

**MODEL UNIT  
BAND C  
LEVEL 2**

# SUCCESS OR FAILURE?

**LIFE CONCEPT: GOD SAVED PEOPLE THROUGH JESUS**

YEAR: ..... **SUGGESTED DURATION:** 5 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**

- Retell the events of Jesus' birth from a specific point of view. (1a)
- Role-play different people's response to Jesus' actions and teachings. (2a, 2b)
- Retell in writing a personal account of Jesus' death. (3a)
- List Christian beliefs about Jesus. (1b,3b)

**ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES**

- ⇒ oral / written response
- ⇒ observation of role-play
- ⇒ work sample
- ⇒ work sample

## UNIT SUMMARY

Students explore the life, death and resurrection of Jesus in the light of the question: Was Jesus a success or failure? They keep a journal in which they record their response to the stories about Jesus. Students contrast Jesus' life and teachings with contemporary views about success and failure.

## UNIT NOTES

Jesus can be viewed as a success or failure, depending on a person's values and experience. For example, if you value power and wealth, Jesus may appear to be a loser. However, Christians believe Jesus was a total success because he achieved what he set out to do; he carried out perfectly God's plan to rescue people.

Students keep a journal in which they record the different views people have of Jesus, using the headings: 'success' and 'failure'. Give students the freedom to express their views about Jesus honestly. Do not coerce students to express a belief they don't have.

## INTRODUCTION

### 1. SUCCESS AND FAILURE

Students find and cut out pictures in magazines or newspapers of people or images that represent success to them.

Discuss with the students:

- What have you chosen as signs of success?
- What types of people have you chosen as successful?
- What makes them successful?
- How does it feel to be successful?
- What is the opposite of success?
- What could make someone a failure?

Discuss the students' responses and make comparative lists of what people consider to be the signs of success and failure, eg

**success:** money and friends, good looks.

**failure:** no money, no friends, unattractive.

Discuss as a class:

- Can someone seem to be a success for some people and a failure for others? Why?
- Who decides if someone is a success?
- What influences your views about who is and isn't a success?

Students record what the world teaches about success in their journal or book.

## DEVELOPMENT

### 2. JESUS: SUCCESS OR FAILURE?

Students read Teacher Resource Sheet [TRS] C2/1. Compare the description with the class list of signs of success or failure.

Discuss: Is the person described in this reading a success or failure? Why? Who decides?

Explain that the poem is about Jesus and that they will investigate Jesus to consider whether he was a success or failure? They will explore several stories about Jesus and consider how different groups viewed Jesus. They will need to keep a record of why Jesus could be considered a success or failure.

### 3. JESUS' BIRTH

The circumstances surrounding Jesus' birth (eg conceived out of wedlock, born to an ordinary couple, born in a stable) do not have the signs of a great success. However, the reactions of the shepherds and wise men suggest something different. Introduce the Christian belief that God had a different definition of success.

Read the story of Jesus' birth (Matthew 1:18,19 and Luke 2:1-7).

Students do these activities in groups:

- List the events surrounding Jesus' birth.
- Discuss: If you were living in Jesus' time, would you consider a child born in these conditions likely to become a success or failure? Why?
- Discuss: If you were awaiting the birth of God's Son, would this be the kind of birth you would expect? Why or why not?
- Read Matthew 1:20-23, Luke 2:8-11, Luke 2:25-35. Do they change your evaluation?

Share group responses. Each student chooses a person who saw Jesus as a baby and retells the story (orally or in writing) from the point of view of that person. They include in the retelling the person's answer to: Do you think this child will be a success or a failure? Why?

### 4. JESUS' LIFE

Students explore different events, teachings and people in Jesus' life to consider what was important to Jesus and what the successful completion of his mission involved. Students will explore the way Jesus' path to 'success' perplexed many and was in fact the reverse of what they expected and believed.

#### A. Jesus' experiences

The devil tempted Jesus with power and wealth. Jesus rejected these, showing that his radical path to success meant obedience to God and being a servant to others. Jesus' view of success challenges values today.

Read about the temptation of Jesus by the devil, Luke 4:1-13. Discuss:

- What does the Bible say the devil tempted Jesus with?

- Where are these things on your success/failure lists?
- What did the devil tempt Jesus to do?
- How did Jesus respond?
- Based on this encounter with the devil, do you think Jesus should be judged a success or a failure? Why?

**B. Jesus’ associates**

‘People are known by the company they keep.’ Ask students what this saying means and if they agree with it. Pose the question: Who were Jesus’ friends and associates?

Students work in groups and use Bible encyclopedias to research one of the types of people who appear in stories with Jesus:  
 high priests    people with leprosy  
 Romans        Jews                      tax collectors  
 women        Pharisees                Samaritans

Ensure all groups are investigated. Use the following questions to guide the investigation:

- How were these people viewed by society in Jesus’ time?
- Who considered the people a success? Who considered them a failure?

Students share their information and list the groups on TRS C2/2.

Assign the stories listed on TRS C2/2 to groups of students. Groups role-play the stories using a reporter who asks different people at the scene their views about the success and failure of Jesus.

After the role-plays discuss: What kind of people do you think Jesus would associate with today?

**C. Jesus’ secrets of success**

Students investigate *Jesus’ Secrets of Success* (TRS C2/3). Discuss:

- How does Jesus’ teaching about success and failure turn upside down the way most people see success or failure?
- What did Jesus predict would be the climax of his success?

**5. DEATH AND RESURRECTION**

Christians believe Jesus’ death and resurrection was part of God’s plan. Jesus’ death was not a failure. Through his life, death and resurrection, Jesus achieved what he set out to do.

As students read the gospel accounts of Jesus’ death and resurrection explain that differences occur because each account is written from the perspective of a different eyewitness.

Tell the students that people who considered Jesus a threat to what they believed about God had him arrested and tried. Discuss: How might you have felt if you were a follower of Jesus at this time?

Read Matthew 26:69–75 which explores Peter’s reaction. Discuss: In this story did Peter consider Jesus to be a success or failure?

Students use TRS C2/4 as a guide to reading and thinking about gospel accounts of Jesus’ death. They share responses in groups.

Use TRS C2/4 for his resurrection.

As a class discuss the students’ own view of the success or failure of Jesus, based on these two incidents.

**6. WHAT CHRISTIANS BELIEVE**

Christians believe human beings are failures because of sin. They believe Jesus took the responsibility for people’s failure and that everyone who trusts in Jesus shares in his success in defeating sin and death.

Consider inviting young Christians in your community to share personal testimonies about their relationship with Jesus.

Students investigate the passages listed below to explore what Christians believe about Jesus.

- John 3:16                      Acts 4:12
- Romans 10:9,13            1 Corinthians 15:3–7;
- 2 Corinthians 8:9        Philippians 2:6–11
- Part 2 of the Apostles’ Creed

Discuss as a class:

- What do Christians believe about Jesus?
- What is the critical event for Christians that makes them label Jesus as a success?
- How do Christians share in Jesus’ success? (If it is appropriate, look at *Baptism* and *Holy Communion* in *Luther’s Small Catechism*)
- What arguments are used by people who label Jesus as a failure?
- How could Christians respond to these arguments?

**RESPONSE**

**7. MY VIEWS ABOUT JESUS**

Provide time for students to reflect personally on how they view Jesus. See TRS C2/5.

## YOU WILL NEED

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|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> magazines and newspapers | <input type="checkbox"/> Bible encyclopedias and handbooks                                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bibles                   | <input type="checkbox"/> arrangements made for visits by young members of the local congregation |

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## INTEGRATING INTO OTHER CURRICULUM AREAS

**ENGLISH:** *Literature:* Develop an understanding of why readers' interpretation of texts may vary. Explain and justify own opinions about texts. Find and cite elements of a text to support a point of view. Read and retell. *Everyday Texts:* Select appropriate text types for particular speaking purposes. Consider the needs of the audience when speaking. Develop discussion and problem-solving skills.

**SOCIETY AND ENVIRONMENT:** *Investigation, Communication, Participation:* Reflect on knowledge and understanding. Gather, organise and interpret information. Draw conclusions. Identify, analyse and clarify values. *Culture:* Investigate customs, traditions and prejudices across cultures. *Social Systems:* Consider causes of conflict between social groups.

from the National Statements and Profiles

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## 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 Jesus?

How did I respond to the range of students' attitudes towards 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?

# SUCCESS OR FAILURE?

He was born in a stable in an obscure village.

In his lifetime he travelled  
less than three hundred kilometres from there.

He never won an election.

He never went to a university.

He never owned a home.

He never had a lot of money.

He became a nomadic preacher.

Popular opinion turned against him.

He was betrayed by a close friend,  
and his other friends ran away.

He was unjustly condemned to death,  
crucified on a cross among thieves,  
on a hill overlooking the town dump.

His executioners gambled for the only piece of property  
that he had on earth, his coat.

When he was dead,  
he was laid in a borrowed grave through the pity of a friend.

Nineteen centuries have come and gone.

Empires have risen and fallen.

Mighty armies have marched,  
and powerful rulers have reigned.

Yet no-one has affected the life of people on earth  
as much as that one solitary life.

Anon

You are known by the company you keep.

Jesus

Based on the company he kept,

## Was Jesus a Success or a Failure?

As a class we have investigated the people who were considered successful people and ‘failures’ in Jesus’ time. List some of the successes and failures below.

Successes		Failures	

Your task is to choose a story from the list below. Read and imagine it through the eyes of different people in the story, eg Jesus and the woman (Luke 7:36–50). Read the story through the eyes of the woman. How would she have reacted to Jesus? Read the story again, but this time read it through the eyes of Simon the Pharisee. How would he have reacted to Jesus?

Prepare a role-play in which a journalist interviews the people at the scene. Present the different ways people in your story view Jesus. Which people considered him to be a success? Why? Which people considered him to be a failure? Why?

Jesus heals a man born blind  
John 9:1–34

Jesus raises a widow’s son to life  
Luke 7:11–17

Jesus heals a paralysed man  
Luke 5:17–26

Jesus forgives a sinful woman  
Luke 7:36–50

The death of Lazarus  
John 11:1–57, 12:9–11

Jesus heals ten men  
Luke 17:11–19

Jesus and the Samaritan woman  
John 4:5–30, 39–42

Jesus and the accused woman  
John 8:1–11

Jesus heals a Roman officer’s servant  
Luke 7:1–10

Jesus and Zacchaeus  
Luke 19:1–10

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If Jesus came in our time, which people would he associate with?

If Jesus came in our time, which people do you think would consider him to be a failure?

What impact did Jesus have on people?

Which story do you think best captures who Jesus is? Explain your choice.

# Jesus' Secrets of Success

Read the following passages and write what Jesus taught about success or living successfully.

Matthew 5:1–12 .....

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Matthew 20:20–28 .....

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Matthew 6:19–21 .....

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John 13:1–17 .....

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Matthew 16:24–26 .....

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Compare Jesus' teaching with the world's message about success.

How would the world view Jesus, as a success or failure?

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Why do you think people might call Jesus radical?

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You will be working in a group of four. Each person chooses a number from one to four.  
Your task is to read the Bible reading with your number.

1.

# Jesus' Crucifixion

- 1. Matthew 27:15–56    2. Mark 15:1–41
- 3. Luke 23:1–49      4. John 18:28 – 19:37

List the key events in your account.

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After reading this story would you think Jesus was a success or failure?

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If Jesus was God's Son, as he said, why do you think he didn't save himself?

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# Jesus' Resurrection

- 1. Matthew 28:1–15..... 2. Mark 16:1–20
- 3. Luke 24:1–49..... 4. John 20:1–29

Record the key events in your Bible reading.

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Discuss in your group:

- How did the different people react to Jesus' resurrection?
- Which people viewed it as a success?
- Do you think the gospel writers considered Jesus' death and resurrection as a success or failure? Why?



# JESUS

To complete our study of Jesus, you are asked to reflect on:

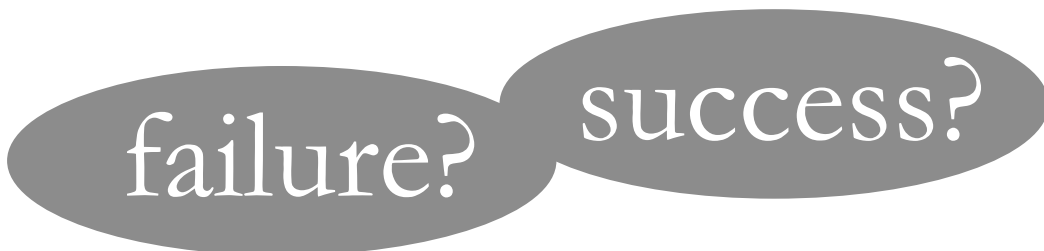
## What do I think about Jesus?

The following questions will help focus your thinking:

- If you had been alive in Jesus' time, what would you have thought about Jesus?
- What image of Jesus is most clear in your mind?
- How would you describe Jesus to others?
- What do you think was Jesus' greatest success?
- If you could meet with Jesus face to face, what would you say to him?

**Choose one of the following activities to express what you believe about Jesus, a success or failure.**

- Design a mural that conveys the different ways people perceived Jesus. Use images from Jesus' life to reveal your thoughts about him. You may include some words and phrases.
- Compose a song or develop your own lyrics for a melody that expresses your views about Jesus. Use musical equipment to record the song and present it to the class. You may enlist volunteers to help you.
- Write a poem for the class or school magazine. Explore descriptive language that captures your emotions, thoughts and ideas.



GOD SAVED PEOPLE THROUGH JESUS