

**SCHOOL-DEVELOPED  
SAMPLE UNIT  
FOR LEVEL 1**

# A COMMUNICATION FROM 'BEYOND'

**LIFE CONCEPT: GOD HELPS PEOPLE BY HIS WORD**

YEAR: ..... FAITH STATEMENTS: ① ② ③  
 DURATION OF UNIT: ..... 9 – 13 hours ..... DATE OF USE: .....

**UNIT-SPECIFIC GOALS** (*highlight your selection*)

**1. GOD REVEALS HIMSELF TO PEOPLE THROUGH HIS WORD**

**1a** explore what Christians believe about God's self-revelation

**1b** examine the Christian understanding that God speaks to people through the law and the gospel

**1c** investigate the Christian understanding of the authority of the Bible

**2. THE BIBLE IS GOD'S WORD, WRITTEN BY PEOPLE WHOM GOD INSPIRED**

**2a** investigate questions in relation to the origin, reliability and authenticity of the Bible

**2b** explore the importance of knowing the authors, context, form and purpose of the books of the Bible

**2c** explore the basic principles Christians use to interpret the Bible

**3. THE BIBLE TELLS THE STORY OF GOD'S PLAN FOR THE SALVATION OF ALL PEOPLE THROUGH JESUS**

**3a** explore the theme of salvation from the Old Testament through to the New Testament

**3b** investigate the Christian belief regarding the purpose of the Bible

**STUDENT ASSESSMENT**

**ASSESSABLE STUDENT OUTCOMES**

Record what God reveals about God in various encounters he has with people. (1a)

Practice several principles of Bible interpretation while looking at God's message in various Old and New Testament passages. (2b,2c)

Investigate and record the place of Jesus in God's communication with people and in the overall plan of salvation by reading a wide selection of Old and New Testament passages. (3a)

**ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES**

⇒ case studies; video outline

⇒ work sample

⇒ video outline

**UNIT SUMMARY**

Students work with the imagery of science fiction in which humans receive communication from extraterrestrial beings to consider how God makes contact with human beings through Jesus and through his written word. Students produce an outline for a video dealing with God's communication with human beings.

## UNIT NOTES

Despite the diversity of the Bible — 66 books, 40 authors, written over 1600 years — it is cohesive in its message and purpose. It hangs together in an amazing way. Students need to be confronted with the miracle of the word and the faith issue that finally God himself is the author of the Bible. It is his word to us. This is how he communicates with us.

The students' appreciation of this topic may well be enhanced if we tap into a popular curiosity about life beyond our world, extraterrestrial life, paranormal activity, aliens, the spirit world etc. There is plenty of material around which illustrates human ingenuity applied to the challenge of 'listening' for any signals from life that is 'out there'.

## INTRODUCTION

### 1. LISTEN TO WHAT'S OUT THERE

View with the students excerpts from the video *Contact* or a similar story which illustrates human curiosity to get in touch with life/intelligence 'beyond this world'.

Discuss:

- Do people want to hear from some life/intelligence out of this world? Why or why not?
- What do people expect or want to hear from 'beyond'?
- How would you react if you heard from some life/intelligence beyond this world?
- How do other people react when someone says they have heard from some life/intelligence out of this world?

Introduce the project for the unit. Students will be creating an outline for their own video, based on the premises outlined on Teacher Resource Sheet (TRS D1/1).

## DEVELOPMENT

### 2. CLOSE ENCOUNTERS

Working in small groups, students research and prepare a case study on one of the people from the Old Testament who are reported to have had close encounters with God, eg Adam and Eve, Noah, Moses (burning bush and subsequent work in Egypt), Moses (in the desert and at Sinai), Moses (death), Jeremiah.

Groups complete a case study report (see TRS D1/2).

If students are confident in using the Bible and Bible reference books for research, they may work independently. If they are not confident, teacher support may range from providing Bible story books which deal with the lives of these people, to directing students to specific Bible passages, to demonstrating how to use an index of subjects in the Bible.

Groups report to the class about their case studies. The reports can be in the form of a news broadcast with interviews. Discuss their findings.

Students consider how they can make use of this information in their video.

### 3. CLOSEST ENCOUNTER

Students consider what happens when the life/intelligence from beyond the world seeks to make the closest possible encounter with human beings.

In the film *ET*, an extraterrestrial being made the journey to earth. The Bible tells us that God not only came to earth, but even actually became a human being. Students examine a range of Bible texts which point to Jesus as God in human form.

Matthew 16: 13-17	Mark 9:1-7
John 1:1-3, 14	John 10:30
John 14:9	John 20:28
Romans 9:5	Philippians 2:5-11
Colossians 1:15-20	1 John 5:20

Working in pairs, students do case studies of people who encountered God in the person of Jesus. They complete case study reports (TRS D1/2). Possible subjects include:

- Mary, mother of Jesus
- John the Baptist
- Peter, an apostle
- John, an apostle
- Paul, an apostle
- Zacchaeus, a tax collector
- Martha, a homemaker
- Pontius Pilate, a governor
- Mary Magdalene
- a widow from Nain
- a man who was paralysed
- a soldier (centurion) with a sick servant
- Simon, a Pharisee

You may want to view some of these encounters in the *Jesus of Nazareth* video and do the case history report as a group.

See the note about support for students in the box above.

Groups report to the class about their case studies. The feedback could be in the form of a cartoon of the main character, with a speech bubble featuring the character's comment about their 'close encounter'. Discuss each group's findings.

Students consider how they can make use of this information in their video.

#### 4. OUR ENCOUNTER

Students consider what happens when the extraterrestrial life/intelligence provides a written message for human beings (eg the coded message in *Contact*). How do people decode/interpret the message?

God's communication with people today comes primarily through his written word, the Bible. The Bible is not a straightforward text to be read and understood immediately.

(a) Interpretation of the Bible involves understanding the nature of the Bible.

Spend a session or two developing the *Here is a book* statements on TRS D1/3.

You may want to incorporate some segments from The Bible Society video series *Messages from the Memorybanks* which is also used in LIFE model units for Band C, Level 2 and Band D, Level 2.

(b) In addition to having some information about the nature of the Bible text, interpretation of the Bible message requires the use of particular skills and principles.

Prepare students for the following exercise:

Review and demonstrate these principles of interpretation which confident Bible readers can apply:

- consider the genre of the passage (see *What kind of writing is this?* in the Development Ideas Menu)
- consider the context of the passage (see *Reading in context* in the Development Ideas Menu)
- consider a passage in the light of other related passages and of the overall salvation theme of the Bible.

OR

Demonstrate these skills which students unfamiliar with the Bible can use:

- locating passages in the Bible
- interpreting Bible passages in terms of their context: who is speaking, to whom, in what situation
- considering what the passage reveals about God, about themselves.

Students examine a selection of Bible passages from Genesis to Revelation to get a 'taste' of the message that God has given people in the Bible. Use passages listed on TRS D1/4. The class can work together on a selection of the verses, or students can each examine one verse and share their findings in small groups. Small groups report. Discuss:

- What basic message does God communicate about himself throughout the Bible?
- What does the Bible say about human beings and their reaction to encounters with God?

Students select three passages that they want to use for their video. They write their own decoding or interpretation of the passage, demonstrating the use of at least two interpretative skills (see boxes above).

Students consider how they can make use of this information in their video.

## RESPONSE

#### 5. VIDEO

Students (working individually, in groups, or as a whole class) produce an outline for a video dealing with God's communication with human beings. Depending on the time available (and the interest of students), they may

- write an outline for an informative video
- write an outline for a video that presents the information in a story format
- write an outline for a video which shows their personal reaction to God's contact with people
- use their outline for a presentation to possible backers/producers for their video
- develop their outline into a script or storyboard
- actually make a video.

## YOU WILL NEED

- Bibles and Bible reference books
- TRS D1/1, 2, 3, 4 for students
- Contact* or another video about communications from 'beyond the earth'
- Messages from the Memorybanks* videos or TRS D1/3 for students

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## INTEGRATING INTO OTHER CURRICULUM AREAS

Find out what students are doing in other curriculum areas in regard to:

### Topics

analysis of written texts \_\_\_\_\_

extraterrestrial life \_\_\_\_\_

### Skills

research \_\_\_\_\_

video scripting \_\_\_\_\_

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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' familiarity with the Bible?

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

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?

## COMMUNICATION FROM BEYOND VIDEO PROJECT

You have just viewed a video based on the premise that there is life and intelligence outside of this world and that it is attempting to communicate with human beings.

Your major project for this unit is to write an outline for your own video, based on the following premises which are, in fact, Christian beliefs:

- God exists 'beyond this world'
- God communicates with human beings
- What God says to human beings makes sense out of all the questions and concerns of human life
- The Bible is both a record of God's communication with specific people and an ongoing form of communication with all people.

In the unit you will be examining

- examples of God's close encounters with specific people
- God's closest encounter with human beings, when he became a human being himself
- God's ongoing attempt to reach people (including yourself) through his written word: the Bible.

As you examine these encounters, make notes about how information can be presented in video form.

Your video may be

- an informative video
- a video that incorporates a story line, eg a student longing to make contact with a power greater than himself stumbles on a copy of the Bible
- a video which shows your personal reaction to God's contact with people
- another format of your choice.

**ENCOUNTERS WITH GOD  
CASE STUDY REPORT**

Name of the subject \_\_\_\_\_

Source of information \_\_\_\_\_

Personal details of the subject (if available), eg age, nationality, education, occupation \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**THE ENCOUNTER:**

Where did the encounter take place? \_\_\_\_\_

When did the encounter take place? \_\_\_\_\_

Exactly what happened (what did the subject see, hear, feel)? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

How did the subject react at the time? \_\_\_\_\_

How did the subject react later in life? \_\_\_\_\_

What is the apparent reason for God making contact with this subject at this time? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What did God reveal to the subject about God? \_\_\_\_\_

What did God reveal to the subject about the subject or other people? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**REACTION TO THE REPORT**

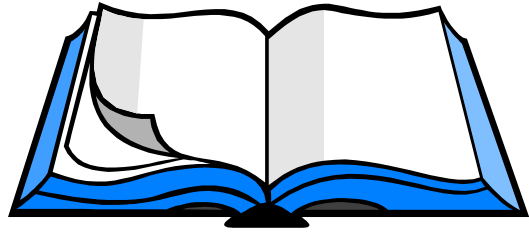
Do you think the subject was 'making up' the encounter? (explain) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What do you think about God who encountered the subject in this way? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Here is a book . . .



- ◆ a collection of 66 smaller books
- ◆ written over 1,500 years  
more than 40 human generations
- ◆ written in three languages
  - Hebrew: the language of the Old Testament
  - Aramaic: the common language of the Near East
  - Greek: the language of the New Testament, the international language at the time of Christ
- ◆ written by over forty authors from every walk of life
  - Moses, a political leader, trained in the ‘universities’ of Egypt
  - Peter, a fisherman
  - Amos, a herdsman
  - Joshua, a military general
  - Nehemiah, a cupbearer
  - Daniel, a prime minister
  - Luke, a doctor
  - Solomon, a king
  - Matthew, a tax collector
  - Paul, a Pharisee, a tentmaker
- ◆ written on three continents: Asia, Africa and Europe  
in many different places
  - Moses in the wilderness
  - Jeremiah in a dungeon
  - Daniel on a hillside and in a palace
  - Paul inside prison walls
  - Luke, while travelling
  - John on the island of Patmos
  - others in the rigours of a military campaign
- ◆ written from different moods
  - some writing from the heights of joy
  - and others writing from the depths of sorrow and despair
- ◆ covering hundreds of subjects which would create opposing opinions when mentioned or discussed.

## and yet

- ◆ written with harmony and continuity from the first word to the last
- ◆ unfolding one story: God’s redemption of human beings through Jesus Christ

‘Well, I say that’s humanly impossible!’ *-Pearly Gates by Ian Jones*

# ENCOUNTERING GOD IN THE BIBLE

## SELECTED VERSES FROM THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENT

### **OLD TESTAMENT**

#### **BEGINNINGS**

GENESIS 1:1; 1:27; 12:1-3; 17:1-22; 28:15

EXODUS 6:1-7; 12:40,51; 20:1-17

LEVITICUS 11:45

NUMBERS 21:4-9

DEUTERONOMY 6:4-9; 11:26-28; 31:6-8

#### **HISTORY**

JOSHUA 1:5-8; 24:14-24

JUDGES 2:11-16

1 SAMUEL 16:1-13

2 SAMUEL 7:8-13, 16

1 KINGS 8:56

1 CHRONICLES 29:10-13

2 CHRONICLES 7:14; 15:1-7; 36:15-23

NEHEMIAH 9:29-33

#### **POETRY**

JOB 5:17,18; 19:25;

PSALM 1:1,2; 18:2,3; 23; 19:7-11; 33:12;  
48:14; 103:8-13

PROVERBS 9:10; 16:9

ECCLESIASTES 12:13

#### **PROPHECY**

ISAIAH 7:14 9:6,7 26:3; 33:22; 40:8;  
40:28-31 53:3-6

JEREMIAH 23:28,29; 31:3, 31-34

LAMENTATIONS 3:22,23

JOEL 2:28-32

MICAH 5:2-4; 6:8

MALACHI 4:1-6

### **NEW TESTAMENT**

#### **GOSPELS (Good news of Jesus)**

MATTHEW 1:18-23; 3:1-6, 13-17; 5:3-12;  
5:13-16; 13:1-9, 18-23; 16:13-  
17, 21; 20:28; 27:32-44; 27:45-  
50; 28:1-10; 28:18-20

MARK 8:34-36; 9:2-7; 10:13-16

LUKE 2:10,11; 4:16-21; 6:27; 18:9-14;  
19:10; 24:46,47

JOHN 1:1,2,14; 1:29; 3:16,17; 6:37,68,69;  
8:31,32; 13:34,35; 14:1-6;  
14:27; 20:31

#### **HISTORY**

ACTS 2:1-3, 37-41; 4:12; 9:1-6, 17,18  
10:34-43; 17:22-31

#### **LETTERS**

ROMANS 1:16,17; 5:8,19; 6:23; 8:1,2;  
8:28; 8:35-39; 12:2

1 CORINTHIANS 1:22-25; 2:2; 2:9; 13:4-7  
15:3-8, 20-22

2 CORINTHIANS 5:17,19

GALATIANS 3:26-28; 4:4,5; 6:14

EPHESIANS 1:7; 2:8,9; 3:19-21; 5:1

PHILIPPIANS 2:5-11; 4:4; 4:6,7

COLOSSIANS 3:15,16

1 THESSALONIANS 5:18

1 TIMOTHY 1:15; 2:3-6; 6:6,7

2 TIMOTHY 1:12; 3:15-17

TITUS 2:11-14; 3:3-8

HEBREWS 1:1,2; 4:14-16; 9:27,28; 13:8

JAMES 1:5; 2:17; 4:8

1 PETER 1:3-6; 2:9,10; 5:7

2 PETER 3:8,9

1 JOHN 1:9; 3:1,2; 4:8-11; 5:12; 5:13

#### **PROPHECY**

REVELATION 1:3; 2:10; 7:16,17; 22:20