation and forgiveness?
- Why do you think Christians forgive?
- What benefits do you think come from forgiveness and reconciliation?
- Do you think Christians have a responsibility to teach others about reconciliation? Why or why not?
- What is an issue that needs reconciliation that you believe Christians could be involved with and influence?

Alternatively, teachers may choose to focus on the issue of forgiveness and reconciliation in relationships between cultural groups, particularly between indigenous Australians and non-indigenous Australians. The video *Out of the Shadows*, which was sent to each Lutheran congregation after the 1997 LCA convention is an excellent starting point for discussion.

- How can Jesus' followers work towards reconciliation between indigenous and non-indigenous Australians?

Journals Students record: How does forgiving and being forgiven help bring about reconciliation?

RESPONSE

6. FORGIVING, BEING RECONCILED

Students choose from the following activities to respond to the unit.

- Plan a day of forgiveness and reconciliation for the school community beginning with a school worship. Students could prepare posters and activities to teach others about forgiveness and reconciliation.
- Students invite a guest speaker from an organisation such as Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation to tell the class practical ways in which the students can work for reconciliation in the community. They develop an action plan to work towards reconciliation in their local community.
- Students design a display for the school worship centre with a message about forgiveness and reconciliation. Students incorporate Bible texts in the display.

YOU WILL NEED

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| <input type="checkbox"/> newspaper articles about reconciliation or issues that would benefit from forgiveness and reconciliation | <input type="checkbox"/> a guest speaker to share information about ways of working towards reconciliation in the local community, eg Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> TRS C2/1,2,3 | |

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. *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.

THE ARTS: *Visual Arts:* Make, design and arrange works for specific audience, compare works and give reasons for preferences. *Drama:* Improvise and experiment in structured drama. Shape own drama — select and link scenes.

SOCIETY AND ENVIRONMENT: *Investigation, Communication, Participation:* Formulate questions, reflect on knowledge and understanding. Identify information sources. Identify similar data. Draw conclusions. Identify, analyse and clarify values. Consider audience in presentation. Cooperation skills.

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' attitudes towards the importance of forgiveness and reconciliation?

How did I respond to the range of students' responses to the Bible's message of reconciliation?

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?

BIBLE STORIES ABOUT RECONCILIATION

Choose one of the following stories to read and report on.
You may read about these people in a children's Bible or use the Bible readings suggested.

Jacob and Esau

Genesis 25:19–34
Genesis 27:1–45
Genesis 32:1–21
Genesis 33:1–17

David and Saul

1 Samuel 17
1 Samuel 18:1 – 19:17
1 Samuel 24

Read the story again, imagining you are Esau or David in the story.

How would you have responded if similar things had happened to you?

Why do you think David or Esau responded in the way they did?

What do these stories teach about forgiveness?

What made reconciliation possible in the Bible story?

JESUS' MISSION OF RECONCILIATION

Read the following verses to explore what the Bible teaches about Jesus bringing about reconciliation between God and people.

What do the verses say about forgiveness and reconciliation?

Romans 5:1, 8–11 _____

2 Corinthians 5:18,19 _____

Ephesians 2:14–18 _____

Colossians 1:20–22 _____

What does the Bible say about how Jesus broke down the barrier of sin between God and people?

What does the Bible say the reconciliation between God and people means for people?

JESUS' DISCIPLES WORK FOR RECONCILIATION

1 Corrie Ten Boom

Corrie ten Boom grew up in Holland shortly before the Second World War.

Corrie and her family showed their Christian faith by providing shelter for Jews during the German invasion and assisting them to flee Holland during the German occupation.

In 1944 Corrie's family's home was raided by the Gestapo, and she and her sister Betsie were arrested. They were placed in a prison in southern Holland. During the following months Corrie and Betsie faced terrible suffering in prison. Conditions were terrible, with overcrowding and little food. Corrie was even placed in solitary confinement for four months.

As the Allied forces advanced through France and Belgium, the prisoners were moved to an even worse prison in Germany. Corrie had been able to smuggle in her Bible and would often read it to fellow prisoners. As winter came, conditions became worse. Betsie became increasingly ill and frail. Eventually she was moved to the hospital and died three days before Corrie heard of her own discharge from prison.

After the war Corrie ten Boom travelled extensively, speaking of her experiences and her Christian faith. It was at a church visit in Munich that she was met by a man whom she recognised as one of the cruellest guards at one of the prisons. He had become a Christian and wanted her forgiveness.

Corrie stood motionless, her mind racing, as all the thoughts of the prison came flooding back. Her mind was struggling with the challenge her Christian beliefs were presenting her. How could she speak of God's forgiveness and the impact it had on her life if she herself wasn't prepared to forgive? Suddenly Corrie's arm lifted from her side and her hand stretched out. She looked at the former guard and said: 'I forgive you, brother, with all my heart'. A feeling of relief and release swept over her.

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Corrie ten Boom's book, *The Hiding Place*, has been made into a film of the same name.

2 Jan Ruff-O'Herne

Jan Ruff-O'Herne had an idyllic childhood growing up in Indonesia.

This came to an end in 1942 with the Japanese invasion of Indonesia. Jan and her mother and sisters were interned in a prison camp. When Jan was twenty-one, she was separated from her mother and placed in another prison with nine other young women.

Jan will never forget the overwhelming fear she felt in that prison camp. For three months the girls were beaten and tortured every day and many times thought they would be killed. Many times she prayed for the strength to endure her horrible existence. She became a source of strength for the other girls as they would meet together and read Romans 8 and Psalm 27 from Jan's Bible. Eventually, Jan and the other girls were taken back to their families.

Fifty years later Jan watched a story on television about women who had suffered similar things in prison camps. Japan was holding an investigation into the crimes that had been committed against women. Jan knew that she had to attend and share what had happened to her.

It was a terrifying experience for Jan to go to Japan. She shuddered at the sound of the first Japanese voice she heard. Yet she knew that she must deal with her past. Jan felt no bitterness or anger and believed that only through forgiveness could the healing begin.

Jan attended a special ceremony along with Japanese ex-soldiers who are now working for peace. Some of the soldiers have become Christians. As she laid the wreath of Australian wildflowers at the tomb of the unknown Japanese soldier, Jan said to the crowd: 'This wreath is a sign of peace and forgiveness. A sign of hope for the future.'

Many soldiers read speeches and prayers. One closed with a verse from Psalm 51 'My sin is always before me'. Jan concluded by reading aloud the prayer of St Francis.

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Jan Ruff-O'Herne's account of her experiences is in her book *50 Years of Silence*.

