

**MODEL UNIT
BAND C
LEVEL 3**

PRAYERS OF LIFE

LIFE CONCEPT: GOD HELPS PEOPLE PRAY

YEAR: SUGGESTED DURATION: 4 weeks (135 minutes per week)

DATE OF USE: FAITH STATEMENTS: ① ② ③

UNIT-SPECIFIC GOALS (highlighted)

1. GOD INVITES PEOPLE TO PRAY TO HIM IN JESUS' NAME

- 1a investigate prayer as a vital part of a Christian's relationship with God
- 1b investigate what it means to pray in Jesus' name
- 1c investigate and compare the features and benefits of personal and corporate prayer

2. GOD PROMISES TO HEAR AND ANSWER PRAYER

- 2a explore the Christian belief that God answers prayers according to his will
- 2b identify situations in which people are led to pray or which make praying difficult
- 2c investigate prayers written by Christians throughout history, including traditional church prayers

3. JESUS TAUGHT PEOPLE TO PRAY

- 3a examine Jesus' teaching on prayer
- 3b investigate the Lord's Prayer as a framework for Christian prayer

STUDENT ASSESSMENT

ASSESSABLE STUDENT OUTCOMES

Record psalms written by David relating to events in his life. (1a)

Identify situations which led David to pray or made praying difficult. (2b)

Record Jesus' teaching about prayer. (3a)

ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES

⇒ work sample

⇒ TRS C3/1

⇒ TRS C3/2

UNIT SUMMARY

Students explore Christian prayer as a means of talking to God about life's experiences. They consider the story of David and his relationship with God as expressed in the psalms. Students reflect on their life experiences and write their own psalm or translation of a psalm.

UNIT NOTES

In the section 'My Life's Experiences' the teacher will need to be aware that for some students reflecting on their life's experiences may be difficult or hurtful. Be available to speak to students privately and inform the student counsellor about issues which may arise.

You will need to provide a range of books which contain translations of the psalms (see Recommended Resources Menu).

Consider reading a text such as *Are You There, God? It's Me*—Margaret by Judy Blume as a class novel during the unit.

INTRODUCTION

1. SHARING LIFE'S EXPERIENCES

Ask students to imagine living alone. Tell them to try to imagine getting up each morning, living through each day and going to bed each night alone, never seeing another person. Imagine each day of every week like this.

To highlight everybody's need to share life's experiences with others, use questions such as:

- What would you miss most living alone?
- How would being alone affect the way you experience situations, the good and bad?
- Why would it be hard not to be able to talk to any one about your experiences?

Tell students that Christians believe that God never leaves them but is with them in every situation — good or bad. So Christians know they can talk to God in prayer about any and all of their life experiences.

They are about to explore what it means to share life's experiences with God. They will do this through a study of the life of David and his psalms from the Bible.

DEVELOPMENT

2. DAVID'S LIFE: THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE UGLY

In this section students read stories from David's life. As the Bible passages can be quite lengthy, you may choose to read the stories in a children's Bible, such as Selina Hastings' *Illustrated Children's Bible*.

Introduce David's story from the Bible as a good example of talking to God about all of life's experiences — good and bad.

Form nine groups. Each group reads one story about David's experiences (see Teacher Resource Sheet [TRS] C3/1). They reflect on the story, using the TRS.

Each group reports on their story.

Discuss:

- What do the stories teach about David's relationship with God?
- What situations would have made praying difficult or easy for David?
- Does living in relationship with God mean that life turns out perfect? Explain your answer.
- Why do you think David's relationship with God continued through all these experiences?
- How do you think David's relationship with God helped him through life's experiences?

3. PSALMS: DAVID TALKS WITH GOD

Tell students that David's reflections and prayers at different times in his life are recorded in the psalms. The book of Psalms is sometimes called the prayer book of the Bible.

Students work in pairs and read the publisher's introduction to the book of Psalms and list five key facts about Psalms to share with another pair. If time permits, list five more facts about Psalms from Bible encyclopedias or handbooks.

As a class read Psalm 54. Ask students to identify the emotions expressed in the psalm. Ask what might have happened to lead someone to write such a psalm.

If students have Bibles which give cross-references from psalms to other sections of the Bible, demonstrate how to use them to locate the story that relates to the psalm, eg Psalm 54 relates to 1 Samuel 23:19; 26:1.

Students locate in their Bibles the stories they read about David in Section 2 and use the footnotes to find the related psalm/s. Each student studies the psalm and records:

- What did David pray about?
- What does the psalm reveal about David's relationship with God?
- What do these psalms teach about prayer?

Discuss the students' findings.

Students record on a poster the psalm with a summary of the related David story. Students can give their poster a title such as: *Praying in the Good Times, When Life Hits a Downer*.

4. PSALMS: PRAYERS OF GOD'S PEOPLE FOR ALL TIME

Tell students that Christians believe the psalms have relevance for people in Bible times, but that they still have a message for Christians today. Students work in pairs to explore psalms and record:

- What is the message of the psalm?
- What does the psalm say about the relationship between God and people?
- When might a Christian today use a prayer like this psalm?

Psalms could include: Psalm 6, 13, 23, 25, 31, 46, 91, 104, 121, 139.

Provide students with a range of books which contain translations of psalms, so that they can compare several versions. These may assist students to identify ways the psalms could be used in contemporary situations.

Students can sort the prayers they study according to the type of prayer they express, eg thanks, praise, petition or a mixture of these.

5. WHY TALK THINGS OVER WITH GOD?

This section assists students to explore the Bible's answers to common questions about why people pray and the role of prayer in Christians' relationship with God.

Ask students to reflect on the story of David and to list reasons why people might talk over their experiences with God in prayer. Discuss students' ideas.

Introduce TRS C3/2 and the students' investigation of why people pray. As they read and discuss the Bible passages, highlight the following points:

- Christians believe that Jesus has made it possible for all people to approach God in prayer.
- Christians believe that God loves all people and wants them to come to him and share their experiences with him.
- The Bible says that God is like the perfect parent. God cares and provides for his children perfectly.

- Christians share their experiences with Jesus, their greatest friend. Jesus promises that anyone can come to him and unload their troubles and be assured of God's resources of love and power being available to them.
- The Bible says that the Holy Spirit will help people pray when praying is difficult (Romans 8:26,27). Christians never pray alone.
- Christians believe that living as God's children does not mean that life will be perfect, but it does mean that Christians have a life partner who loves them unconditionally and can be trusted and relied upon and with whom they can talk about anything and everything.

RESPONSE

6. MY LIFE'S EXPERIENCES

Give each student a large piece of paper, possibly with an attractive border and heading 'Life Map'. Each student creates a life map, using words, pictures, and symbols to describe their life. The map should include when and where they were born, people and events that are important in their life.

Students reflect on their map with questions such as:

- Who are the important people in your map?
- What are the important events in your life?
- What parts of your life have been most fun?
- What parts of your life map have been most difficult?
- Whom have you chosen to talk about your life experiences with?

Students skim through the psalms used in the unit and others which they believe could relate to their life experiences. They record appropriate verses and psalm references around the border of their life map. Volunteers could be asked to share these with the class.

Alternatively, students could write their own translation of an appropriate psalm as a poster. Display the posters in the class or school worship centre.

YOU WILL NEED

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|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> copies of TRS C3/1,2,3 | <input type="checkbox"/> Large sheets (A3) with attractive border and heading 'Life Map'. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> books which contain translations of the Psalms (see Recommended Resources Menu) | <input type="checkbox"/> Bible encyclopedias, handbooks |

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. Compare different versions of traditional texts. Directed reading, reading alone. *Everyday Texts:* Consider needs of audience when speaking. Develop discussion and problem-solving skills. Report findings in speech and writing.

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.

HEALTH AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION: *Identify:* Identify contrasting emotions and things they do well. Explore feelings about themselves and 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' life experiences?

How did I respond to the range of students' attitudes towards prayer as a means of sharing life with God?

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?

★ ★ ★ DAVID'S LIFE ★ ★ ★

THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE UGLY

David's story in the Bible is a good example of sharing all of life's experiences with God. David is one of the Bible's most famous heroes, but this doesn't mean he had the perfect relationship with God.

You will be working in a group and be reading one of the stories below. Circle your story.

David and Goliath
1 Samuel 17:1 – 18: 5

David spares Saul's life
1 Samuel 24

David and Bathsheba
2 Samuel 11

Saul's jealousy of David
1 Samuel 18:6–16

David is made king
2 Samuel 1:1–16; 2:1–7

Nathan's message and
David's sorrow
2 Samuel 12:1–13

David and Jonathan
1 Samuel 20

Nathan's message to David
2 Samuel 7

David and his son Absalom
2 Samuel 18

★ After you have read the story, write a summary of it. _____

★ What emotions would David have felt during these experiences? _____

★ Describe David's relationship with God during the story. _____

★ What would have made praying easy or difficult for David at this time? _____

★ Choose three specific moments in the story and suggest the kinds of things David might have prayed about at each moment:

- | | | |
|----------|----------|----------|
| 1. _____ | 2. _____ | 3. _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ |

?? ? IS ANYONE THERE ? ? ?

It is interesting to read Bible stories about people talking to God in prayer about their life experiences, but each person faces the same questions when considering how it relates to them:

How do I know God is there? Will God really listen to me?

The Bible has some information to help answer these questions. Read the Bible verses and record what the Bible says about each question.

? Is anyone there? (Jeremiah 23:23,24; Isaiah 45:22) _____

? Why talk with God? (Psalm 139; Isaiah 43:1,2,4,5) _____

? How do I know God cares? (John 3:16; 1 John 4:9,10) _____

? Will God answer me? (1 John 5:14,15) _____

? Who helps me when praying is difficult? (Romans 8:26,27) _____

Christians believe that Jesus is the greatest friend. The Bible explains how Jesus has broken down the barrier of sin and made it possible for all people to pray confidently to God. This is why Christians pray in Jesus' name, as Jesus has restored the relationship between God and people.

Read Matthew 11:28; Matthew 28:20; Romans 5:6–10; Ephesians 3:12

? What do these verses say about Jesus? _____

? How has Jesus changed prayer? _____

? How does praying help Christians through life's experiences? (Luke 21:36; Colossians 1:11; Isaiah 40:31) _____
