

**GOD SAVED
PEOPLE
THROUGH
JESUS**



BAND

D

PLANNING GUIDE



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God saved people through Jesus is one of twelve concepts covered by LIFE curriculum. This BAND D planning guide contains model units for two middle secondary years.

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GOD SAVED PEOPLE THROUGH JESUS

AIMS

The ultimate aim of LIFE curriculum is that

- students will come to know God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit
- students will have faith in God as their Father, Saviour, and Helper.

We understand that faith is entirely a gift of the Holy Spirit.

We teach in obedience to Jesus' command to go and teach.

*How can people have faith in the Lord
and ask him to save them,
if they have never heard about him?
And how can they hear,
unless someone tells them?
Romans 10:14 (CEV)*

GOD SAVED PEOPLE THROUGH JESUS

As Christians we believe this and are compelled to tell others.

Our aim in teaching this concept is that students

- hear,
- explore and
- reflect on

these faith statements:

1. God's Son became a human being to save the world
2. Jesus brought God's loving rule into the world
3. Jesus died and rose again to save all people from sin and death

BACKGROUND NOTES FOR TEACHERS

GOD SAVED PEOPLE THROUGH JESUS

(Note: There is naturally some overlap between this concept and the RESCUE concept. The Background Notes for RESCUE [God saves people from sin and evil] should be read as background also for this present concept.)

Jesus and the good news of his saving work are central to every LIFE concept. In this concept, however, we have a special opportunity to tell the story of Jesus. Our aim will surely be to help students meet Jesus — not just as a figure from ancient history, a character in a book or the centre of a set of doctrines, but as a real living person.

The four Gospels give us a portrait of Jesus, each highlighting certain features, but all confronting readers with the questions: Who is this Jesus? What is the point of his story? One of the most important ways for teachers to prepare to teach this concept is to read at least one of the Gospels with these questions in mind.

TRUE GOD Jesus is true God. This is what makes Jesus unique. He is more than a great teacher, wonderful model and inspiring spiritual leader. He is the Son of God ‘from eternity’. That means, there has never been a time when Jesus did not exist as God’s Son (‘the Word’, John 1:1–3).

Jesus is ‘God incarnate’, that is ‘God in the flesh’ (John 1:14). If we want to know what God is like, we look at Jesus (John 14:9). He shows us the power, glory, wisdom of God, and especially the love of God (John 1:17,18).

THE KINGDOM OF GOD When Jesus began his ministry, he announced that the kingdom of God was here. In his person the loving, saving rule of God had come to human beings. Jesus taught people about God’s kingdom. In parables about the kingdom he told people what it is like when God rules with his grace. People were impressed by Jesus’ teaching (eg the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 5 – 7); he obviously knew what he was talking about. Jesus’ miracles were ‘signs of the kingdom’. God’s loving rule was in action when Jesus healed the sick, raised the dead, forgave sinners and accepted outcasts.

It is important that we and our students recognise Jesus as truly God. This means that it is no mere mortal but God himself who is our Saviour. The Son of God ‘humbled himself’; he did not always and fully use his divine qualities (power, glory etc). In order to save us, ‘he gave up everything and became a slave, when he became like one of us’ (Phil 2:7). So great was his love for sinful human beings, that the Son of God put himself through all the misery, pain, and suffering of sinful human existence and through hell itself (Matt 27:46) in order to rescue us from sin and its consequences.

A REAL HUMAN BEING Jesus is truly human. We need to be sure of this. The Son of God became a human being **for us**, to take our place — to live the perfect life we are supposed to live but can’t, to take our sins on himself and pay the penalty we deserved. As a human being he died our death and went through the hell of being forsaken by God.

CONCEIVED AND BORN

It was a truly human foetus that spent nine months in Mary’s

womb, and — despite the haloes on the Christmas cards — it was a truly human baby whom lowly Mary gave birth to and nursed. The big difference was that he was born without sin; he did not inherit the sin and guilt of his human parent.

Jesus lived a truly human life. He developed physically and mentally (Luke 2:40). He went through normal human experiences. He got tired, he was hungry and thirsty, happy and sad, pleased and angry. The one difference was that he never thought, did or said anything wrong. His life was perfect; he obeyed his Father in absolutely every respect, even though he knew all the time that this would mean sacrificing his innocent life to pay for the guilt of the whole human race.

SUFFERED AND DIED Jesus’ suffering and death were real. He felt what any of us would feel. In Gethsemane, for example, he was ‘deeply distressed’ and said: ‘I’m so sad that I feel as if I’m dying’ (Mark 14:34). He felt the shame of the soldiers’ mockery and the pain of their scourging, the weight of the cross,

Jesus opened the way to God which had been blocked by sin. That way is now open for all people through him.
Jesus is the Saviour who shows us the loving heart of God.
Theological Foundations of LIFE

the agony of crucifixion and the torture of being forsaken by his Father.

ROSE AGAIN Jesus' resurrection was real. The same human body that suffered, died and was buried became alive again. More than 500 eyewitnesses said they saw the risen Jesus, and they were ready to die for what they claimed. In the forty days after Jesus' resurrection his followers saw how Jesus' body was no longer restricted by the physical laws of time and space. Jesus' self-humbling for us is over. Now he is in an 'exalted' state; he always and fully uses his attributes (power, glory etc) as God.

Jesus' resurrection is central to the Christian faith. It shows that he is truly God, that God has accepted Jesus' perfect sacrifice for the sins of the world, and that death can no longer hurt human beings as the punishment for sin.

AT THE FATHER'S RIGHT HAND

Still today Jesus is God in human flesh. A human being — one of us — is forever at God's right hand, as the advocate who intercedes for us, as the Lord who rules all things for our benefit. We can follow him through suffering, death and resurrection to live forever with bodies that will be glorified like his (Phil 3:20,21; 1 John 3:1–3).

FAITH IN JESUS To believe in Jesus means more than just acknowledging that what the Bible says about Jesus is true. It means **trusting** Jesus as our only hope of being rescued from our guilty condition and from the punishment we deserve. More than that, it means living and dying with the confidence that because of Jesus God is always for us and nothing can separate us from God's love (Romans 8:31–39).

FOR REFLECTION AND/OR DISCUSSION

1. What questions do the *Background Notes* raise for you? What questions do you think your students will have on this topic?
2. Why is this an important topic to teach to your students? What implications might the topic have for the life of your school?
3. Discuss:
 - a) Christians (and Christians schools) can regard the fact that many children have never heard of Jesus, or know very little about him, as a plus rather than a minus.
 - b) How should teachers of younger children handle the difficulty children often have when we talk about Jesus as both God and a human being?
4. Comment on the following:
 - a) The great thing about Jesus' death was that it was **God** who died for us. The great thing about Jesus' resurrection was that it was **a human being** who rose again from the dead.
 - b) We Christians often say 'Christ **died** for us. Christ **rose again** for us.' We sometimes forget also to say: 'Christ **lived** for us'. All the time Jesus spent on earth was important for our salvation.
5. Discuss the appropriateness of using Christian creeds or Luther's explanation of the second part of the Apostles' Creed in worship if there are non-Christians in the class/school.

FOR FURTHER READING

Luther's explanation of the second part of the Apostles' Creed in the Large and Small Catechisms

Augsburg Confession Art II (*Book of Concord* p 29)

(See also the index of the *Book of Concord* pp 657–659)

One in the Gospel, by Friedemann Hebart, Openbook Publishers, chapter 12: *And there's no other God*.

Good Question, ed B Schwarz, Openbook Publishers, p 71: *Was Jesus God?*; p 76 *Jesus' death; Reality of the resurrection* p 110.

BAND D STUDENTS

DEVELOPMENTAL CHARACTERISTICS

Students place a high value on their friendships and social relationships.

Students place a high value on having fun. For many, Jesus is labelled as serious and thus boring.

Students are searching for a sense of identity. They are beginning to ask questions like 'Who am I?', 'Who's right', 'What's it all about?' They experience anxiety and insecurity about their worth and acceptability.

The only Jesus many students know is the one that appears on Christmas cards as a baby or the westernised Jesus of religious artwork and films.

By now students have found out that characters such as Santa Claus, the Easter Bunny, the tooth fairy (in whom they once believed) are not real.

In seeking to understand the world and truth, students will also question the reality of Jesus and the reliability of the gospel stories about him. Yet students are seeking meaning and purpose in their lives, wanting a personal faith.

Students are quick to condemn hypocrisy and are critical of people who call themselves Christian but don't act as Christians.

IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHING

Jesus needs to be presented as someone who was a real human being, who went to weddings, associated with people of all walks of life, for whom friendships were also important. Explore with students the friendships Jesus had with men and women.

Make learning fun. Organise a variety of learning situations — class, group and individual work — providing students with various options to show what they have learnt.

Select passages from the gospel accounts of Jesus which demonstrate that the question of identity is at the heart of understanding who Jesus is and his relevance for people of the 21st century.

Use the many examples in the gospels of Jesus affirming people's worth and their acceptability to God.

Help students to grow in their knowledge and understanding of the culture in which Jesus lived. Critically examine with students a range of Jesus portraits from films and artwork around the world, exploring the stereotypes of Jesus and comparing the portraits with the life of Jesus in the gospels.

Allow students to raise freely their doubts and questions about Jesus. Use student questions as a starting point for examining the life of Jesus.

Present the gospel writers as people who were keen to communicate the truth about Jesus.

Examine incidents where people placed their faith in Jesus and how this changed their lives, hopes and expectations for the future.

Encourage students to speak to Christians about their commitment to Jesus and the importance this has in their lives.

A study of the gospels is a good opportunity to dismantle stereotypes about Jesus and what it means to be a Christian and to show that Christians are human (therefore will do wrong, make mistakes and fall) and forgiven.

Students need to hear the gospel which Jesus preached, that the Christian life is not just a matter of doing but being in relationship with God the Father through Jesus.

NOTES