

**MODEL UNIT
BAND C
LEVEL 1**

THE GOOD NEWS

LIFE CONCEPT: GOD SAVED PEOPLE THROUGH JESUS

YEAR:SUGGESTED DURATION: 6 weeks (135 minutes per week)

DATE OF USE: FAITH STATEMENTS: ① ② ③

UNIT-SPECIFIC GOALS (highlighted)

**1. GOD'S SON
BECAME A HUMAN
BEING TO SAVE
THE WORLD**

1a explore the New Testament description of Jesus as God and human

1b explore the Christian belief that Jesus lived a perfect human life for people

**2. JESUS
BROUGHT GOD'S
LOVING RULE INTO
THE WORLD**

2a examine Jesus' teaching about the kingdom of God

2b explore the words and actions of Jesus which Christians believe bring God's power and love into people's lives

**3. JESUS DIED AND
ROSE AGAIN TO SAVE
ALL PEOPLE FROM SIN
AND DEATH**

3a explore the account of Jesus' death and resurrection as presented in the four gospels

3b investigate why Jesus' death and resurrection are central to the Christian faith

STUDENT ASSESSMENT

ASSESSABLE STUDENT OUTCOMES

Use Mark's gospel to identify information about Jesus as God's Son and human. (1a)

List key events and teachings of Jesus in a *Good News* journal. (2a,2b)

Respond to questions relating to Mark's account of Jesus' death and resurrection. (3a)

Create a newspaper front page describing why Jesus' death and resurrection are good news for Christians. (3b)

ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES

⇒ Good News Book

⇒ Good News Book

⇒ Good News Book

⇒ newspaper front page

UNIT SUMMARY

In this unit students investigate the good news of Jesus by reading the gospel of Mark. Students keep a journal as they read and record what they are learning. Students produce a newspaper front page to present what Christians believe is the good news about Jesus.

UNIT NOTES

The following unit may be an ideal whole-term study. It provides the opportunity to integrate with the English curriculum.

In Section 3 students read the entire book of Mark. The teacher may shorten the reading to only the 'must read' verses listed on Teacher Resource Sheet (TRS) C1/2.

After reading each chapter, students make entries in a reading journal (*The Good News Book*). See TRS C1/1. To develop a chronology of events in Jesus' life, students could place events on a time line.

At the end of the unit the students produce front pages for a 'Good News' newspaper, describing what Christians believe is the good news about Jesus.

INTRODUCTION

1. WHAT IS GOOD NEWS?

Students work in groups and share stories about the best news they have ever heard.

Discuss as a class:

- What news is good news?
- What would be the best news you could ever hear?

Read Mark 1:1 as a class and ask the students:

- Why do you think Mark began his story this way?
- What do you think Mark means when he says 'the good news about Jesus Christ'?

Tell the students they are about to begin an investigation of Mark's gospel. They are to record what Mark says is the good news about Jesus. Give each student a copy of *The Good News Book*. See TRS C1/1. Students can assemble their own books or they can be prepared beforehand.

Make up a sample book first to check instructions.

Photocopy the six TRS C1/1 sheets to form three double-sided sheets (a/b, c/d, e/f).

Using the three sheets for each booklet,

- cut off the header and footer areas using a scissors or guillotine
- fold to mark the horizontal centre of the pages. Cut along this line.
- place the three top halves over the bottom halves.

Fold in half vertically and staple on the fold. You may want to trim the edge of the pages.

DEVELOPMENT

2. BACKGROUND RESEARCH

During the research ensure that the following points are highlighted:

- Mark was a Jewish Christian writing to Gentiles who were living in Rome sometime between 60 and 70 AD.
- At this time Emperor Nero was persecuting Christians, and great leaders, Peter and Paul, were being martyred.
- The initial enthusiasm of the Christians was dwindling. The early church began to realise that following Jesus would be difficult.
- Mark wanted to encourage them by reminding them of the good news of Jesus.

Students use the publisher's introduction to the book of Mark in their Bibles, as well as Bible handbooks and encyclopedias, to research briefly the author of the gospel of Mark and his purpose for writing. They record their discoveries on pages 4 and 5 of *The Good News Book*.

Provide students with a map of Palestine in Jesus' day and identify the districts/areas of Galilee, Perea and Judea, and the towns Jerusalem, Nazareth and Bethlehem. Tell the students that Jesus lived in this region. Use a Bible handbook, encyclopedia and other texts to show the landscape of Israel and the lifestyle of the people in Jesus' time.

Use a globe or world map to make sure students can relate this area to the world and compare its size to areas they are familiar with.

Prepare a blank time line which covers the three-year period of Jesus' ministry recorded in Mark.

3. READING MARK'S GOSPEL

Use pages 1 and 2 of *The Good News Book* to introduce the reading activity.

Try to have at least three sessions a week in order to maintain interest and develop continuity.

Students could read one chapter of the gospel of Mark in each session, or the reading could be conducted during a silent reading session before the Christian Studies lesson. The lesson could then be centred on discussion and using handbooks or encyclopedias to gain insight into the stories.

In some of the more difficult chapters, focus on one story for the discussion. Students can skim through the rest of the chapter to place the events on the time line of Jesus' life.

See TRS C2/2 for suggestions of the focus for each chapter.

Vary the reading and discussion in each session to maintain interest. Some ideas are listed below.

At the close of each session have students add to the time line and reflect on the good news.

Adding variety to reading sessions:

- Introduce the chapter by telling one story from the point of view of a character in the story. Students then read the chapter silently.
- Conduct a guided meditation on one story from the chapter. Students relax with music, visualise the story in their minds and imagine themselves in the story. Students then read the chapter.
- A guest storyteller tells a story from the chapter before students read.
- Listen to a tape of the gospel of Mark. (Available from the Christian Blind Mission International see 'You Will Need' section.)
- The students read the chapter individually or with a partner.
- Use *The Dramatised Bible* to read a chapter aloud. Students take on character roles.
- Use Bible handbooks and encyclopedias to gather information about the events and people in the chapter.
- View a film of events in the chapter. Compare the film with the Bible text.
- Students read and prepare role-plays of the stories in the chapter. Students interview characters after the role-play to explore their reaction to the events and Jesus' message.
- Examine artwork that depicts stories from the chapter. How does the artwork develop themes and messages of the story?
- Students work in groups to retell one of the stories in a contemporary setting. What would be Jesus' message for people today?
- Students explore stories from different people's point of view. How was good news for one group sometimes bad news for others?

As you explore each chapter, use the following general questions to focus discussions:

- What is the good news about Jesus for the people in the story?
- What is the good news for people today?

Emphasise the struggle people had to understand Jesus' good news. The good news was different from what people were expecting and challenged what they thought and did. The people who followed Jesus found it difficult to understand that God's greatest news, his promise to save the world, would mean the suffering and death of his own Son.

At the completion of this section students could view a film about the life of Jesus (see Recommended Resources Menu). Students compare the film with the gospel of Mark.

- Which events are presented?
- What are the similarities to and differences in relation to Mark's gospel?
- What does the film-maker suggest is the good news about Jesus?

RESPONSE

4. THE GOOD NEWS OF JESUS

Students use what they have discovered about Jesus in the gospel of Mark to develop front-page headlines and articles for a 'Good News' newspaper.

Discuss as a class:

- What does Mark say is the good news about Jesus? (Ask students to cite stories in support of their opinion.)
- If you were writing about Jesus for people today, what would you consider to be the good news about Jesus?

Tell students that they will be designing a newspaper front page to show people the good news about Jesus.

Examine newspaper front pages as models.

- How do editors create headlines that grab people's attention?

Students work in groups of four or five and choose four or five stories from the gospel of Mark to present as front-page stories in their newspaper. They design a headline, news article and picture for each story.

If time is limited, students could simply design headlines for articles which show what Mark identifies as the good news about Jesus.

Each group shares its newspaper front pages with the rest of the class. Students share why they selected the stories they did. Display the news pages.

YOU WILL NEED

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> stories about Jesus<input type="checkbox"/> non-fiction texts about people and their way of life in Jesus' time<input type="checkbox"/> a film about the life of Jesus<input type="checkbox"/> newspapers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Bibles in different versions, eg Good News, CEV, NIV<input type="checkbox"/> optional: tape of the gospel of Mark available from the Christian Blind Mission International, PO Box 5, 1245 Burke Road, Kew 3101 Victoria.
Ph:61 3 9817 4566 Fax:61 3 9817 6193
Email: cbmiaus@compuserve.com |
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INTEGRATING INTO OTHER CURRICULUM AREAS

ENGLISH: *Literature:* Explain and justify own opinions about texts, consider characters, setting and point of view. *Media:* Construct own media texts. Monitor reporting of news for ways stories are presented. Identify text features and utilise these in their own writing.

THE ARTS: *Drama:* Sustain dramatic roles within a variety of dramatic situations and forms. Talk and write about drama. Use appropriate language and terminology. Express opinions about own and others' drama based on observation and feelings.

Media: Experiment with words, sounds, images for different effects and to present different points of view. Use media technology. Demonstrate knowledge of program conventions by structuring practical work. Use media language to discuss how the media function and how media products are constructed.

SOCIETY AND ENVIRONMENT: Reflect on knowledge and understanding. Gather, organise, interpret information, draw conclusions. Identify, clarify values. Organise group work democratically and efficiently to promote participation and resolve conflict.

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' varied reading abilities?

How did I respond to the range of students' attitudes towards what Christians believe about 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 GOOD NEWS BOOK

By.....
(with a little help from Mark)

18

Mark Chapter 12

Explain Jesus' great commandment in your own words.

7

Mark Chapter 2

What good news did Jesus have for the paralysed man?

In Jesus' time people such as tax collectors were considered to be outcasts. What good news does Jesus have for them?

Reading the gospel of Mark

23

As a class we will read a chapter a day. You will have time at the end of each session to record the good news Mark presents about Jesus.

CODE

As you read, use these symbols in your Bible. You may use colours.

- Underline any teachings of Jesus that you like or want to remember (black).
- Put an arrow (>) next to any story you want to remember (blue).
- Put a question mark (?) next to anything you want to discuss in class or privately with your teacher (green).
- Circle the words 'good news' or 'news' (red).

Write an advertising blurb on the back of this booklet telling about the good news to be found in the gospel of Mark.

8

 Mark

 Chapter 3

In Jesus' time the Pharisees had many rules and regulations about what was and wasn't pleasing to God.

What did Jesus teach about God?

How was Jesus bad news to the Pharisees?

17

 Mark

 Chapter 11

Draw the welcome Jesus got as he rode into Jerusalem.

What do you think is the greatest news about Jesus?

In Jesus' time children were of little importance in society's structure. Why do you think Jesus said God's kingdom belonged to people such as children?

Draw Jesus with the children.

READING THE GOOD NEWS

As you read think about the following questions:

- What is the good news about Jesus for the people in the story?
- What good news does Mark present about Jesus or about following Jesus?

SHARING THE GOOD NEWS

When we have completed our study of the gospel of Mark, your group will choose 'good news' stories from Jesus' life to present as front-page newspaper articles. Each member of your group will present a newspaper front-page article that details a good-news story from Jesus' life. Keep this in mind as you read.

Use a Bible handbook and encyclopedia to investigate the meaning of the word 'parable'. Explain the parable of the sower in your own words.

What does the parable of the sower teach us about how people react to Jesus' good news?

4

Find out about the author

Who was Mark?

Who was Mark writing to/for?

What was happening to Christians around the time Mark wrote the gospel?

10

Mark Chapter 5

Draw the reaction of Jairus to Jesus' good news.

21

Mark Chapter 15

Draw what you will remember most from this chapter.

15

Mark Chapter 9

What does Jesus say is the way to greatness in God's eyes?

20

Mark Chapter 14

What event in this chapter worried/saddened/troubled you most? Explain why?

14

You are halfway through the gospel of Mark. How do you feel about what you have read so far?

Christians believe that Jesus is God's Son who became a human being to complete God's plan of rescue for all people.

How does Mark show Jesus as both human and God?

5

What good news do you think Mark will have about Jesus?

11

Mark Chapter 6

List the miracles of Jesus in this chapter.

What do the miracles reveal about Jesus?

What happened as more and more people found out about the good news of Jesus?

6

Mark Chapter 1

Make a list of the names Jesus is called in this chapter.

What clues do Jesus' names give about what Jesus has come to do?

19

Mark Chapter 13

What does Jesus predict will happen to the disciples as they spread the good news?

12

Mark Chapter 7

In Jesus' time there were many religious laws concerning what was clean and unclean and what was pleasing to God.
How did Jesus say people could please God?

13

Mark Chapter 8

What news did Jesus have about his future?

How did the disciples react to the news?

READING THE GOSPEL OF MARK

INFORMATION FOR THE TEACHER.

The following is not a complete synopsis of the gospel of Mark; it indicates some of the subject matter of each chapter and offers suggestions for students to dig deeper. If time is limited, a brief study can be done by using the **'must read' sections written in brackets after each chapter**. An excellent resource for teachers is *Mark: A Gospel for Today* by Simon and Christopher Danes.

CHAPTER 1 (MARK 1:1–20)

Key themes: Mark's gospel begins with action. Mark skips over Jesus' birth and jumps straight into his ministry. He is concerned with what Jesus did and how this revealed the good news that God had for people. The opening chapter also begins the ongoing theme of the mystery of Jesus' identity. Students could list who people say Jesus is in this first chapter. The theme of 'the good news' is also apparent. Jesus calls the disciples to follow him and believe the good news. Mark also begins with the stories of Jesus healing. Through the healings Mark says that God's kingdom has arrived. In Mark's gospel the good news of God's kingdom is that he has come to deal with both the cause and the effect of human sin. Jesus is described as bringing healing and wholeness to people's lives.

Digging deeper:

1:1–8 Why do you think Mark begins this way and skips over Jesus' birth?

1:9–13 After reading the first chapter, who do you think Jesus is?

1:14–20 What good news do you think Jesus is talking about?

1:35–45 Why does Jesus tell the man to keep his healing a secret? What happened once the news about Jesus spread?

CHAPTER 2 (MARK 2:1–17)

Key themes: The Jews at this time had many beliefs about the cause of sickness and disabilities. A common belief was that sickness was caused by the sins of either the person or his parents. This is why Mark has Jesus forgiving sins as he heals people. However, this placed Jesus in conflict with the Pharisees, who in these stories fail to recognise Jesus as God's Son who has the right to forgive sins.

Digging deeper:

2:1–12 Why do some people think Jesus is bad news?

2:13–17 What good news did Jesus have for the outcasts of his time?

2:23–28 What good news did Jesus tell about the Sabbath?

CHAPTER 3 (MARK 3:1–6)

Key themes: The Pharisees had clear expectations about the type of Saviour God would send. He would be great and mighty. He would rescue Israel and make it a great and powerful nation. The Pharisees had great difficulty with Jesus and his good news. They expected and wanted something different.

Digging deeper:

3:1–6 Why was Jesus bad news for the Pharisees?

3:7–13 Who is Jesus? What different answers did Jesus give?

Why is Jesus' true identity a secret?

CHAPTER 4 (MARK 4:1–41)

Key themes: Parables were stories used by teachers in the time of Jesus. To explain an idea, the teachers would use visual images to which people could relate. In Jesus' time the people of Galilee were familiar with grains and seeds, as they were predominantly rural dwellers. Jesus told parables about God's kingdom. In Jesus' parables he used images to explain what God's kingdom and God are like. Students could explore contemporary images to explain the parable of the sower.

Digging deeper:

4:1–9 What are parables?

4:10–12 Why does Jesus use parables?

CHAPTER 5 (MARK 5:21–43)

Key themes: In Jesus' time there were strict religious rules regarding what was clean and pleasing to God. Students could skim through Leviticus to develop an understanding of these rules. Women who had their period were considered unclean, and so were the dead. Jews were not to touch anything that was unclean. Yet in this chapter we have two amazing stories. The woman who had menstrual bleeding for years and would have been considered unclean and forbidden to touch others, follows Jesus in a large crowd. She takes a risk even being in such a crowd of people. She reaches out to Jesus just to touch his cloak. Jesus feels her touch in the pressing crowd. He turns and has great compassion for her. He knows her suffering and what she has risked to be healed. This is followed by the story of Jairus' daughter. These stories reveal the nature of Jesus and the nature of God's kingdom. Jesus shows the love God has for people in real and tangible ways.

Digging deeper:

5:1–20 What does Jesus' power reveal about God?

5:21–43 How was Jesus good news for the people in this story?

CHAPTER 6 (MARK 6:30–56)

Key themes: Discuss the miracles of this chapter. What do these reveal about Jesus?

Digging deeper:

6:1–6 What questions did people have about Jesus?

6:30–44 What type of person was Jesus?

6:53–56 Describe people's reaction to Jesus. When have you seen people react in a similar way?

CHAPTER 7 (MARK 7:31–37)

Key themes: Discuss Jesus' views about what is clean and unclean in God's eyes. Imagine how threatening this must have been to the Pharisees who prided themselves on maintaining God's laws.

Digging deeper:

7:14–23 How does Jesus interpret God's law?

7:24–30 What good news has Jesus for Gentiles and all people?

7:31–37 How does Jesus give good news to people?

CHAPTER 8 (MARK 8:22–38)

Key themes: In this chapter Jesus predicts his own death, and it totally mystifies the disciples. As Jesus' closest friends, they still struggle to understand who Jesus is and what he has come to do. Jesus explains that he must die as punishment for the sins of all people. Christians believe Jesus fulfilled the law for all people. He lived a perfect human life and suffered the punishment we deserve because of our sin.

Digging deeper:

8:11–13 What evidence is there that people were confused about who Jesus was?

If Jesus knew he was going to die, why didn't he stop it from happening?

8:31–9:1 What does Jesus predict? Why has Jesus — God's Son, the Son of man — come?

CHAPTER 9 (MARK 9:33–37)

Key themes: The transfiguration is in the centre of Mark's gospel. Mark has three events where God provides signs that Jesus is his own dear Son: Jesus' baptism, the transfiguration, Jesus' death. In this chapter Jesus also makes it clear that God's kingdom is about servanthood.

Digging deeper:

9:33–37 What does Jesus say is the secret to greatness in God's kingdom?

CHAPTER 10 (MARK 10:13–31)

Key themes: Be sensitive to those students who have experienced divorce in their own families. Focus on Jesus' teaching again that to be great in God's sight you must be the servant of others. In Jesus' time children were the property of their parents. They had no rights. Jesus chooses one of the weakest groups in the society to teach about entry into God's kingdom. Jesus also reveals that God requires total commitment from his followers. Nothing must come between God and his people, not wealth or possessions.

Digging deeper:

10:13–16 Why do you think Jesus uses children to teach about how to enter God's kingdom?

10:17–31 Why would riches stop someone from following Jesus?

CHAPTER 11 (MARK 11:1–11)

Key themes: Focus on Jesus' entry into Jerusalem and skim through the rest of the chapter. This chapter begins the last week of Jesus' life.

Digging deeper:

11:1–11 How did people react to Jesus?

CHAPTER 12 (MARK 12:28–34)

Key themes: Discuss the parable of the tenants. Some students may be able to grasp the imagery and Jesus' prediction of what will happen. Focus on Jesus' teaching about the greatest commandment. All the laws of the Old Testament are kept when people love God and love others. Students might consider how the commandment might affect decisions they make. Can anyone keep the law of God as Jesus explained it?

Digging deeper:

12:1–12 What does this reading reveal about what will happen to Jesus?

12:28–34 How does God's law show people that they need Jesus?

CHAPTER 13 (MARK 13:3–13)

Key themes: This is a difficult chapter, as Jesus talks about the end of the world. He warns his followers that the future will be hard for them. He talks about the persecution they will face. Mark probably was writing for Christians who were suffering as Jesus' followers. It must have been some comfort to know that Jesus had predicted it would be difficult and also had promised deliverance from all evils.

CHAPTER 14 (MARK 14:1,2, 10–72)

Teacher Information: Take time to explore the stories in this chapter. There are a number of focuses: Jesus instituting the Lord's supper as a way of remembering and receiving the benefits from Jesus' suffering and death for all people; the story of Peter: his confidence and then denial; Jesus in Gethsemane: Jesus, filled with anguish at the suffering that lies before him, pleads with the Father for another way. Yet he is obedient to the Father, even if it means death on a cross. Jesus before the council: Jesus' identity continues to trouble the Pharisees. Even though he has done nothing wrong they seek a penalty of death for blasphemy.

CHAPTER 15 (MARK 15:1–47)

Key themes: Read this chapter as a class and examine artwork that depicts the scene. Encourage the students to imagine the scene. It was ugly and torturous. It was not the end Jesus' followers would have predicted. They are obvious in their absence. Draw attention to the death of Jesus as part of God's plan. Jesus would suffer this for us. Yet still his identity causes conflict, as people taunt him to prove he is the Son of God. It may also provide the opportunity to talk about attitudes towards death and grieving. Information could be presented about crucifixion as a means of execution and cultural practices in death.

Digging deeper:

15:33–41 Why did Jesus have to die?

15:42–47 What might have been the newspaper headline this day?

CHAPTER 16 (MARK 16:1–20)

Key themes: The resurrection is central to the Christian faith. The good news is that through his death and resurrection, Jesus overcomes sin, death and the devil. The Bible's message is that nothing can separate us from God's love because of what Jesus has done for us. Discuss what the resurrection means for Christians. Discuss what it means to have eternal life.

It is significant that in Mark's gospel it is the women who find out that Jesus is raised. In Jesus' time women were second-class citizens. Perhaps Mark is again suggesting that God's kingdom is different; it goes against what you might expect. The first will be last and the last will be first. Those who are servants will be great in God's eyes.

GOD SAVED PEOPLE THROUGH JESUS