

**1a** explore the concept of original sin and what it means for all people

**1b** explore the impact of sin on people's relationship with God

**1c** investigate biblical teaching about the ongoing struggle against sin and evil

**2a** investigate the recurring theme of God's rescue of his people in the Old Testament

**2b** explore biblical descriptions of God's unconditional love and forgiveness for all people

**2c** explore people's relationship with God in the light of Jesus' rescue

**3a** investigate Christian beliefs about death and eternal life

**3b** explore how the certainty and reality of eternal life affects the lives of Christians

**3c** investigate the Christian teaching that faith in Jesus is crucial for salvation

## STUDENT ASSESSMENT

### ASSESSABLE STUDENT OUTCOMES

Record the Bible's explanation of the relationship between sin and death. (1a,1c)

Record the Bible's message about the impact of sin on people's relationship with God. (1b)

Record Bible verses about God's love and forgiveness and explain how the verses may be used to comfort people. (2b, 3b)

Choose and record Bible verses that explain what Jesus' death and resurrection have achieved for all people. (2b,2c)

Record and report on the Bible's message about death and eternal life. (3a,3c)

Describe in writing the impact eternal life might have on the lives of Christians. (3b)

### ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES

⇒ TRS C2/1

⇒ TRS C2/1

⇒ journal entry

⇒ journal entry

⇒ TRS C2/4 and presentation or pamphlet

journal entry

## UNIT SUMMARY

Students examine the Christian understanding that Jesus' death and resurrection release people from the power of death. Students present the information they gather in the form of an information session or pamphlet for parents.

## UNIT NOTES

This unit provides opportunities for students to investigate issues related to death, particularly the Christian assurance that Jesus has won victory over death for all people. Encourage an investigative atmosphere and steer students away from becoming morbid. Be aware of students who have suffered bereavement recently, treat them sensitively, and encourage other students to do the same.

Students keep a journal in which they record their thoughts and feelings as the unit progresses (see glossary for information about journal-writing).

Because dealing with death is often a family experience, the culmination of this unit is an information session in which students share with parents what they have learnt about death.

## INTRODUCTION

### 1. DEATH

Begin the unit with one of these activities to help students realise that death is real and that there are different ways of dealing with death.

- Read death notices in a newspaper and compile a list of beliefs and feelings about death revealed in the notices. (Keep the notices for further use.)
- Survey parents or members of the school community to gather information about people's beliefs and feelings about death.
- Listen to songs about death, eg Eric Clapton's *Tears in Heaven*. Students list what the songs reveal about people's beliefs and feelings about death.

Discuss as a class:

- What beliefs and feelings do people have about death?
- Why don't people like to talk about death?
- What phrases do people use instead of 'death'? (eg 'pass away', 'kick the bucket')

Students compile a list of questions that they have about death. The list can be used to guide the investigation or be kept for reviewing what is learnt in the unit.

**Journal** Students reflect on: What is death?

## DEVELOPMENT

### 2. WHY PEOPLE DIE

**Journal** Students record their initial responses to: Why do all people die?

Students in pairs use Teacher Resource Sheet (TRS) C2/1 to discover the Bible's answer to the question: why do all people die? The sheet

looks at both the Genesis 3 account of the first sin and passages from Romans about the relationship between sin and death.

As a whole group, discuss students' answers to the last question on TRS C2/1.

**Journal** Students reflect on what they have learnt about why all people die.

### 3. JESUS' DEATH OVERCOMES DEATH AS PUNISHMENT FOR SIN

Choose from either activity to introduce the concept that all people are guilty in God's sight because of sin and face death.

- Consider the cartoon on TRS C2/2. Brainstorm possible situations which might have led to the situation.
- View a video of a courtroom scene in which a person is declared guilty and faces the death penalty.

Discuss:

- How might the guilty person feel?
- How might the guilty person feel if somebody came along and said: 'I'll take care of it for you'?

Review Romans 6:23a. Tell students that the key message of the Bible is that God sent his own Son to 'take care of it': to die the death people deserve because of sin.

Students consider briefly the events of the death of Jesus. They may

- view a film or video portrayal of the crucifixion, eg *Jesus of Nazareth*
- read the story from one of the Gospels (Matthew 27:27–66 Mark 15:16–41, Luke 23:26–49 John 19:17–37)
- listen to the story as told by the teacher (possibly using artists' representations of the story).

Students work in small groups to read the statement on the middle of TRS C2/2.

Students work in groups to read the accompanying Bible verses and choose one which they feel best describes the message of the Bible. Students share their choice with the class, explaining their reasons for choosing it.

**Journal** Students reflect on the questions: What does the Bible say Jesus' death has achieved for all people? What do you think about the Bible's message?

**Or** Students respond, using art, graphics or words to depict the Bible's message that Jesus has overcome death for all people.

#### 4. JESUS' RESURRECTION MEANS DEATH IS NOT THE END

Skim through the collected newspaper death notices to identify those that reflect an attitude that death is final and those that reflect confidence that death is not final. Discuss the thoughts presented and why people might think this way. Students create their own cartoon that conveys people's views about the finality of death. See TRS C2/3.

Students consider briefly the events of the burial and resurrection of Jesus. Use any of the strategies suggested above for relating the story of Jesus' death. (Gospel accounts: Matthew 27:57 – 28:10 Mark 15:42 – 16:8 Luke 23:50 – 24:12 John 19:38 – 20:18)

Students read the Bible verses on TRS C2/3 to explore the Bible's message about what Jesus' resurrection means for people and how faith is crucial for salvation. Students work in groups to select a verse which they believe best conveys the Bible's message about Jesus' resurrection.

**Journal** Students reflect on the question: What is your response to the Bible's message about Jesus' resurrection?

#### 5. LIFE AFTER DEATH

**Journal** Students individually respond to the question: What is eternal life?

Discuss students' responses and tell students that the Bible provides some images of what eternal life will be like.

As a class, read the introduction to the book of Revelation in their Bibles to identify:

- Who wrote it?
- For whom was it initially written?
- Under what circumstances was it written?
- What seems to be the central message of the book?

Students use TRS C2/4 to explore the nature of heaven and how people can obtain the gift of eternal life. They may also interview the local pastor and members of the local congregation to explore what they think heaven will be like.

Read and discuss John 14:1–3 and 1 Corinthians 2:9.

**Journal** Students write their response to these two verses.

**Or** they paint their image of the Bible's description of eternal life.

## RESPONSE

#### 6. COPING WITH DEATH

This section looks at both students' feelings about their own death and ways of coping with the death of a loved one.

**Journal** Students respond to the question: In the light of what you have learnt about the Bible's message of Jesus' rescue from death, how do you feel about facing your own death?

Students' response could be in the form of a list of thoughts, a poem or a design for their own tombstone.

Students read John 11:17–36 as an example of people experiencing grief at the death of a loved one. Consider:

- How did the sisters feel?
- What questions did they have?
- What difference did Jesus' presence make to them?

Discuss: In what ways are people important to each other in times of grief?

Students interview a Christian funeral director, doctor, nurse, or counsellor (or a panel of people) who can help them understand

- the stages of grief
- ways of supporting people who are experiencing grief.

Tell students that the Bible has descriptions of God's love and words of assurance for people who grieve. Students read and choose appropriate verses for their report to parents.

Isaiah 54:10                      Matthew 28:20  
Roman 8:38,39                  Ephesians 3:16–21  
1 Thessalonians 4:13–18

**Journal** Students record three of these verses and explain why or how these verses might offer comfort to Christians in times of loss.

#### 7. INFORMATION SESSION OR PAMPHLET

Students prepare and present an information session for parents (or a pamphlet) in which they explain what they have learnt about death and Christian attitudes towards death.

They begin by reviewing their original lists of what people believe and feel about death and their questions about death.

They may invite one of the people they interviewed during the course of the unit to be a guest speaker. Students complete a self-evaluation of the unit and presentation. See TRS C2/5.

## YOU WILL NEED

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> to invite a panel of people who can share information about helping deal with grief, eg a Christian doctor or nurse, funeral director, Christian counsellor (possibly from Lutheran Community Care)</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> a video about the life of Jesus, eg <i>Jesus of Nazareth</i></li><li><input type="checkbox"/> photocopies of TRSs</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> newspapers with death notices</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> songs with messages about death and grief, eg Eric Clapton <i>Tears in Heaven</i> from the CD <i>Unplugged</i></li></ul> |
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## INTEGRATING INTO OTHER CURRICULUM AREAS

**ENGLISH:** *Literature:* Develop an understanding of why readers' interpretations may vary. 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 stories. Read alone; reading and retelling activities. Write widely, using editing skills. *Everyday Texts:* Select appropriate text types for particular speaking purposes. Consider the needs of the audience when speaking and writing, eg eye contact, explain facts. Develop discussion and problem-solving skills. Plan, prepare and present short talks. Develop strategies for gathering, recording and reporting data.

**SOCIETY AND ENVIRONMENT:** *Investigation, Communication, Participation:* Reflect on knowledge and understanding. Formulate questions and gather, organise, interpret information, draw conclusions. Consider appropriate ways of communicating, and consider the audience in the presentation.

**HEALTH:** *Interaction, Relationships and groups:* Develop skills to listen to others, express feelings and point of view.

(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 and understanding about death and grief?

How did I respond to feelings about death and loss?

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?

# Why? Why? Why?

## Why do all people die?

Read Genesis 3:1–24 to explore what the Bible says about why people die.

After reading discuss with a partner and record your responses to these questions:

**What were the consequences of Adam and Eve’s disobedience/sin?**

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**In what ways did sin break the relationships between people and between people and God?**

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**God prevented Adam and Eve from eating from the tree of life which would have made it possible for them to live forever. Why do you think it was kind of God to do this?**

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**Do you think God planned for sin and death to be a part of his perfect creation? Why?**

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**Read Romans 3:23; Romans 5:12–16; Romans 6:23; and record what the Bible reveals about the relationship between sin and death.**

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**Use a Bible encyclopedia to find out what sin is and how it affects all people.**

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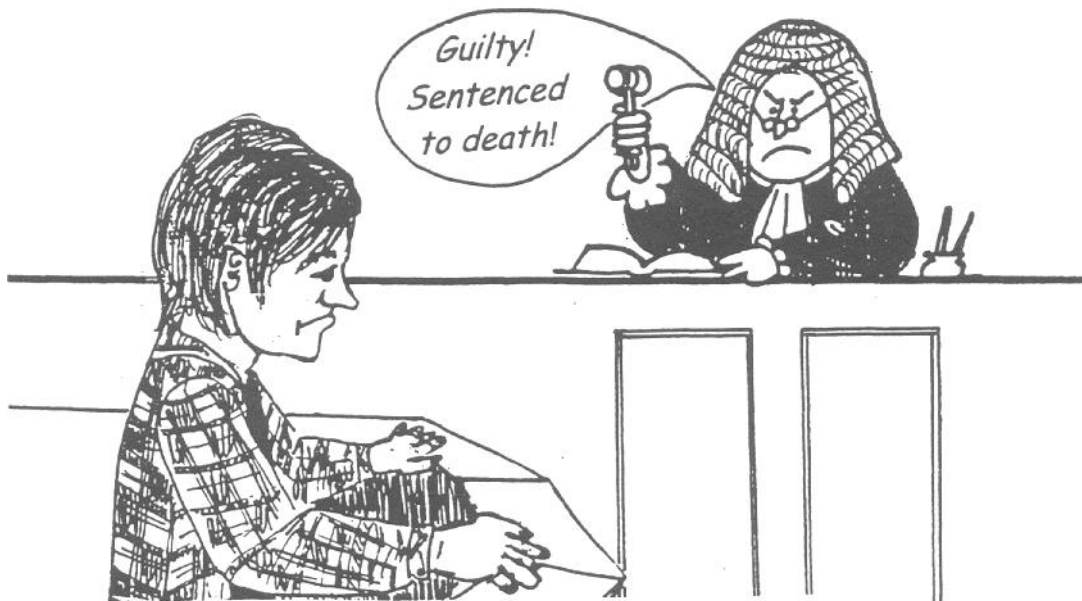
**What do Christians believe is the reason people die?**

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# sin guilt death and punishment

What might have happened before this scene?



Isaiah 53:5

Matthew 20:28

Romans  
3:23,24

Romans  
6:23

Romans  
5:6-9

1 Corinthians  
15:3

1 Peter  
2:24

2 Corinthians 5:15

1 Corinthians 15:56,57

***What do the Bible verses say Jesus has done  
for all people?***

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# Is that all there is?

Create your own cartoon about what people say and believe about death,  
eg 'It's the end', 'gone forever', 'he had a good life'.

Read the following Bible verses to discover the Bible's message about what Jesus' resurrection means for people.

John 3:15–17	John 11:25,26
Romans 6:4–10	Ephesians 2:4–7
1 Corinthians 15:20–22	Colossians 3:1

What is the Bible's message about Jesus' resurrection?

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Which verse do you think best explains the Bible's message about what Jesus' resurrection has achieved for people? Give reasons for your selection.

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# Life after Death

## John's vision of heaven

Read Revelation 21:10 – 22:5

1. What image of heaven does John create in your mind? Draw or write about it.

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2. Why do you think John described the new Jerusalem with images of gold, precious stones and light?

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Read what C S Lewis said about John's vision of heaven.

There is no need to be worried by facetious people who try to make the Christian hope of 'heaven' ridiculous by saying they do not want 'to spend eternity playing harps' . . .

All the scriptural imagery (harps, crowns, gold, et cetera) is, of course, a merely symbolical attempt to express the inexpressible.

Musical instruments are mentioned because for many people (not all) music is the thing known in the present life which most strongly suggests ecstasy and infinity.

Crowns are mentioned to suggest the fact that those who are united with God in eternity share his splendour, power and joy.

Gold is mentioned to suggest the timelessness of heaven (gold does not rust) and the preciousness of it.

How would you describe what heaven is like, using images that people could understand today? .....

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Read Mark 16:16a, John 14:1–7, Acts 16:30–33, Romans 10:9.

How do people know they are going to heaven? .....

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How do you think being certain about going to heaven would affect the way you feel about death?

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# Rescued from Death

## SELF-ASSESSMENT

### THE UNIT

The most important thing I learnt during the unit is:.....

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Five things I believe about death:

① .....

② .....

③ .....

④ .....

⑤ .....

What I remember most about the unit is:.....

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### OUR PRESENTATION

Our presentation took the form of a .....

The highlight of our presentation or pamphlet was:

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I would do these things differently if I was preparing another presentation like this:

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Features of presentation to be assessed (eg logical order of information)	Competent	Needs developing

**Parent Comment:**

GOD SAVES PEOPLE FROM SIN AND EVIL