

**SCHOOL-DEVELOPED
SAMPLE UNIT
FOR BAND D LEVEL 2**

THE MARRIAGE RELATIONSHIP

LIFE CONCEPT: GOD CREATES HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS

YEAR: FAITH STATEMENTS: ① ② ③

DURATION OF UNIT: 8 - 13 hours

DATE OF USE:

UNIT-SPECIFIC GOALS *(highlighted)*
**1. GOD CREATES
PEOPLE TO LIVE IN
LOVING
RELATIONSHIP WITH
EACH OTHER**
1a compare the Christian understanding of human relationships with that of contemporary culture

1b explore Jesus' teaching on human relationships

1c examine the Christian belief that relationships are restored through the power of God's love and forgiveness

**2. GOD PROVIDES
SOCIAL
STRUCTURES FOR
THE WELFARE OF
ALL PEOPLE**
2a investigate the Christian understanding of the responsibilities and limitations of social structures

2b explore the Christian understanding of the tension between duty to authority and individual conscience

**3. GOD WANTS
PEOPLE TO LOVE
AND RESPECT ALL
PEOPLES OF THE
WORLD**
3a examine the implications of Jesus' command to be a neighbour in a world of inequality and prejudice

3b explore the Christian belief that the gospel removes barriers between people

3c examine the role of Christians in addressing social issues

STUDENT ASSESSMENT
ASSESSABLE STUDENT OUTCOMES

Summarise biblical teachings about marriage. (1a,2a)

Present a report on the importance of marriage in a society other than their own. (2a,3b)

Respond in writing to a question about an issue related to marriage, eg Are de facto relationships compatible with Bible teachings? (2a)

Design a logo that depicts the Christian understanding of marriage. (1,2,3)

ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES

⇒ student's choice of reporting techniques

⇒ reports

⇒ work sample

⇒ work sample

UNIT SUMMARY

Students explore the nature of marriage — the most basic and intimate of human relationships — as given expression in a variety of historical and cultural contexts. In particular, they look closely at what the Bible teaches about marriage, identifying the key principles which are relevant for marriage today. Students design a logo representing the Christian understanding of the marriage relationship.

UNIT NOTES

This unit falls under the LIFE Concept: *God creates human relationships*. Ensure that this overriding concept comes through any discussion that takes place in the unit.

In this unit marriage is considered as a relationship (of which sexuality is an important component).

There is likely to be considerable variation in the degree to which students are interested in exploring issues related to marriage.

Many of the issues that students will want/need to discuss in the areas of marriage and sexuality are very complex. Some students will want simple 'yes' or 'no' answers; others will be looking for positions which help them to justify their own opinions and personal actions, or those of parents, siblings and friends. Still others will be looking for ways to handle difficult situations or alleviate guilt.

Students approach marriage issues with a variety of personal experiences and different levels of understanding. Students from families which have experienced separation and divorce will have a different perspective from those who have experienced more stable family relationships.

Most students have an underlying positive attitude to the institutions of marriage and family. Even those who suffer traumatic personal experiences in their own families think about getting married 'some day'.

The marriages described in the Bible are full of familiar tensions and troubles. They reflect a number of very different historical and cultural settings (quite different from our own). The relative status of men and women in the different societies described in the Bible is often challenged in the Bible itself.

The Bible does not lay down prescribed regulations concerning how men and women are to get married. Yet the basic biblical principles related to God-pleasing marriage and family relationships can be distilled in a way that provides a positive, affirming and encouraging guide for young people.

Throughout the unit students make notes for a logo that reflects what they learn about Christian marriage (see Teacher Resource Sheet [TRS] D2/1). Allow time for this at the end of each section of the unit.

INTRODUCTION

1. MARRIAGE IN THE MAGS

Students collect items from popular magazines that give advice or comment on marriage. (A little prior notice is needed!)

In groups students read and analyse the articles collected and write a point-by-point summary definition of marriage according to the magazine items studied.

As a class read, compare and discuss the definitions put together by the different groups. Note in particular:

- Do the magazines seem to focus on one or two particular aspects of marriage, or do they give a broad picture?
- Is there any confusion between the relationship of marriage and the process of getting married (a wedding)?
- Do the magazines seem to present marriage in a positive way?
- Do the magazines present marriage in a realistic way?

2. MARRIAGE AND SOCIETIES

The marriage relationship, in one form or another, is common to all human societies. Students in pairs or small groups research laws, traditions and understandings of marriage in a country/culture of their choice. They give a brief oral report on 'Marriage in our society' as if they were people of that culture.

The class notes and summarises similarities and differences. What basic beliefs and purposes of marriage are common to most or all of these cultures?

DEVELOPMENT

3. MARRIAGE IN THE BIBLE

Students do individual research on what the Bible says about marriage.

The teacher provides a level of support dependent on the capability of students.

TRS D2/2 gives an overview of the project and guiding questions for the research. It can be used by teachers for introducing the project or given to students who can undertake their own investigation.

TRS D2/3 provides support for 'Finding things in the Bible' and 'Understanding what you find in the Bible'. It can be used as a basis for teacher guidance or can simply be given to capable students as a review of skills they have already acquired.

The teacher may provide a list of appropriate Bible references to consult. Helpful in this regard are:

- the Bible References Menu
- the NSW Council of Churches *Statement on Sexuality*, found in the Teacher's Manual of *God, Sex, and Us*, by Di Middlemiss, Christian Publications, Board of Education, Diocese of Sydney, PO Box A287, Sydney South 2000;
- The LCA statements 'The Attitude of the LCA to marriage, divorce, and re-marriage' and 'Marriage and de facto relationships'.

Most importantly, teachers need to help students understand the underlying principles in Bible passages which describe situations far removed from us today both culturally and historically. There is great opportunity for one-to-one discussion of key Bible passages while students are doing individual reading and research.

Although this is an individual research project and students' reading may take them in a variety of directions, they may spend the first (five) minutes of each research session sharing research 'sites' and findings in small groups.

Students report their findings, using one of the options listed on TRS D2/2.

4. GUEST SPEAKER: GETTING READY FOR MARRIAGE

Invite a local pastor to visit the class and explain the procedures used in preparing a couple for marriage: both the legal requirements and the support/training/counselling provided by the church. The

speaker can also touch on ongoing support the church provides for married couples.

How do the church's procedures support what the Bible teaches about relationships and marriage?

OPTIONAL EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

A. Marriage through the ages

Share with the class an overview of the history of marriage in the western Judeo-Christian tradition. An excellent resource is Chapter 5 of the student book, *Commitment: God's plan for engagement and marriage* by D C Boehm Concordia 1989 (Lutheran High School Religion Series).

B. Marriage: a picture of our relationship with God

As a devotional exercise ask students to reflect on two or three passages in which the relationship of husband and wife is used to describe the relationship between God and his people, eg Isaiah 62:5; Ephesians 5:25-33; Revelation 21:2-4.

Students write in their journals a creative piece of poetry, prose or prayer linking our experiences of God's faithfulness and love to his plan for people in marriage.

RESPONSE

5. OTHER ISSUES

Discuss other issues related to the study of marriage that are of concern for your students, eg divorce, remarriage, staying single, civil weddings. For example:

Explain to the class the meaning of the term 'de facto marriage'. Drawing on what students learnt from the Bible about relationships and marriage, discuss:

- What are the differences between 'living together' a 'de facto marriage' and 'legal marriage'?

(See again the LCA statement 'Marriage and de facto relationships'.)

Students write a response to: Are de facto relationships (or Is 'living together') compatible with what the Bible teaches?

6. MARRIAGE LOGO

Each student designs a logo which reflects what they have learnt about Christian marriage.

YOU WILL NEED

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> popular magazines <input type="radio"/> access to suitable resources for student research on marriage in various cultures and on current Christian views of marriage | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Bibles and Bible concordances <input type="radio"/> Bible computer software (optional) <input type="radio"/> the help of a local pastor |
|---|---|

INTEGRATING INTO OTHER CURRICULUM AREAS

It is particularly useful in exploring marriage and other issues related to human sexuality to integrate with:

ENGLISH: Many of the novels studied at this level deal with themes related to sexual identity, self-esteem, family relationships, decision-making, and the like.

SCIENCE/HEALTH AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION: Work done in looking at human sexual development, homosexuality, sexual reproduction, contraception, sexually transmitted diseases and the like.

LANGUAGES OTHER THAN ENGLISH/SOCIETY AND ENVIRONMENT: Students may be able to make use of what they have learnt about customs and traditions in their studies of other cultures.

TECHNOLOGY: Students may have learnt how to use Bible computer software programs in technology studies; access to the Internet may provide a useful resource for some of their research.

THE ARTS: Particularly in Drama or Media Studies, students may be looking at themes related to sexual identity, self-esteem, family relationships, decision-making, and the like.

UNIT EVALUATION

Which activities worked well in this unit?

Which resources were useful in the implementation of this unit?

How did I adapt the unit to deal with the range of students' experiences with and understanding of the marriage relationship?

How did I respond to the range of students' attitudes towards the Bible as a guide for practical aspects of life?

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?



MARRIAGE LOGO

Your assignment throughout this unit is to learn all you can about the Christian concept of marriage.

Use what you learn to design a logo which can be used for a marriage enrichment course being planned by a local Christian church.

The logo will be used on:

- advertising material
- a study book cover
- a banner
- a certificate for participants who complete the course.
-

The logo can incorporate symbol(s) and word(s).

It may also be a set/series of related symbols.

You will be expected to submit, along with your final design, notes and sketches you have made as you complete each section of the study.



What the Bible says about **MARRIAGE** a research project

1. Prediction

Write three things you expect to find that the Bible says about marriage.

2. Research

Read appropriate parts of the Bible to find out what it actually says about marriage.

Keep these focus questions in mind as you do your research:

- ◆ What is marriage according to the Bible?
- ◆ How does the marriage relationship compare with other human relationships?
- ◆ What is God's plan for marriage?
- ◆ What are the minimum requirements for a God-pleasing marriage according to the Bible?
- ◆ What are the requirements and purposes of marriage according to God's plan?
- ◆ How does the Bible address some of the important issues related to marriage, such as divorce or sex outside of marriage?

Take notes on your reading and with each note indicate where (in the Bible itself or in a commentary) you found the information.

When you have completed your research, check to see how many of your predictions were correct.

3. Report

Choose one of these methods to report on what you find in the Bible about marriage.

- ◆ Write an essay titled: 'Marriage — what the Bible says'.
- ◆ Write a Bible-based response to two items about marriage you found in popular magazines.
- ◆ With a group write and present a play which depicts at least three key things the Bible teaches about marriage.
- ◆ With a partner write a vision statement of a marriage relationship that reflects the Bible's teachings.
- ◆ Design a poster which looks like a legal document that lists five key Bible principles about marriage that are relevant for marriage today.



Some helps for doing Bible research

Finding **MARRIAGE** in the Bible

How can you find out what the Bible says about a topic like 'marriage'?

You will not have time to read through the entire Bible as part of this research project. So you will need to rely on work other people have done in sorting, cataloguing and interpreting Bible verses to help you find the most important sections.

Some forms of help available to you are:

- ◆ theme indexes listed in some Bibles
- ◆ cross-references from one Bible verse to another related verse
- ◆ notes in study Bibles which explain words and ideas and may link to related verses
- ◆ Bible concordances: key words are listed alphabetically; following the key word is a list of Bible verses where the key word occurs
- ◆ Bible dictionaries: key words are listed alphabetically; following the key word is an explanation of the way the word is used in the Bible; some Bible texts may also be listed
- ◆ Bible handbooks and encyclopedias which present Bible information in various formats
- ◆ search functions available with Bible computer software
- ◆ and if all else fails, your teacher may provide you with a list of appropriate Bible references.

Key words

Half the battle of using these Bible research helps is starting with the right key words. If you are looking for information about marriage, you will obviously start searching for the word 'marriage' and you might also try 'marry', but that search may not give you all the information you want/need. List five other key words you might use to find information about marriage.

husband _____

You may also look at key words that apply to human relationships in general that apply to marriage, eg

forgiveness duty love _____

Understanding what you find in the Bible

One of the tricky things about understanding what you read in the Bible is that some things may not really mean what they seem to mean at first glance. You need to consider questions like these as you are reading:

- ◆ Is the passage part of a story/narrative about people who are married or part of a 'teaching' about marriage?
- ◆ Who said/wrote the words?
- ◆ In what context were the words said/written?
- ◆ Were the words said/written for one particular situation or for everybody for all time?

Some of the Bible helps listed above will help you answer these questions.

And, remember, *everything* written in the Bible about any subject must be read in the light of the overall message of the Bible which is summarised in John 3:16,17.