

**MODEL UNIT  
BAND D  
LEVEL 2**

# DIGGING FOR TRUTH

**LIFE CONCEPT: GOD HELPS PEOPLE BY HIS WORD**
**YEAR:** \_\_\_\_\_ **SUGGESTED DURATION:** 8 – 13 hours (depending on the approach taken)

**DATE OF USE:** ..... **FAITH STATEMENTS:** ① ② ③

**UNIT-SPECIFIC GOALS (highlighted)**
**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**

Students record their research findings and personal responses in their books or log-sheet. (1c,2a,3b)

Students present a report and personal evaluation of their research. (1c,2a,3b)


**ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES**

 TRS D2/2  
individual work samples

 TRS D2/5  
individual work samples

**UNIT SUMMARY**

The unit provides students with the tools to investigate questions they have about the Bible and its truth. The unit outlines for students and teachers a process of investigation and a lesson approach, providing students and teachers with a range of options. Students can examine questions relating to the historicity of the Bible or the accuracy of biblical documents or the relevance of the Bible for people moving into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. All students consider the nature and purpose of the Bible, in particular the Christian belief that the 'gospel is God's powerful way of saving all people who have faith' (Romans 1:16 CEV). Students present a report and their personal evaluation and conclusions.

## UNIT NOTES

Students at Band D level are often quick to dismiss the Bible as irrelevant, boring and unreliable, yet they are quite prepared to accept other sources of information as reliable and truthful, eg newscasts, films. This unit will enable students to explore their own claims about the Bible as well as the claims made by Christians and the writers of the Bible themselves about its authority, purpose and reliability.

The unit provides students with the tools to dig for answers to questions they have about the Bible and its truth. It is not expected that all parts of the unit will be taught. Select those sections which are pertinent to your students. If students raise questions different from those presented in the unit, use the process of investigation and the resource sheets as a model to create new areas of investigation.

## INTRODUCTION

Digging for the truth about the Bible resembles the process by which archaeologists uncover sites and identify objects from the past. Evidence collected can point to certain conclusions, but it is never complete. Ultimately, the archaeologist can only guess at what took place. The reliability, genuineness and relevance of the Bible cannot be proved; it can only be tested. Acceptance of the Bible as God's truth is a matter of faith.

### 1. DIG

Create a miniature archaeological dig (in an aquarium) containing different layers of soil and rock with different buried treasure. Using a small trowel and brush, gradually uncover the buried items, explaining to students the work of excavation (see *Digging Up the Past* in *The Lion Encyclopedia of the Bible*). Draw a comparison between the work of an archaeologist and what students will be doing in the unit.

### 2. WHAT DO I WANT TO KNOW?

Students write down ten things they know about the Bible, eg the difference between the Old Testament and the New Testament, the number of books, authors and types of literature in the Bible. Alternatively, if students are not familiar with the Bible they can have a quick look at a Bible and then write ten things they have observed.

If students have little knowledge of the structure and make-up of the Bible, you can incorporate into the unit activities such as *Finding your way*, *Different types of writing*, *Discovering the Bible* (Introductory Activities Menu).

Alternatively, students survey different groups of people on what they know, think and feel about the Bible (refer to *Bible survey* in Introductory Activities Menu).

Students list questions and objections they have about the origins, authenticity and reliability of the Bible.

Teacher Resource Sheet (TRS) D2/1 summarises for the teacher the types of questions people have about the Bible. It can be used to stimulate student discussion. If a survey has been conducted, students add to their own questions the questions and objections raised by other people.

## DEVELOPMENT

### 3. SOME BIG QUESTIONS

Introduce the main questions about the Bible on TRS D2/1 with the following activities.

#### A. DID IT REALLY HAPPEN?

In groups students select ten items they would like to include in a personal or school time capsule which is to be opened one hundred years in the future. Students justify their choice and explain what message the items will communicate about themselves or the school.

Students brainstorm how future generations will be able to test the authenticity of the items and what will impact on their interpretation of the items in the capsule.

Students discuss ways in which the Bible is like a time capsule and ways in which it differs from a time capsule. They compare methods for testing the authenticity of items in their time capsule with the methods that can be used to test the authenticity of the people, events and words in the Bible.

#### B. ARE BIBLE RECORDS ACCURATE?

Select an experience common to all students in the class, eg a school assembly, an excursion, a community project. Divide the class into several groups. Each group recounts the experience from different perspectives and for different audiences, eg:

- the principal's report for the school newsletter and for the school board

- a cleaner's report to other cleaners and to family
- a parent's report to the grandparents and in a letter to a friend
- a participant's report for the school magazine, as a journal entry and to a friend who was absent.

Students compare the different versions and determine on what basis the reports are seen as accurate and truthful. Discuss how the use of language changes from one report to the next and according to the relationship between the reporter and the receiver of the report. Students make a list of criteria by which non-participants/non-observers determine the reliability of an account.

Students list areas of concern people have about the reliability and truthfulness of the Bible and brainstorm what measures can be taken to test its accuracy.

### **C. WHAT GOOD IS IT FOR LIFE TODAY?**

Students list ten activities, ideas, events, books that are relevant to them and ten that are irrelevant. They identify the criteria by which something is deemed to be relevant. Which criteria are objective? subjective?

Students list what people think makes the Bible relevant or irrelevant.

## **4. DIGGING FOR TRUTH**

Students work individually or in groups to investigate one of the three questions introduced above or other questions they themselves have raised.

### **A PROCESS OF INVESTIGATION**

1. Students select the question they want to investigate. The teacher gives them a copy of the relevant TRS (D2/3, 4 or 5) which suggests starting points and resources for investigations. If they are working in a group, they decide who will research what and where they will look for information. Assign a group leader who can monitor progress and keep the group on task.
2. Students research the topic using a range of resources.
3. Students keep individual records of their findings and the source of their information. They use either their books or the log sheet (TRS D2/2).
4. Students evaluate and reflect on how effectively and convincingly their findings answer their questions about the Bible. They record any new questions or objections that their findings raise.

## **LESSON APPROACH**

1. Begin the lesson with group or class sharing. Students give a brief summary of their most important findings of the previous day. They share useful resources and indicate where they are located. They raise any problems they have with their research and the class suggests strategies for dealing with the problems.  
Alternatively, the teacher meets with each group during the lesson to monitor progress.
2. Students research for the most part of the lesson, reading, viewing etc, and recording their findings.
3. Students spend the last five minutes of the lesson recording their personal comments and reflections on their findings.

### **D. WHAT MAKES THE BIBLE UNIQUE?**

If people accept the Bible as an accurate record (Question B) of past events (Question A) that can still speak to the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Question C), then they are compelled to respond to the truth that it contains. The Bible was not destined to be displayed in a museum. 'It is God's powerful way of saving all people who have faith' (Romans 1:16).

TRS D2/6 presents a range of Old Testament and New Testament passages on the nature and purpose of the Bible. Students share the reading of the passages and identify the different claims in the Bible about the word of God.

In John 5:31–47 Jesus discusses the criteria by which he and his words can be accepted as truth. Students compare the results of their investigation with Jesus' words. They imagine and role-play the different responses to Jesus' words of people living either in the present or the past.

## **RESPONSE**

### **4. REPORT**

Students present a report of their investigation, with personal evaluation and conclusions. This can be presented as an interview, a statement of faith or a reflective monologue. TRS D2/7 offers some guidelines for students' process of evaluation.

## YOU WILL NEED

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|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> material to create a miniature archaeological dig</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> several copies of <i>The Lion Handbook of the Bible</i>, <i>The Lion Encyclopedia to the Bible</i>, Christian biographies, at least one copy of <i>Evidence That Demands a Verdict</i></li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Video: <i>Messages from the Memorybanks</i></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> to organise time for students to use the library</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> TRS D2/1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Bibles</li> </ul> |
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## INTEGRATING INTO OTHER CURRICULUM AREAS

Find out what students are doing in other curriculum areas in relation to

### Topics

- ancient cultures .....
- archaeology .....
- genres of literature.....

### Skills

- independent research.....
- analysing primary and secondary sources of information .....
- analysing literary passages .....
- journaling, maintaining files .....

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## UNIT EVALUATION

Which activities worked well in this unit?

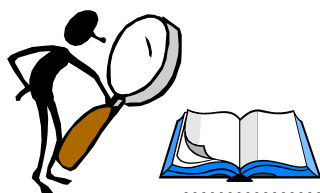
Which resources were useful in the implementation of this unit?

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?



## IS THE BIBLE TRUE?

- ◆ Christians believe that the Bible is the word of God, the permanent record of God's communication with people.
- ◆ Christians see the New Testament as a continuation and fulfilment of the story of God and his people begun in the Old Testament (Hebrews 1:1,2).
- ◆ The stories — creation, great events of Old Testament history, the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost and the formation of the Christian church — repeat the message of God who reaches out to the people he loves, calling them into a relationship with himself.
- ◆ The New Testament presents Jesus as the one who most clearly reveals God and as the one who brings people to God.
- ◆ Christians accept the Bible as the authority for their faith and life and their relationship with God because the focus of the Bible is Jesus — 'the way, the truth and the life' (John 14:6).
- ◆ Christians believe that the Bible is God's word for *all* people (Section D).
- ◆ Before some people accept the claim Christians make about the Bible, they want answers to their questions.

Students have the option to investigate one or more questions from Sections A, B, C.

### TYPE A QUESTIONS: DID IT REALLY HAPPEN?

Some people wonder if the Bible is a fictional tale, a book of legends and myths. They want to verify that the people, times and events described in the Bible coincide with what we can know about ancient times from other sources. They might ask questions such as: Did a man such as Noah exist? Was there a flood that nearly destroyed the earth? Did Jesus in fact live? Did Jesus die by crucifixion?

### TYPE B QUESTIONS: ARE THE BIBLE RECORDS ACCURATE?

Some people wonder if they are actually reading what was originally written. They are concerned that the story could have been changed as it was handed down in the oral tradition. Or those who copied the Bible documents might have changed the details to suit themselves, or made mistakes. Or the meaning of the Bible could have been lost in the process of many translations. They want to know about the process involved in the writing of the Bible, eg do we have the actual words that Jesus spoke?

### TYPE C QUESTIONS: WHAT GOOD IS THE BIBLE FOR TODAY?

For some people the major concern is the relevance of the Bible for people living in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. They argue that our world is so different from the world of the Bible. We live in a multicultural world, a world of many faiths, a world with different values from those of Bible times. Television and technology have 'shrunk' the globe, enabling people to travel from one end of the world to another in a day and to see events anywhere in the world as they are happening. Modern science, sociology, psychology, philosophy etc have given people different ways of understanding life. How can the Bible speak to such a different world?

All students examine Section D: the Christian claims regarding the uniqueness of the Bible

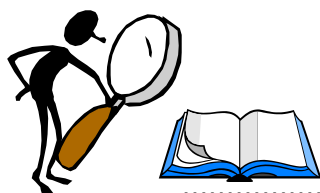
### TYPE D QUESTIONS: WHAT MAKES THE BIBLE UNIQUE?

Some people have no problem in accepting the Bible as a historical document, written many centuries ago which contains useful and instructive material for good living. They recognise that the Bible contains a range of good literature and some beautiful poetry. However, these people seriously question that the Bible is God's truth for all people. Isn't the Bible just one of many books that a person can consult for good advice about living?



# DIGGING FOR TRUTH: LOG SHEET

DATE	TOPIC OF INVESTIGATION	FINDINGS	SITE (source of information)	PERSONAL COMMENTS / REFLECTIONS (indicate new questions research raises for you)



# DIGGING FOR TRUTH

## INVESTIGATING THE BIBLE

### A. DID IT REALLY HAPPEN?

#### AREAS OF INVESTIGATION

1. Investigate Christian sources for the historicity of Jesus:
  - ◆ New Testament documents. What historical content is there in the gospels?
  - ◆ early church fathers, eg Polycarp, Eusebius, Irenaeus, Ignatius, Justin, Origen
2. Investigate non-biblical sources for the historicity of Jesus:
  - ◆ Tacitus, Josephus, Pliny the Younger, Tertullian, Jewish Talmud references
3. Examine what light archaeological findings shed on the authenticity of Bible people and events:
  - ◆ The Cairo Genizah, palimpsests, Pompeii, Babylonian chronicles, Dead Sea Scrolls, discoveries at Masada, the Taylor prism, kings of Israel and Judah in Assyrian records
4. Explore the contribution buildings such as old cathedrals, gravestones, inscriptions etc, and the growth and spread of Christianity for two thousand years make to the question of the genuineness of Bible records.

Can you think of any other areas of investigation you need to undertake?

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#### RESOURCES

Alexander P & D *The Lion Handbook to the Bible*

Alexander P (ed) *The Lion Encyclopedia of the Bible*

Dowley T (ed) *The History of Christianity*, a Lion Handbook

McDowell J *Evidence That Demands a Verdict*

*Messages from the Memory Banks Part 1: The Bible Society in Australia*

Encyclopedia Britannica

The Internet

What other useful resources have you found?

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# DIGGING FOR TRUTH

## INVESTIGATING THE BIBLE

### **B. ARE THE BIBLE RECORDS ACCURATE?**

#### **AREAS OF INVESTIGATION**

- 1.** Investigate the history of biblical writing and documentation from oral tradition to copying of manuscripts to the printing press:
  - ♦ discovery of Codex Sinaiticus, Dead Sea Scrolls
- 2.** Investigate the history and work of Bible translators:
  - ♦ Wycliffe, Hus and Luther. Contact organisations such as Wycliffe Bible Translators, The Bible Society and Lutheran Bible Translators
- 3.** Examine the process by which the books of the Old Testament came to be a collection of books recognised as authoritative for Jews and then — together with the books of the New Testament — also for Christians.
- 4.** For the adventurous! Find out about the different Bible narratives that might have been the sources for the authors writing in both the Old Testament and the New Testament.
  - ♦ Yahwist, Elohist, Deuteronomist, Priestly and prophetic narratives in the Old Testament; the different sources (including Quelle) used by the gospel writers

Can you think of any other areas of investigation you need to undertake?

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#### **RESOURCES**

Alexander P & D *The Lion Handbook to the Bible*

Alexander P (ed) *The Lion Encyclopedia of the Bible*

McDowell J *Evidence That Demands a Verdict*

Wright T *The Original Jesus*

Yarham A *The Great Australian Scripture Book*. It has an excellent section on the Codex Sinaiticus

*Messages from the Memory Banks Part 2 & 3* The Bible Society in Australia

Encyclopedia Britannica

The Internet

What other useful resources have you found?

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# DIGGING FOR TRUTH

## INVESTIGATING THE BIBLE

### C. WHAT GOOD IS IT FOR LIFE TODAY?

#### AREAS OF INVESTIGATION

**1.** Survey Christian people (school, local community and church, biography) on what makes the Bible relevant for them. Christian magazines such as *On Being Alive* and *Christianity Today* will have current material. Tim Mander (Rugby League referee) and Brad Mackay (Rugby League player) speak about the impact the Bible has had on their lives. Refer to *Towards the Goal* CEV version of the New Testament.

**2.** Look at books of quotations to find out what people across the ages and cultures have said about the Bible.

**3.** Investigate what the Bible says about what it offers people.

Read Proverbs chapters 1 – 4 and list all the reasons the writer gives for reading/listening to God's word. What do the writers in the Bible have to say about relevancy? The following questions will help you understand Proverbs:

- ◆ Who speaks the words and to whom are the words spoken in the proverbs?
- ◆ What does reading or listening to the words actually involve?
- ◆ What gives the words written in proverbs their credibility?
- ◆ What are the consequences of either reading or not reading and believing or not believing God's word?

Look up other passages on the role and purpose of God's word:

- |                      |                         |                   |
|----------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|
| ◆ Psalm 119:105      | ◆ Ecclesiastes 12:11–14 | ◆ Matthew 4:1–11  |
| ◆ Matthew 7:24–27    | ◆ John 20:30,31         | ◆ Romans 1:16     |
| ◆ 1 Corinthians 1:17 | ◆ 1 Corinthians 2:4,5   | ◆ Ephesians 6:14  |
| ◆ 2 Timothy 3:16,17  | ◆ 2 Peter 1:19          | ◆ Hebrews 5:12–14 |
|                      | ◆ James 1:21,22         |                   |

**4.** Evaluate the relevance of Old and New Testament teaching to contemporary society:

- ◆ Consider the relevance of the Ten Commandments in our society.
- ◆ Using Bible concordances or Bible dictionaries, look up what the Bible has to say about: the treatment of the poor, just laws, rape, property, the value of individual people, ambition, communication, death, divorce. Compare the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (part of the United Nations charter) with these biblical principles.

What other areas of investigation will you have to undertake?

#### RESOURCES

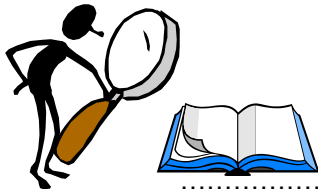
Danes S & C *Today's Issues and Christian Beliefs*

Bibles, Bible concordances, Bible dictionaries

Christian biographies

The Internet

What other useful resources have you found? \_\_\_\_\_



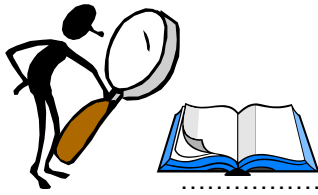
# DIGGING FOR TRUTH

## INVESTIGATING THE BIBLE

### D. WHAT MAKES THE BIBLE UNIQUE?

Read each of the Bible passages and write in your own words the claims the writers of the Bible make about what they said and/or wrote.

Joshua 1:6–8	Ecclesiastes 12:11–14	Psalms 37:30,31	
Isaiah 55:10,11		Jeremiah 23:29	
Matthew 4:4		Matthew 7:24–27	
John 5:24		John 6:63,68	
John 20:30,31		Romans 1:16,17	
1 Corinthians 1:18–25		1 Corinthians 2:13–16	
2 Timothy 3:16,17		Hebrews 1:1,2	
Hebrews 4:12	James 1:21–25	2 Peter 1:19	1 Peter 1:23–25



# DIGGING FOR TRUTH

## *INVESTIGATING THE BIBLE*

### ***REPORT AND PERSONAL EVALUATION OF MY INVESTIGATION***

#### **GUIDE QUESTIONS**

- 1.** What were the main questions about the Bible to which you wanted an answer?
- 2.** What makes these questions important to you?
- 3.** How did you go about your investigation?
- 4.** Which resources did you find most helpful?
- 5.** Did your investigation provide you with helpful answers?  
If yes, which information was most convincing? least convincing?  
If no, explain why the investigation did not answer your questions satisfactorily.
- 6.** Has your investigation raised any new questions for you? How do you propose to deal with those questions?
- 7.** Which of the claims the writers of the Bible make about their writing do you find acceptable? not acceptable? Give reasons.

**PRESENT A REPORT** of your investigation and your conclusions about the Bible.

Present it

- ◆ as an interview in which you are the interviewee, or
- ◆ as a statement of faith, or
- ◆ as a reflective monologue.

Your report should be at least one page in length.