

**MODEL UNIT
BAND C
LEVEL 3**

LIVING AS DISCIPLES

LIFE CONCEPT: GOD CALLS PEOPLE TO BE JESUS' DISCIPLES

YEAR: SUGGESTED DURATION: 4 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	ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES
Compare the values of Jesus' followers with those of contemporary society in general. (3b)	⇒ collages and journal entry
Describe how Jesus influences the way Christians live. (1b,3a)	⇒ journal entry
Respond in writing to the story of the forgiving father. (2a)	⇒ TRS C3/4 and journal entry
Describe the guidance the Bible provides for living as a Christian. (3b)	⇒ journal entry
List ways Christians can influence the world. (3c)	⇒ journal entry

UNIT SUMMARY

In this unit students consider what it means to live as a Christian. Students keep a journal as they explore the relationship Christians have with Jesus and how this determines how they live and what they value. They also explore Jesus' teaching that the way in which Christians live points others to Jesus.

UNIT NOTES

The development of values, morals and ethics is a complex process. This unit explores how Christians live and how Jesus' disciples follow his example and his instructions when making life choices.

Encourage students to keep a journal during this unit and to record their thoughts about what is being discussed.

INTRODUCTION

1. LIVING

In this activity students consider how people's values impact on the way they live. Do not challenge or criticise the students' values. The unit will provide the opportunity for students to discuss and analyse their own and the world's values and compare them with Jesus' values.

Students create a collage of images to show what are important aspects of living in the world, eg having lots of friends, money. Ask them to include a slogan that could be used as a basic guide for living in the world, eg 'If it feels good do it'. Display collages and discuss the images presented.

- What kinds of things are considered important in living?
- What has led you to think these things are a part in living?
- What kinds of beliefs or values underlie these images of living? (eg, having lots of possessions makes you happy)
- If you valued the environment, what would you think is important in living?
- How does what people value influence the way they live?

Students write their name in the centre of a page and surround the name with names or pictures of things or people that influence the way they live, eg parents, friends, sporting heroes. Students then number these influences from most to least important. Discuss various things that influence them.

Use the discussion to introduce the concept that other people (parents, friends) can greatly influence the way they live.

Ask students what they think it means to live as a Christian. Accept all responses and tell them that they will be exploring the way Christians live. They will keep a journal and record their thoughts about their findings.

Students make their first journal entry: What do I think it means to live as a Christian?

DEVELOPMENT

2. LIVING AS A DISCIPLE

The starting point for Jesus' teaching about how to live were the commandments, which Jesus interpreted not in a legalistic way but according to the overarching law of love.

While the Bible is not always explicit about lifestyle choices, it does provide guidance for how to live and what to value.

Tell students that Christians are Jesus' 'disciples'. That means that for Christians Jesus should be the greatest influence on the way they live. The basic question for Christians when they make life choices is 'What does Jesus want me to do?'

A. The Ten Commandments

Establish the context for Jesus' teaching about the commandments by reviewing the story of God giving the Israelites the commandments, Exodus 20:1–17. Highlight that God gave his people the commandments because he loved them and wanted to protect their relationship with him and with others. The commandments provided the basis for their living.

Students could use the *Lion Encyclopedia of the Bible* to investigate the purpose of the commandments.

Use TRS C3/1 to explore how the Pharisees had distorted the commandments.

B. Jesus interprets the commandments

Students work in groups. Each group reads and reports on a different section of Jesus' interpretation of the commandments (see TRS C3/2).

Groups share and discuss Jesus' teaching:

- In what ways is the way Jesus expects his disciples to live different from the lives of the Pharisees?
- Summarise Jesus' teaching in a word or sentence.

Assign each group one of the Ten Commandments and ask them to identify the 'spirit' of the law. Students then brainstorm a range of situations relevant to the class where this commandment could be applied. They develop and present role-plays to show how the spirit of the law impacts on their daily lives.

Students make a journal entry, recording responses to: What directions does Jesus give for living?

C. The law of love

Students explore what Jesus taught was the basic principle for his disciples to live by.

Mark 12:28—31 John 13:34,35
John 15:12,13 Romans 13:8—10
1 John 4:10,11,19.

Discuss as a group and then students make individual responses in their journals:

- What does Jesus tell his followers to do?
- How did Jesus love?
- What motivation do Christians have for loving other people?
- Somebody once said: 'First love and then do what you like'. Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Explain your answer.

D. Christian values

Review with students the collages they created about living. Discuss what the collages suggest is valued in today's society.

Tell students that Jesus also taught about what to value in life.

Students work in groups and each group member chooses a different teaching of Jesus to read and share with the rest of the group (see TRS C3/3). Discuss and students make a journal entry in response:

- What does Jesus teach his followers to value?
- Compare Jesus' values with the values in the living collages made at the beginning of the unit. Describe any differences and similarities.

3. JESUS' DISCIPLES LIVE BY GOD'S GRACE

Christians believe it is impossible for anyone to keep the law of God perfectly. All people have failed and need the love and forgiveness God offers through Jesus. Christians believe that God's grace (undeserved love) covers all their failures as Jesus' disciples.

Discuss or debate:

Good disciples always live the way Jesus wants them to. True/false?

Read Romans 3:21–31 with the students. Go slowly and highlight the following points:

- God expects the law to be fulfilled perfectly. The punishment for not obeying the law is death.
- Jesus came to fulfil the law for all people.
- Christians live a life of love in response to what Jesus has done for them.

Tell students that Jesus told a story to show God's reaction when people fail to live as he wants. Use the guided meditation on the forgiving father on TRS C3/4. Provide time for students to record in their journal their individual responses to the questions and Bible readings at the bottom of the TRS.

Write a definition of 'grace' on the board: 'God's undeserved love' (or 'God's riches at Christ's expense'). Students individually read Ephesians 1:7 and write a journal entry in response to:

- What do you think it means when Christians say they live by God's grace?
- How does grace influence the way Jesus' disciples live?

4. JESUS' DISCIPLES INFLUENCE OTHERS

Read Matthew 5:13–16; Luke 6:27–36 and Philippians 2:14–16.

Students draw one of the images described. They make comments around the drawing to explain how the lives of Christians can influence other people.

Students discuss their drawing in small groups and select one to share with the whole class.

Students make a journal entry in response to:

- What do you think Jesus meant when he described his followers as the salt and light of the world?
- In what ways do you think Christians could influence others?

RESPONSE

5. MY REFLECTIONS

Students reflect on what they have learnt during the unit (see TRS C3/5).

YOU WILL NEED

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|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> copies of the Ten Commandments from Luther's <i>Small Catechism</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> copies of TRS C3/1,2,3,5 |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> magazines |

INTEGRATING INTO OTHER CURRICULUM AREAS

ENGLISH: *Literature:* Explain and justify own opinions about texts. Develop discussion skills. Explain and justify own opinions about texts. Find and cite elements of a text to support a point of view. Independent reading and response activities. *Everyday Texts:* Consider needs of the 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: *Drama:* Shape own drama for particular audience and purpose.

SOCIETY AND ENVIRONMENT: *Investigation, Communication, Participation:* Formulate questions, reflect on knowledge and understanding. Draw conclusions and match evidence to opinions and conclusions. Identify, analyse and clarify values. Test assumptions by application.

HEALTH: *Identify:* Consider people's diversity. Identify own values and stereotypes of others.

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 Jesus teaching about how to live?

How did I respond to the range of students' understanding of what it means to live as a follower of Jesus?

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?

The Pharisees' Lifestyle

The Pharisees were model Jews. They were a religious group whose lifestyle demanded that they keep the law God gave Israel exactly in every detail. They had developed many rules and regulations for each of the laws given to Moses and sometimes extended the laws to make them very difficult to keep. For example, God gave the commandment: Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. The Pharisees would forbid any work on the Sabbath, including lighting a fire or carrying a load. They believed their created laws were like fences which would keep people from breaking the actual law of God. In actual fact, however, the Pharisees undermined and weakened God's law by focusing on the letter of the law rather than the spirit.

The Pharisees separated themselves from others to ensure that they could keep every law. For example, if they ate with someone, they needed to be sure that they had given one-tenth of everything they prepared to God, even the spices. This attitude led to the Pharisees being quite arrogant and considering themselves to be holier than others. They were sometimes known to despise others who did not keep their laws.

The Pharisees' strict observance of the law often made them place the law before love and mercy. This led them into conflict with Jesus. Jesus did not deny the importance of the law, but he became angry with the unloving way in which the Pharisees enforced it. He condemned their self-righteousness and legalism.

➤ ➤ ➤ Read Matthew 23:1–28.

Make a list of Jesus' criticisms of the Pharisees.

What was Jesus' view of the of the way the Pharisees lived?

Jesus' interpretation

OF THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

Work in a group.

Read one of Jesus' teachings about the commandments and laws of the Bible.

Matthew 5:20–26

Matthew 5:27–30

Matthew 5:38–42

Matthew 5:43–48

➤ ➤ ➤ As you read in your group record the following:

- the law Jesus is talking about

- Jesus' teaching about the law

- the 'spirit' of the law in your own words

➤ ➤ ➤ Discuss in your group:

- What directions does Jesus give for living?
- What do you think would be the benefits and difficulties of living in this way?

Jesus teaches

ABOUT WHAT TO VALUE IN LIFE

➤ ➤ ➤ Quietly reflect on the question: What is most important to you?

Jesus taught his disciples about what to value in life as his followers.

➤ ➤ ➤ Work in groups. Each group chooses one of the following readings to read and report on. Circle your choice.

Matthew 6:1–4

Matthew 6:19–21, 25–34

Matthew 7:7–12

Matthew 20:20–28

What did Jesus teach his followers to value?

If someone held this value, what might you expect to see them doing and hear them saying?

Compare Jesus' values with the values shown in the collages.

Describe any differences or similarities between Jesus' teaching and the values shown in the collages.

THE STORY OF THE LOST SON

A GUIDED MEDITATION BASED ON LUKE 15:11–24

Students may lie or sit quietly.

You may choose to play some calming music in the background.

Read the following slowly, allowing time for students to create the images in their minds.

I'm going to read a story that Jesus once told to show people how much God loves them and wants them to come back to him.

As I read the story, try to imagine how the different people in the story felt.

There was once a man who had two sons. The man had a very comfortable lifestyle. He owned a farm and was very proud of his property. One day the younger son came to his father and said: 'Father, I would like my share of the property now!' This was an unusual request, as it was the custom for sons to inherit property only after the father had died. But the father did love his son and made arrangements for his son to receive his half of the property.

After a few days the younger son sold his part of the property and left home with the money. He went to live in a place very far away and began to use his money on an extravagant lifestyle. It did not take very long for the younger son's money to run out, and he found himself in a desperate situation. Famine hit the place where he was living, and he lost everything. Finally, in sheer desperation he went to work for a pig farmer.

The job at the pig farm was hard, and the young man was paid little money. He often wished that he could eat as well as the pigs did. As weeks went on, the son became more and more depressed. His lifestyle had become intolerable. He could no longer go on.

The son dreamed about his home and how generous his father had always been. He thought to himself:

*Even the hired workers on my father's farm
have a better life than mine . . .
I should go back . . .
but how can I?
I have shamed my father . . .
I have wasted my inheritance . . .
I could beg for his forgiveness . . .
I could tell him that I know I am no longer fit to
be his son.
Maybe, just maybe, he might let me work as a
hired helper.
That would be better than this.*

The younger son gathered all his courage and decided to return home. All the way he thought about what his father's reaction might be:
*Will he send out guards to turn me away?
Will he punish me for the disgrace I have
brought on the family?
Will he simply ignore me?*

Little did the younger son know that every day the father had stood looking out and wishing for his son to return. Today, like every other day, he found himself staring out, watching and wishing. He saw a figure a long way off, heading towards the farm. As the figure came closer, something stirred in the father's heart: 'It couldn't be! How I wish it was!'

The younger son was still a long way from the homestead when his father recognised him.

The father's heart was pounding and he could hardly swallow. He ran to the door, wrenched it open, bolted down the steps and ran to his son. He threw his arms around his son and hugged him tight. The younger son started on his prepared speech:

*Father, I have disgraced you,
I have shamed you,
I can't be your son any more.*

The father looked at him with tears tumbling down his cheeks and said: 'But you are my son. All these years I thought that you were dead. But I am so happy because I know you are alive. Come inside with me. I must tell everyone. We must celebrate! My son is alive and home!'

Pause and ask the students to think about the story. Allow time for reflection about each question:

- In what ways are people like the lost son?
- How does the story describe God's reaction when people turn back to him?
- What picture of God does this story create in your mind?
- What is the most important message in this story for you?

My reflections

What do you think is the most important part of living as a Christian?

Why do you think this is the most important? _____

What do you think is the biggest challenge for people who want to live as Jesus' disciples?

How does Christians' relationship with Jesus influence the way they live?

How do you think living as a Christian influences others?

➤ ➤ ➤ In the space below use words and pictures to show what you think it means to live as a Christian.