

MENU

BIBLE REFERENCES

1

God creates people to live in a loving relationship with one another

Friendship

Proverbs 17:17 Proverbs 18:24
Proverbs 27:5,6 Proverbs 27:17
Ecclesiastes 4:12 Galatians 6:1
John 15:13

What Jesus said about friendship

Matthew 5:43–48 John 15:12–16

Jesus washes his friends' feet

John 13:1–17

Jesus' dinner companions

Tax collectors Luke 5:27–31
Simon the Pharisee Luke 7:36–50
Mary and Martha Luke 10:38–42
A Pharisee Luke 14:1–24
Tax collectors and sinners Luke 15:1,2
Zacchaeus Luke 19:1–10
Disciples at Emmaus Luke 24:13–32
Wedding guests John 2:1–10
Lazarus, Mary John 12:1–11
The disciples John 13:1–30
The disciples John 21:1–14

Jesus with his friends

Jesus chooses his friends Mark 13:13–15
John 1:35–51; John 15:16
Jesus with his friends in a storm Mark 4:35–41
Little children and Jesus Mark 10:13–16
Jesus gives his disciples encouragement
Matthew 10:16–20, 26–32
Jesus and Peter on the water Matthew 14:22–33
Jesus is transfigured Matthew 17:1–9
Jesus heals a boy with a demon
Matthew 17:14–23
Rivalry among disciples Matthew 20:20–28
In the garden of Gethsemane
Matthew 26:36–56
Peter catches fish Luke 5:1–11
Jesus teaches his disciples to pray Luke 11:1–4
Jesus is buried Luke 23:50–56
Jesus appears to his disciples Luke 24:36–49
Lazarus dies John 11:1–44
Jesus washes his disciples' feet John 13:1–17
Jesus comforts his disciples John 14:1–14

Jesus calls his disciples 'friends' John 15:12–16

Jesus prays for his disciples John 17:6–19

Jesus looks after his mother John 19:25–27

Jesus helps Thomas believe John 20:24–29

A broken relationship with God spoils people's relationships with one another

Genesis 3:6–13 Genesis 4:1–12
Romans 1:28–31 Romans 3:10–18
Galatians 5:19–21 Hebrews 12:15
James 4:1–3

A change of heart precedes a change of behaviour

Jeremiah 31:33,34 Ezekiel 36:25–27
Matthew 7:15–20 Matthew 15:17–20
John 3:5,6 2 Corinthians 5:17
Galatians 5:16,17,24,25 Ephesians 4:22–27

A good relationship with God enriches and restores relationships

Galatians 5:22,23 Ephesians 4:32 – 5:2
James 3:17,18

Conflict management

Matthew 5:9,23,44 Luke 6:29,31,37,38
Romans 12:17–21 Philippians 2:1–5
James 4:12

Forgiveness restores relationships

Psalms 32:1 Matthew 9:2
John 8:11 Colossians 3:12–15

The effect of unforgiveness

Psalms 32:3–5 Hebrews 12:15

Christians forgive because God has forgiven them

Matthew 18:21–35 Luke 11:4
Ephesians 4:32 Colossians 3:13
1 John 4:19

God's love

1 Corinthians 13:4–7 Galatians 5:22,23
Colossians 3:12–14 1 Peter 4:8

2

God provides social structures for the welfare of all people

The community of Christians (the church)

Romans 12 Romans 13:8–14

The community of the world (the state)

Romans 13:1–7 1 Peter 2:13–18

Exploring the role of Christians in society

Isaiah 58 Matthew 5:13–16

Luke 20:25 John 17:15–18

Romans 12:1,2 Ephesians 5:8–11

Philippians 2:14–16 1 Timothy 2:1,2

1 Peter 2:11,12

Biblical characters take a stand

Esther Esther

Jeremiah Jeremiah 18; 20:7–18

Daniel and his friends Daniel 1; 3; 6

Peter and John Acts 3; 4; 5:29

Jesus' Mission in life

Matthew 9:12,13 Mark 10:45

Luke 4:18,19

Jesus' attitude to an oppressive government

Matthew 5:43–48 Matthew 26:47–56

Luke 7:1–10 Luke 20:20–26

Jesus' assessment of the religious leaders of his day

Matthew 12:9–14 Matthew 16:6, 12

Matthew 17:24–27 Matthew 23

Luke 11:37–54 Luke 19:45–48

Jesus' dealings with tax collectors

Matthew 9:9–13 Luke 19:1–10

Jesus' concern for the disadvantages

Matthew 6:1–4 Luke 6:20–26

Luke 14:12–14, 21, 23

3

God wants people to love and respect all peoples of the world

The Jews were God's agents for blessing all people

Genesis 12:3 Leviticus 19:33,34

Isaiah 43:6

Jesus removes the barriers between people

Luke 10:25–37 John 4:4–10

1 Corinthians 12:12–31 Ephesians 2:11–22

Ephesians 4:3–6 Galatians 3:26–28

Colossians 3:15–17

To keep the bond of peace God's people need his power, wisdom, knowledge of his will and his love

Ephesians 1:15–23 Ephesians 3:14–19

Colossians 1:9–14

Jesus teaches about the worth of all human beings

Matthew 5:45 Matthew 6:25–32

Matthew 18:10–14 Matthew 20:1–16

Luke 11:11–13 Luke 12:6,7

Luke 14:15–24 Luke 15:1–10

Luke 17:1,2 John 6:35–40

God calls Peter and Paul to make a difference

Acts 8:1–3 Acts 9:1–30

Acts 10 Galatians 1:3–24

Christians have conflict with one another

Acts 6:1–7 Acts 15:1–5

Romans 14:1 – 15:13 1 Corinthians 1:10–17

1 Corinthians 3:1 – 4:6

1 Corinthians 11:17–34 Galatians 2:1–10

Galatians 5:6 Philippians 2:1–16

Philippians 4:2,3 Philemon

James 2:1–4 James 4:1–12

1 Peter 5:1–6

The gospel unites people

Acts 2:1–12 Acts 2:41–47

Acts 10:27–29, 34–43 Acts 15:6–35

Ephesians 2:11–22

Christians are called to love

Mark 12:28–34 1 John 4:7–21

1 Corinthians 13

Relationships between Christians

Romans 12:9–21 Galatians 6:1–5, 10

Ephesians 4:1–3, 25–32

Relationships with all people

Matthew 5:43–48 Romans 13:8–14

1 Peter 2:17

Relationships between parents and children

Ephesians 6:1–4 Colossians 3:20,21

Relationships between husbands and wives

1 Corinthians 7:1–5 Ephesians 5:22–33

Colossians 3:18,19 1 Peter 3:1–7

Relationships between masters and slaves

Ephesians 6:5–9 Colossians 3:22 – 4:1

Relationships between older men and younger men

1 Peter 5:1–5

MENU

INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITIES

1

God creates people to live in loving relationship with each other

RELATIONSHIPS The topic of relationships is broad. Students list the different relationships that exist within any number of groups of people, eg family, school, community, government. To stimulate ideas, view segments from sitcoms and soaps, eg *Friends*, *Home and Away*, *Heartbreak High*. Students think of a definition which describes a healthy relationship and one which describes a poor relationship.

Working in small groups, students examine three different relationships, eg parent/child, teacher/student, employee/employer, bus driver/passenger. Students determine what factors in any one of the relationships would contribute to a healthy relationship and what would spoil the relationship.

Each group shares their list of positives in relationships.

Write the common ideas on chart paper to be kept for future reference and comparison with biblical material. (1a,1b,2a)

FAMILIES All people are born into some kind of a family. Students find pictures in magazines, history or geography books which show a range of the different family groupings that are possible, eg from single-parent to extended families. They consider the starting point for a family, the special role the family plays in the life of all its members, the authority structure within a family, and the features common to all families. They write a definition of family. (Be sensitive to the fact that not all family experiences are positive for students.) (1,2)

Students come from a range of family settings. Be inclusive of different family situations. Discussing family issues will be confronting for some students. Encourage students not to disclose confidential information about their family. Encourage students to be sensitive and to talk to you privately about problems that arise. Direct them to the counsellor or chaplain if appropriate and necessary.

MY FAMILY Students can participate in any number of activities in relation to their family.

- Draw a family tree, including details such as cultural background, birthplace, where the family has lived, family history, family rituals that have been passed down from one generation to the next, family sayings, family traits.
- List the life skills they have gained by being part of a family.
- Identify the things which cause conflict in their family. Students name two of the strategies used in their family to resolve conflict.
- In no more than fifty words write what their family means to them.

Students respond to and discuss the following statements: Family is the single most important influence in the life of young people. Families

are a gift to all people. (1a,2a)

FRIENDSHIPS

Boys and girls generally experience, view and speak about relationships in gender-specific

ways. Divide the class into gender groups. Each group identifies the distinguishing features of different friendships they have, such as friendship with a best friend, mates, gang/group, boyfriend/girlfriend, parents, other significant adult, eg coach.

Students discuss how friendships differ in

- what people do together
- the topics of conversation
- how comfortable and safe people feel.

Students identify the main 'hassles' they have in relationships (there is no need for students to give personal details), what they see to be the main cause for their hassles and how they deal with them. They identify what breaks a friendship and how it can be mended. Students design a five-point plan for developing healthy friendships. The groups share their plans. Students assess what gender differences exist in friendships. (1,3b)

CONFLICTS Students find examples in the news (international, national, local news) of conflict between people. They identify and list the reasons for conflict, the effects of conflict on people and relationships, the measures taken to resolve conflict, the conditions which help to resolve conflicts effectively. They share how they feel about conflict. They discuss whether personal conflicts are any different from conflicts at a local and national level. (1,2b)

DEALING WITH CONFLICT Most conflict resolution or behaviour management programs have the premise that people cannot change other people, but they can change the way they themselves respond to a situation or to people. Students think of a conflict situation they are currently experiencing. They consider what they would change if they accepted the motto 'Change begins with me'.

Students investigate the strategies used in win-win conflict resolution, eg the use of 'I' language, collaboration, agreement about what the problem is, listening to one another's needs, learning from others, assessing the advantages and disadvantages of different solutions to the problem, being willing to compromise, deciding on a course of action and doing it. Students role-play a win-win approach to a conflict situation.

Students contrast approaches such as the win-win with how conflicts are resolved in films and TV programs. They identify what is presented as acceptable and unacceptable ways of dealing with conflict.

This can lead to a study of the power of God's love and forgiveness in restoring relationships between people. (1a,1b,1c)

WHAT A TANGLED WEB WE

WEAVE Students find and share examples of jealousy, anger, mistrust, cheating, lying, fear, hate, prejudice, revenge etc, used as the subject matter of novels, films, real-life dramas.

Genesis 26:12–22 has a good example of how relationships can be torn apart by jealousy. Students look up the above words in a Bible concordance for biblical examples of pride, hatred etc. *The Life Application Bible* (NIV) has a useful index.

Students assess the damage to relationships caused by jealousy etc. View portions of films, read excerpts from Shakespeare's plays, read poems which demonstrate the impact of such emotions. Students imagine that they can rewind and replay the events in their selected examples. What will need to change to bring

harmony and wellbeing into the situation and relationships? (1)

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

Simulation games are a fun, hands-on way of focusing on specific issues in relationships, eg cooperation, trust, acceptance, competition, interdependence, conflict resolution, expressing feelings. Refer to Recommended Resources Menu for simulation games books.

Students explore relationship-building and decision-making in families through the following game:

1. Organise teams of four to six people. Assign an observer to each team.
2. Give each team a set of family roles, eg 'grandmother, age 62'. The family roles span several generations (son to grandmother) and represent different family groupings (blended, extended, nuclear). Students decide who will play each role. They each wear a role card.
3. Give each 'family team' a floor plan of their house. Each family team involves all members in furnishing a home in which they will all live. They design and label the furnishings to be placed in the house. (Provide magazines, coloured paper, scissors and glue.) Students have twenty minutes to complete the task. The observer makes notes on how the 'family members' relate, who makes the decisions and the process involved in furnishing the house.
4. Form pairs of teams. Team 1 must vacate their home and move in with Team 2, who must make room for them without extending their house. The combined teams have ten minutes to solve the problem. The observers make notes on how the 'family members' relate, who makes the decisions, and the process involved in organizing the move.
5. In the debriefing process teams and observers compare notes about each phase of the game, discussing the process of developing a sense of family and coping with major changes.
6. Students analyse and evaluate the factors which help and hinder the development of relationships, decision-making and resolving conflicts in families. (1,2)

HOSPITALITY AT HOME AND

SCHOOL Hospitality plays a significant role in building relationships. Students discuss the importance and practice of hospitality in their own society, eg what happens when their parents entertain at home, the kind of people that are generally invited, what people do when they are together and the reasons for getting together.

Students think of who they spend their lunchtime with at school, the topics of conversation, what happens when another person who is not part of their group wants to join them for lunch. Do they ever invite non-group members to lunch?

Use this activity to introduce *Jesus' Dinner Companions* in the Development Activities Menu. (1b)

A TREE OF HURT In groups students draw a tree on a large sheet of paper. The tree should have branches, leaves, fruit and roots. The soil around the base of the tree, on which the tree feeds, represents the hurts that come from broken friendship, rejection, abuse, divorce etc. Use Hebrews 12:15 in the Good News version of the Bible to discuss the poisonous effect of unresolved hurts in people's lives. Tragic Shakespearean heroes such as Othello and Hamlet are a good study of how jealousy and revenge can poison a person's relationships and life, leading to death.

Students label the different parts of the tree, eg the roots that grow as a result of hurts (hatred, anger, bitterness, revenge etc). They brainstorm how emotions such as anger manifest themselves in people's attitudes, actions and words (the fruit the tree produces).

Students suggest other images to represent the hurt that people experience.

How to reverse the hurtful effects is developed in *The Tree of Love* (see Development Activities Menu). (1c)

2

God provides social structures for the welfare of all people

HONOUR YOUR FATHER AND

MOTHER The family is seen as the foundational structure of society. Students search through a week's newspapers for articles that relate to the family. They assess the function of family in society, pressures on family life and major concerns about the family.

Parents are the primary carers in a family. Students discuss issues relating to the authority of parents, eg

- What would students do now and in the future if they were made responsible for the care of a child?
- Do governments have the right to allow children to divorce their parents?
- Should child services let parents know of the whereabouts of children who have run away from home?
- Should parents punish their children?
- In what ways are schools and governments an extension of the family?
- Who have the greatest authority in a school: parents or teachers?

Select portions of Luther's explanation of the fourth commandment in the Large Catechism for student discussion and response.

View a film such as *Mrs Doubtfire*, which explores the frustrations and conflict of interest resulting from tensions in a family. (2a)

DANGER, SCARY SITUATIONS,

WORRIES Students make a list of situations which are dangerous, scary or worrisome for babies, toddlers, primary school students and themselves now. They identify

- what makes a situation dangerous or scary
- the feelings experienced when a person is in danger or worrying circumstances
- how worries and danger affect a person
- the measures people take to protect themselves
- the kind of people and friends needed at those times
- the support that people can give to those who are frightened and worried.

This can lead to a study of social structures as God's gifts for the protection and wellbeing of people. (1a,1b,2a,3a)

TAKE A STAND (1) Divide the class into two areas, A and B. Read to students a range of situations about which they make a choice. They vote their choice by going to either location A or location B. For example,

A student is having a hard time at school. Do you (A) offer your private support to the student or (B) defend the student publicly?

Students in each location discuss the reasons for their choice.

Students can suggest a range of situations that create personal conflict for them and about which choices can be made. (2b)

AT THE MOVIES What do you do when your personal sense of right and wrong and justice is not upheld by your family, community and government? Students view sections of films such as *The Crucible*, *A Man for All Seasons*, *Gandhi*, *Les Misérables*, *The Mission*, *The Breakfast Club*, which explore the thoughts, actions and motivations of individual persons as they struggle with their duty to others while remaining faithful to the truth they believe in. (2b)

PEER PRESSURE Write the words 'peer pressure' in large letters on the board. Share your own experience of peer pressure as an adult. Working either individually or in groups, students illustrate with pictures and words the ways they have experienced peer pressure, eg they draw a pressure cooker, a vice, bread dough, a punching bag. They think of times when they have pressured others to do what they want. Students create a list of words that describe negative and positive effects of peer pressure. They share strategies they use to deal with negative peer pressure or to create positive peer pressure. (2b)

REAL-LIFE SCENARIOS Students experience conflicts with their parents, with teachers and with friends. (Conflicts with parents can often be about friends.) Students write real-life scenarios of conflicts they commonly experience with their parents, teachers and friends. They use fictitious names and places.

The scenarios can form the basis for discussion about the tensions that exist between loyalty to parents and friends, between authority figures and individual pursuits and conscience and how to resolve such conflicts. (2a,2b)

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES, FREEDOM AND FAIRNESS In two columns students list what they believe are basic human rights and human responsibilities. In another two columns they list examples of freedom (eg freedom of speech, freedom to learn) and examples of fairness. They compare the two sets of columns identifying and defining the relationship between rights, responsibility and freedom and fairness.

Students conduct a survey in their families or their class. They list the needs and wants of each member of the family or class. They decide on a plan of action that will ensure that each person's rights are honoured and that each person's needs are met with fairness to all. They determine the responsibility that needs to be exercised by each person. They predict the obstacles to their course of action

and propose strategies to overcome those obstacles.

As an extension students investigate how government tries to meet various people's needs with justice.

This can lead to a study of how individual and communal rights are protected in the Ten Commandments. (2a,2b)

3 God wants people to love and respect all peoples of the world

A COMMON HUMANITY Love and respect for other people flow from knowing, understanding and empathising with them. They flow from the recognition that, while we are all different, each of us as a human being is a member of the human family.

Students select two articles from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (see *Today's Issues and Christian Beliefs*) which are honoured in their community and two articles which are not honoured in their community. Alternatively, students work in groups to investigate the family and social life of different ethnic groups that make up the Australian population. They select ethnic groups that are prominent in their locality. As part of their research students survey each ethnic group to find out which articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights they most value. As students collate their information, they determine what experiences are common to all groups and what factors distinguish one group from another.

Another approach is for students to investigate the value different religions or ideologies (humanism, communism etc) place on human life. (3a,3b,3c)

BEING DIFFERENT Developing healthy relationships requires mutual respect for one another's autonomy and individuality. The focus of this activity is for students to appreciate other people's individuality and to recognise how what is different about the individual is either respected or disrespected. Students make a list of various groups/classes of people they encounter personally in any one week, eg neighbours, relatives, people of different ethnic background and language, unemployed people, disabled people, police, ex-prisoners. Students also list people they hear and read about in the news.

Create a large paper wall, drawing the individual bricks that make up the wall. On each brick, students name one of the groups they have listed and write statements made

about that group, especially those that indicate stereotyping.

Students discuss how stereotypes are created and the assumptions and pre-judgments the stereotypes carry. They add these assumptions to the bricks.

Students consider the impact stereotyping has on relationships and the kinds of barriers stereotypes create between people. They discuss how the barriers can be broken down.

Students discuss what 'mortar' holds the bricks of their wall together.

In groups students investigate the needs, problems and life experiences of one group of people on their list. Alternatively, invite representatives of a group, such as an unemployed or disabled person, to share his/her life story. Or find a film or documentary which explores the life situation of a person who is different. This can be an opportunity for students to share their different family experiences or experiences of living in a different culture, etc. Students consider how stereotypes can be eliminated, eg by finding facts about people which destroy the stereotypes. Students write in their journals how their perceptions and assumptions about people are being challenged. (3a,3b,3c)

ARE YOU LISTENING? Hugh Mackay in *Why Don't People Listen to Us?* suggests that 'people don't listen to us because we don't listen to them'. Students give examples of experiences of what they consider to be poor, ineffective communication between people and examples of what they consider to be effective communication. They suggest how the people involved felt about the experiences.

Students assess the importance of listening in a relationship; the assumptions a good listener makes about the person he/she is communicating with; the qualities needed in order to be a good listener, eg patience, courage, empathy, the ability to reflect.

This can lead to a study of how Jesus related to and listened to people. (1a,1b,3b)

PUSHED OUT AND IGNORED

Students think of a time when they have been ignored, made fun of, and/or excluded from a group. They list or make a thought-web of the various feelings they experienced, the words that went through their minds, how they felt about their own worth.

Students make a list of reasons people are excluded from friendships or groups at school. They identify what makes a person popular at school.

Students list reasons for not standing up for other people who are left out and ridiculed. They think of a time when they have wanted to stand up for others but were too scared to do so. (1a,1c,3a,3c)

EQUALITY Australia prides itself on being an egalitarian society. Students explore the meaning of 'egalitarian' and the implications this has in their own school situation. They role-play different scenarios which explore issues relating to equality, eg a scenario in which every student in a year level is given the same maths work, a scenario where there are no power structures. Students discuss what makes people equal and what measures can be taken to promote that equality.

As extension explore the Australian context. Students find and read stories of Indigenous Australians who were part of the stolen generation, of carers who look after sufferers of Alzheimer's disease, of people with a mental illness, of unemployed youth.

Students explore the relationship of personal power and freedom, rights and responsibilities to equality.

This can lead to an investigation of the role of Christians in society as described in the Bible. (2a,3a,3c)

THINKING GLOBALLY Technology has brought the needs and issues of the world into individual people's lives. Students contrast the messages that they are receiving about life from advertising, the career market, magazines etc with the reality of life for people in other parts of the world. Students collect headlines and articles about people, events and lifestyles in other parts of the world, particularly third world countries. Organisations such as Caritas Australia, the National Council of Churches in Australia and Lutheran World Service have information about the economic and social situation of different countries.

Students write a definition for a successful, fulfilling life for people living in their own society and another for people living in a third-world country.

Students suggest how people of first-world countries can demonstrate love and respect to people of third-world countries. (3a,3c)

THE WORLD AS A VILLAGE An Earth Summit was held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, June 1992. To make people aware of the interdependence of people in the world, the whole-world scenario was described as a village of one thousand people of various situations in life. This highlights dramatically the ratio between rich and poor, the ratio of Asians to Europeans, the ratio of those who earn an income and those who don't, etc. The material is published in MAP *On the Road* volume on Family. If students are involved in

MAP in your local congregation, do not use this material. Organisations such as Caritas Australia will have similar information available (see Life Issues by C Wright p 74).

This kind of material will enable students to discuss the implications of being a neighbour to others in the world, to explore such issues as responsibility, cooperation, compassion, sacrifice, resolution of conflicts in meeting the needs of people in the world, eg students think about the lessons that can be learnt from the way their family household is managed to help the global household. (2,3)

MENU

DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

1

God creates people to live in loving relationship with each other

A BROKEN RELATIONSHIP Students read about God creating human beings to live in relationship and human beings ruining what God intended (Genesis 2:4 – 3:24). They compare the relationships between God and his creation and between Adam and Eve before the fall with those relationships after the fall. They identify what brought about the changes in the relationships.

Students design and draw/paint a triptych (three panels that are linked by a theme) to represent the original relationships, the change, and the changed relationships. (1a)

FAMILY SAGAS

Feuds, betrayals, politics, murder, etc feature strongly in the mini novels of Old Testament fathers such as Abraham, Isaac,

Jacob, King David, and of siblings such as Jacob and Esau, Joseph and his brothers.

Working in groups, students examine closely Bible stories which feature the relationship between parents and children or between brothers, noting the short-term and long-term effects of the relationships.

In the family saga students contrast the words and actions which lead to happiness and harmony in the relationships and those words and actions which spoil the relationships. They look for evidence of God's grace in the relationships and discuss the difference this makes to people's lives in those relationships.

Students retell the story of the family relationships, using a medium of their choice, eg story book, storyteller, comic book, drama, video soapie. The focus of the presentation is to be on what motivates the actions and reactions in the relationships. They retell the story from either a parent's, or a child's or a brother's point of view.

Students discuss and evaluate these stories in the light of the Christian belief that God creates people to live in a loving relationships with one another. (1a)

In this menu relationships and conflicts are treated in a general manner, however there are many opportunities to apply the activities to specific relationships and issues in the family, school, local community and wider community.

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

Display on the board or on a chart the commandments of the second table of the law (honour your father and mother, etc). Students assess for themselves to what degree they have either broken or kept these commandments. They write their understanding of each commandment, explaining what they think the commandments demand and what they are intended to protect.

In the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5,6,7) Jesus gives his interpretation of the commandments and of how people are to relate to one another. Students examine closely Matthew 5:21 – 6:4; Matthew 7:1–6. They identify what is to motivate people's relationships with one another and how the commandments affirm the worth of each person. Students compare Jesus' interpretation

with the interpretation of religious leaders of his day, with their own view, and with the way people generally

understand the commandments.

In Matthew 22:37–40 Jesus states that relationships with people flow out of a relationship with God. Students discuss how loving God can help a person in their relationship with people. See Matthew 15:3–6; 1 John 5:1–3. (1b,3a)

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT God cares about the human relationships he has created and wants to repair them when they break down. In the following activity students will compare biblical and modern psychological/ sociological principles for repairing broken relationships. The New Testament gives some pointers to managing conflict:

Matthew 5:9,23,44 Luke 6:29,31,37,38
Romans 12:17–21 Philippians 2:1–5
James 4:12.

Students match the Bible verses with the following ground rules for conflict management and discuss difficulties involved in putting the rules and Bible principles into practice.

- Change begins with me.
- Respond; don't react.
- Deal with the conflict now.
- Eliminate blaming.

Students apply these to a conflict situation they are experiencing or to examples of conflict in the newspapers.

Students analyse the following Bible passages which teach that a change of heart precedes a change of behaviour and attitude:

Matthew 7:15–20 Matthew 15:17–20
John 3:5,6 2 Corinthians 5:17
Galatians 5:16,17,24,25 Ephesians 4:22–27.

Students discuss how a person's hate can be changed to love. (1a,1b,1c)

JESUS DINNER COMPANIONS By examining stories about Jesus sharing a meal with others, students can learn what Jesus valued in people and about relationships and how he handled difficult relationships. Introduce this activity using *Hospitality at Home and School* in the Introductory Activities Menu.

The Bible References Menu has a list of stories of Jesus' dinner companions. In groups students read one of the stories. Give them background notes on the culture of the day to help them analyse the story using the following questions:

- Who was the host?
- Who were the guests?
- What was the occasion?
- What were the topics of conversation?
- What was most memorable about the meal?
- To whom did Jesus pay the most attention?
- Which relationships were strengthened? Weakened?
- Would Jesus have received a second invitation? Explain.

Students present a drama of several scenes showing the conversations that might have taken place at the host's and guests' homes after everyone returned home after the meal.

Students reflect on whether they would invite Jesus to their next BBQ at home or invite him to join them for lunch at school. (1b,3a)

JESUS WITH HIS FRIENDS Jesus came to restore the relationships God created. This activity focuses on Jesus' relationship with his disciples, whom he called his friends.

Students conduct a study of Jesus' conversations and experiences with his disciples over the period of his ministry. In groups students examine one or two accounts in the gospels (refer to the Bible References Menu). They determine to what extent Jesus treated the disciples as people he loved and respected.

As a class students develop a profile of Jesus as a friend, highlighting what they see as the distinguishing features of his friendship. To conclude the activity, students spend some

quiet time on their own reflecting on what it would mean to have Jesus as their friend today. (1b)

THE BIBLICAL PATTERN Students recall a time in their relationships when there has been a fall-out followed by a reconciliation. They identify what they and the other person(s) in the relationship did to effect a reconciliation. They compare this with the biblical description of human relationships outlined below:

- God creates people to live in loving relationship with one another
Genesis 1:27, 31 Genesis 2:18–25
1 Timothy 4:4 James 1:5, 17
James 3:17,18 Galatians 5:22.
- People disconnect themselves from one another by disregarding and disobeying God:
Genesis 3:8–12
Genesis 4:1–10 Genesis 6:11,12
James 4:1–3 Galatians 5:13–21.
- Jesus reconnects people to God and one another through his life and death:
Romans 5:10,11 2 Corinthians 5:17,18
Galatians 3:26–28 Ephesians 2:14,15.
- The path to wholeness for broken relationships involves people admitting their wrong, saying sorry, receiving and extending forgiveness:
Luke 17:3 James 4:8–10
James 5:16 1 John 1:9.

Students examine stories of human relationships found in the Bible. They note the strong link between a person's relationship with God and with other people.

- Jacob and Esau are reconciled
Genesis 28 Genesis 32,33.
- Peter and Jesus are reconciled
Mark 8:27–33 Mark 14:27–41
Mark 14:66–72 John 21:15–19.
- Paul begs Philemon to be reconciled to Onesimus
Philemon 8–20.
(1a,1c)

THE POWER OF LOVE AND FORGIVENESS

Students share what it feels like to be forgiven when they have done wrong. They read Bible passages describing the difference love and forgiveness can make to a difficult and seemingly hopeless situation.

- Joseph forgives his brothers Genesis 45
- God forgives David Psalms 32 and 51
- Jesus loves Zacchaeus Luke 19:1–10
- Jesus and a Samaritan woman John 4:1–42
- The impact of loving others
2 Corinthians 8:1–15
- God forgives all people
Colossians 2:13–15.

Students choose a real-life situation, eg a fall-out between friends, civil war, the issue of reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. They role-play acts of love and forgiveness in each situation and possible new outcomes. (1c)

THE TREE OF LOVE Forgiveness is the key to a new start in life for healing and restoring relationships to what God intended for them:

Psalm 32:1, 3–5 Matthew 6:12
Matthew 9:2 John 8:11.

In turning to God for forgiveness and love Christians believe they in turn are able to forgive and love those who have wronged them:

Matthew 18:21–33
Ephesians 4:32 Colossians 3:13
1 Peter 4:8 1 John 4:19.

Students draw a tree similar to the one drawn in *A Tree of Hurt* (Introductory Activities Menu). Referring to biblical passages listed above, they show the possible changes in a person's life when the hurt is replaced with love and forgiveness.

See also: 1 Corinthians 13:4–7
Galatians 5:22,23 Colossians 3:12–14.

Students suggest other images to represent what happens in relationships when hurt is replaced with love and forgiveness. (1c)

FORGIVENESS HEALS Jesus came to bring health to human beings' relationship with God and with one another. God's forgiveness is the power that heals. The gospel writers included several of Jesus' parables and encounters with people to demonstrate Jesus' teaching on forgiveness. See:

- The unmerciful servant Matthew 18:21–25
- Preaching about love and judging
 Luke 6:27–36
- Jesus anointed by a sinful woman
 Luke 7:36–50
- The lost son Luke 15:11–32
- The Pharisee and the tax collector
 Luke 18:9–14
- Zacchaeus Luke 19:1–10.

Give groups of students a story each, along with any background material they will need to help them understand the cultural content and the impact the stories would have had in Jesus' time. Students consider the part personal confession of wrongs and experiencing unconditional forgiveness plays in changing people's lives. Students refer to a real-life scenario (see *Real-Life Scenarios, Conflicts* in the Introductory Activities Menu) and prepare a dramatic presentation of the change personal

confession of wrongs and forgiveness would bring to the situation. (1c)

BEING VULNERABLE A strong message in our society is that people need to be strong and in control. This can work against healing the rifts in relationships. The film *Radiance* demonstrates the healing power of disclosure between sisters in a family, giving room for truth and forgiveness. Students view segments of films with explore the personal benefit of people facing the truth, forgiving and seeking forgiveness of others. They examine what Jesus says about the benefits of forgiveness: Luke 7:36–50 Luke 15:11–32. (1c)

2

God provides social structures for the welfare of all people

CHURCH AND STATE In Romans 12; 13:8–14 Paul deals with the community of Christians (the church) and in Romans 13:1–7 with the community of the world (the state).

Both have important God-given roles in contributing to the welfare of people. Students compare the two communities, identifying:

- the differences between the two communities
- the assumptions Paul makes about the two communities
- the motivation for behaviour in each community
- the common attitudes Christians bring to each community.

Give students a summary of Luther's teaching on the God-given roles of government and the church (teaching of the two kingdoms). Students contrast the function and purpose of each structure and explore the interrelationship between the two structures. They consider to which structure they belong. They consider the implications this teaching has for Christians' involvement and responsibilities in the world. Students discuss whether people (Christians in particular) have the same obligation to a government that is unjust as to one that is just. Students explore the insights the following Bible passages give to the discussion about the role of Christians in society:

Isaiah 58 Matthew 5:13–16
Luke 20:25 John 17:15–18
Romans 12:1,2 Ephesians 5:8–11
Philippians 2:14–16 1 Timothy 2:1,2
1 Peter 2:11,12. (2a,2b)

CHRISTIANS ACT Christians believe that they are called to responsible citizenship, in which they influence and participate in the power structures rather than abandoning them. Students investigate Christians who have become actively involved in the structures of government to bring justice, truth and healing, eg Tim Costello in Melbourne, Martin Luther King in the United States, Archbishop Desmond Tutu in South Africa, Christian members of parliament, Christians involved in Jubilee 2000. Students research

- Christians' motivation for involvement in the political and social arena
- the personal challenges Christians have faced in their involvement
- how Christians deal with the tensions between government policies and Christian principles.

Christian magazines, such as *On Being Alive* and *Christianity Today*, and *The Lutheran*, feature Christians who have committed themselves to making a difference in the world today. (2b,3c)

MARRIAGE AND DE FACTO

RELATIONSHIPS Many social structure are changing. Australian society now recognises and accepts de facto marriage relationships that have not been legally solemnised. Christians are concerned to do God's will in the area of marriage. Students explore how a Christian can answer the question: 'Is it right to live with someone without being legally married?' They investigate:

- the Christian understanding of the role marriage plays in the ordering of society: Genesis 1:27,28 Genesis 2:18–25 Matthew 19:4–6 and the Christian understanding of marriage as total lifelong commitment: Ephesians 5:22–33.
- The Lutheran Church of Australia's Statement on Marriage and De Facto Relationships
- Christian's understanding of the role of society, customs and government legislation in their personal lives
- the legal requirement for marriage in Australia, as well as the practice of de facto relationships/marriages and legislation relating to them. (2a,2b)

TAKE A STAND (2) Government is a gift of God. However, there are times when governments legislate laws which contradict people's personal convictions about truth and justice, eg a declaration of war on another country, the White Australia Policy, legalising brothels. In other instances societal practices offer a personal challenge, eg sex before marriage.

Students dramatise appropriate scenes from one of the following situations described in the Bible, highlighting the personal dilemma and choices made:

- Esther defies convention and approaches the king on behalf of the Jews Esther 4,5
- Jeremiah speaks God's message Jeremiah 18; 20:7–18
- Daniel and his friends refuse to worship idols Daniel 3; 6
- Peter and John refuse to obey the elders and teachers of the law Acts 3, 4. (2a,2b)

BONHOEFFER Christians believe that citizens must respect and obey the government because God has given it authority. Dietrich Bonhoeffer was arrested and later executed for his part in a plot to kill Hitler. Students research the life and writings of Bonhoeffer to find out what led this Christian pastor to commit himself to a plot to kill the leader of his nation and so disobey the fourth and fifth commandments.

Students compare Bonhoeffer's decision with that of other people who have taken action against evil in their society, eg Gandhi, Martin Luther King. Students respond to the question: 'Was Bonhoeffer's action right or wrong?' (2b)

SOCIAL ISSUES There are many conflicts and crises between people that have an impact on the whole community, eg abortion, divorce, capital punishment and other consequences of crime, war, mental illness, drug-taking. Students work in groups and investigate a social issue.

1. Students find a current example of the social issue. They identify the problems the issue poses for individuals, families, communities and governments. They outline possible causes of the problem and the different approaches that have been taken to deal with the problem/issue.
2. Students explore the current debate on the issue, identifying the range of viewpoints in the community, among Christians and other religious traditions. They examine the premises on which the various arguments are based.
3. Students determine whether the Bible has any conclusive answers in relation to the issue being researched. (They need to

understand the cultural and religious context of the Bible passages before they apply them to modern issues, so they will need to make use of Bible concordances, dictionaries and handbooks.)

Christian ethics is not a legalistic set of rules; it is grounded in love which has its source in God: Mark 12:28–34
John 4:7–21 1 Corinthians 13.

Students apply the love principle to the issue they have researched, using a Y-chart (What does love look like, feel like and sound like in a particular situation?). (2b,3a,3c)

JESUS AND POLITICS Students consider what Jesus' words and actions would be towards today's governments. Using Bible handbooks and encyclopedias, they research the authority structures under which Jesus lived.

In groups students investigate Jesus' position in relation to the religious and civil authorities of his day. They examine:

- Jesus' mission in life:
Matthew 9:12,13 Mark 10:45
Luke 4:18,19
- Jesus' attitude to an oppressive government:
Matthew 5:43–48 Matthew 26:47–56
Luke 7:1–10 Luke 20:20–26
- Jesus' assessment of the religious leaders of his day:
Matthew 12:9–14
Matthew 16:6,12 Matthew 17:24–27
Matthew 23 Luke 11:37–54
Luke 19:45–48.
- Jesus' dealings with tax collectors who were government representatives:
Matthew 9:9–13 Luke 10:1–10
- Jesus' concern for the disadvantaged:
Matthew 6:1–4 Luke 6:20–26
Luke 14:12–14, 21, 23.

Students look at significant issues facing their generation and government, eg reconciliation between non-Indigenous and Indigenous peoples; social services to the aged, disabled, people with mental illnesses; gambling.

Students deliver the speech Jesus might give to politicians, to the world of advertising, to community groups, to your class or to people in general with regard to any of the above issues. (2b)

3

God wants people to love and respect all peoples of the world

VALUING THE INDIVIDUAL Jesus taught and demonstrated that each person is of immense value. Students read Jesus' teaching about the worth of all human beings:

Matthew 5:45 Matthew 6:25–32
Matthew 18:10–14 Matthew 20:1–16
Luke 11:11–13 Luke 12:6,7
Luke 14:15–24 Luke 17:1,2
John 6:35–40.

Give students the necessary cultural background and context of the gospels so that they can understand the truth contained in the accounts.

Students write up a charter of human worth based on Jesus' teaching.

Students use Jesus' teachings as a way of evaluating Jesus' own dealings with people, in particular his relationship with women and Gentiles. The gospel of Luke, written by a Gentile, contains a wealth of material, eg

- Jesus raises a widow's son Luke 7:11–15
- Jesus is anointed by a sinful woman Luke 7:36–50
- Jesus is touched by a sick woman Luke 8:43–48
- Jesus heals a crippled woman on the Sabbath Luke 13:10–17.

The Acts of the Apostles, also written by Luke, shows the impact Jesus' teaching had on his followers:

- Pentecost Acts 2:1–11
- Philip and the Ethiopian Acts 8:26–39.

Students determine how each person's worth can be celebrated and demonstrated in their school context. (3a,3b,3c)

A FIRST-CENTURY COMMENTATOR

The writer of the epistle of James addresses people who profess to be Christians (James 2:1) and examines the implications of living out Jesus' teaching about the love of God and the worth of human beings in a twenty-first century context. James addresses the impact on people's lives of:

- favouritism chapter 2
- gossip chapter 3
- quarrelling chapter 4
- exploitation chapter 5.

Students work in groups, each examining one of the issues. They record in a table:

- the nature of the problem experienced in the first-century Christian community
- the Christians' behaviour

- James' challenge to the Christians.

Students conduct a parallel study of the same issues in the twenty-first century. They find examples in the newspaper and the school context. They

- summarise the nature of the problem;
- investigate how local congregations and individual Christians address the problem;
- examine the challenge that James' letter has for students attending a Christian school. (3a,ec)

AM I A NEIGHBOUR? A lawyer asks Jesus: 'Who is my neighbour?' Jesus responds by telling the story of *The good Samaritan* and rephrasing the question: 'To whom must I be a neighbour?' (Luke 10:25–37). Some students may have heard this story repeatedly.

Present the story giving its first-century context. Helpful examples include: *And Jesus Said* by William Barclay and *The Parables of Jesus* by Harry Wendt.

Students retell the story from the perspective of either the Pharisee, the Levite or the Samaritan, explaining the different barriers the situation demanded each one should overcome and the decisions they made about those barriers.

Students discuss the point Jesus is making when he chooses a Samaritan as the hero of the story.

Take students through a guided meditation in which they think about their relationships with people.

- With whom do they relate easily? awkwardly? with difficulty? Not at all?
- What helps them relate to people?
- What are the barriers in the difficult relationships?
- What is the challenge for them in this story?

End the meditation with a Bible reading that affirms the worth of all human beings, eg

Matthew 6:25–32 Luke 12:6,7
Luke 15:1–10 Luke 19:10. (3a,3b)

INCLUDING THE UNWANTED Jesus came to befriend the unwanted and those who do not fit in to society. It doesn't matter whether their rejection is because of exclusion by others or because of their own failures and lack of self-esteem. See

Matthew 9:12,13 Luke 4:18,19
Luke 19:10.

The following stories are examples of Jesus forming relationships with those pushed out of society:

- a Samaritan woman John 4:4–42
- Zacchaeus Luke 19:1–10
- Bartimaeus Mark 10:46–52.

The following steps can be used with any story selected:

1. Give students the reasons why the person would have been excluded from general society. Students brainstorm how the person might have felt about his/her situation.
2. Tell students the story in stages. At the end of each stage one group of students suggests what the person's inner thoughts may have been about her/himself, Jesus and the situation. Another group imagines Jesus' internal monologue; another group indicates the feelings and thoughts of the disciples and the townspeople as they appear in the story.
3. Working in groups, students retell the story using a modern scenario, eg
at school: the student who is excluded from all the parties, the student with whom no-one will sit in the classroom (it is important that students do not refer to specific students by name);
in communities: the unemployed, disabled, immigrants, indigenous peoples. Students imagine how Jesus would speak to such people and what words of encouragement he would give them.

Give students time for personal reflection in which they consider their own attitudes and behaviour towards people who are shunned. What greater understanding of those people has the story given them? How can they modify their future actions?

Students reflect on times when they have been rejected and consider what words of hope and encouragement the Bible story gives them. (3a,3c)

THE GOSPEL REMOVES BARRIERS

The message of the gospel is that God offers the same unconditional love to all people in all circumstances and situations of life. The universal nature of the gospel is treated extensively in the book of Ephesians.

1. Divide the class into groups, one group to represent the Gentile Christians (Romans, Greeks, Samaritans, Egyptians, Parthians, Medes etc) and the other the Jewish Christians.
2. Using Bible encyclopedias and dictionaries, each group investigates the social and religious life of their group before they were converted to Christianity and the relationship that existed between Jews and Gentiles after the Exile and into the first century. See
Ezra 9:12 Ezra 10:2–44
Nehemiah 10:30 Nehemiah 13:23–31.
3. Students imagine and role-play the conversations and interactions between Gentiles and Jews at a marketplace.
4. Students read Ephesians 2:11–22, taking the perspective of the Gentile and Jewish Christians. Each group rewrites what the passage is telling them about themselves and the other group. Students identify the basis for unity between the two groups. See also
1 Corinthians 12:12–23
Ephesians 4:3–6 Colossians 3:15–17
5. Students identify
 - what Jewish Christians need to give up in order to maintain the bond of peace
 - what Gentile Christians need to give up in order to maintain the bond of peace
 - what each group will receive in return
 - what each group needs to be reminded of continually.
6. Students examine what Paul prays for these people:
Ephesians 1:15–23
Ephesians 3:14–19 Colossians 1:9–14.
7. According to Galatians 3:26–28 all barriers between people have been broken down in Christ. Students explore the basis on which cultural and gender barriers can be overcome. They consider what it will mean in practical terms for people if the 'bond of peace' is to be a reality, eg students investigate the reconciliation process that is taking place in South Africa between white and black people. (3b)

BABEL AND PENTECOST Broken relationships are often the result of pride and selfishness, while healing and restored relationships come through humility and thought for others. Students contrast the story of The tower of Babel (Genesis 11:1–9) with the story of Pentecost (Acts 2:1–12, 41–47), analysing what divides and what unites people. They discuss the importance of everyone being able to hear the message of God in their own language (Acts 2:8).

As extension students read about the problems of division which faced the Christian church

- in Corinth: 1 Corinthians 1:10–17
 1 Corinthians 3 – 4:6
- in Philippi: Philippians 2:1–4, 14
 Philippians 4:2,3.

Students note the reasons Paul gives for the division they are experiencing and the advice he gives for resolving their conflicts and restoring relationships. They identify what is the motivating factor for unity in the church. Invite members of a local church to share how conflicts are resolved in their community. (3b)

PETER VERSUS PAUL The great message of Christianity is that Jesus and his gospel are for all people. The New Testament writers tell stories of how two prominent Christian leaders, Peter and Paul, dealt with the barriers first-century Christian Gentiles and Christian Jews had to overcome. Students investigate the lives of Peter and Paul, examining in detail the pressure Christian Jews were placing on the Gentiles and the barriers (attitudes and way of life) Jews had to overcome to accept and associate with Gentiles. See

- profile of Peter Acts 10
- profile of Paul Acts 8:1–3; Acts 9:1–30
 Galatians 1:13–24; Philippians 3:4–6
- conflict over circumcision Acts 15:1–5
 Galatians 2:1–10; Galatians 4:6
- resolution of the conflict Acts 15:6–35
 2 Peter 3:15.

Students write and present a play on the issues of circumcision, or students write the letter from the Council of Jerusalem to the Jewish believers about the issue of circumcision. Alternatively, students research significant issues facing the Christian church today, eg de facto relationships, euthanasia, morality, accommodating a changing culture. They present their findings as a play or as a letter to Christians. Students discuss: On what basis can Christians seek to resolve their conflicts and restore their relationships? (2b,3a,3b)

CALLED TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

In the early centuries of the church Christians lived under oppressive governments and were often subject to persecution. Yet neither Jesus nor his followers attempted to overthrow the governments of their day. Christians were challenged to live out the Christian way of love in their families and communities, where they could make a difference (1 John 3:11, 16–18).

In groups students investigate exhortations given to Christians on how to conduct their relationships with one another and with other people. Students apply the principles found in the New Testament epistles to contemporary scenarios from their own experiences or those found in the news. They compare the directions given in the epistles with the many 'instruction' books available today.

- Relationships between Christians:
Romans 12:9–21 Galatians 6:1–5, 10
Ephesians 4:1–3, 25–32
- Relationships with all people:
Romans 13:8–14 1 Peter 2:17
- Relationships between parents and children
Ephesians 6:1–4 Colossians 3:20,21
- Relationships between husbands and wives:
1 Corinthians 7:1–5 Ephesians 5:22–33
Colossians 3:18,19 1 Peter 3:1–7
- Relationships between masters and slaves:
Ephesians 6:5–9 Colossians 3:22 – 4:1
- Relationships between older men and younger men:
1 Peter 5:1–5

Students discuss how the instructions in the epistles would help Christians to be models of relating to all people (Matthew 5:13–16) in their community, on what basis Christians can be expected to be models (Ephesians 2:10), and what happens when Christians fail in their relationships (Luke 11:4, 1 John 1:9). (3a,3b)

MENU

RESPONSE ACTIVITIES

1

God creates people to live in loving relationship with each other

DOCUMENTARY COLLAGE Students work either individually or in groups. They create a collage of artwork, music, movement, poetry, news reports, Bible material, drama, video clips etc to depict the complexity and vitality of relationships. Each collage should focus on one arena of life, eg family, school, local community, global community. Collages represent students' views and hopes for relationships, as well as their response to the biblical material on relationships. (1a,1b,1c)

SELF-HELP CHARTS Students produce charts which give pointers on what to do and what not to do to maintain healthy relationships. They create charts that address issues that relate to student/teacher relationships (one for the teacher and one for students and peer relationships). These can be displayed in the classroom as reminders to teachers and students.

Students can complete the same exercise for their relationships at home. Encourage students to consult their family members as they create their own personal charts. (1a,1b,1c)

CELEBRATING FAMILIES Students plan and prepare a day which celebrates the importance and contribution of family in their lives. Suggestions for activities:

- Invite family groups to attend school worship and lead sections of the service.
- Create postcards that promote families.
- Make bookmarks that feature Bible verses about the family. Sell them and give the proceeds to local community groups that help families in need.
- Have open-air drama at lunchtime showing the highs and lows of families in the Bible.
- Have a photographic display of families present and past.
- Invite family service groups in the community to speak of the work they do to support families.
- Ask families in the school to share their stories. Publish these as a booklet that can be included in the school library. (1a,2a,3c)

TIME OF HEALING Conflicts leave people feeling confused, angry and lost. Writers of the Bible encouraged people to bring their turmoil and problems to God in prayer (Philippians 4:6,7). Encourage students to keep a journal during a unit on conflict. Students reflect on the importance of forgiveness in resolving their conflicts and what this will require of them.

Students prepare to hold a class session of a quiet reflective time in which they can name their hurts and anxieties, confess the wrongs they have done others, seek personal strength and love for others and meditate on God's message of peace and forgiveness. Students

- select readings (Bible and other Christian writers through the ages,
- music
- write litanies
- devise symbolic actions to help people have a focus for their thoughts
- choose a place which encourages reflection and respects people's need for privacy
- select a leader for the session
- bring their journals. (1b,1c)

AN ACT OF KINDNESS Students think of ways they can encourage a person who is feeling low about themselves or show a person appreciation without the act being known and without expecting any reward, eg send a card to someone who is sad, do the chores at home without being asked. (1c)

2

God provides social structures for the welfare of all people

FORUM FOR DEBATE Many issues facing governments and individuals are complex, and solutions are far from simple and clear. For example:

- Is sex before marriage wrong?
- Who should receive assistance from governments?
- Should churches stay out of politics?

Students select from a range of topics raised by the class. They investigate the topic and arrive at a personal viewpoint which they must be able to substantiate with data and examples. Students who have researched the same topic form a panel to lead class discussion. Students judge which arguments are the most convincing. (2a,2b,3a,3c)

PEOPLE PROFILES Students produce profiles (posters, power-point presentation, brochures) of people who have taken a stand for truth and against wrongs and injustice. As a class students select from a wide cross-section of people and issues, eg Daniel, Paul, William Wilberforce, St Thomas More, William Booth, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Desmond Tutu, Gandhi, conscientious objectors during the war in Vietnam. (2a,2b)

WHAT WOULD JESUS DO? Drawing on what they have learnt about Jesus' modelling of the loving, caring relationship God intends people to have with one another, students write a 100-word response to: 'If Jesus were here today and had money, how would he spend it?' (2b,3b)

3 God wants people to love and respect all peoples of the world

TRYPYCH Students create a triptych which illustrates the movement from brokenness to wholeness in relationships through the action of the gospel in people's lives. Subject matter can be stories in the New Testament, the global community or the students' own life.

While a triptych is traditionally a three-panelled painting, students can present it as a set of three human-figure tableaux that are viewed simultaneously or as a movement or dance in three parts. The three panels can represent three distinct scenes, but the common theme needs to be evident. (1c,3b)

21st CENTURY COMMENTATORS

This response activity follows *A First-century Commentator* in the Development Activities Menu. The epistles in the New Testament encouraged the early Christians to make a difference for God in their communities. Students imagine and write the kind of letter the New Testament writers would write to Christians today, referring specifically to issues facing people today, eg the 'tall poppy' syndrome, genetic cloning, third-world debt, sex before marriage, de facto relationships, care of the disabled and aged.

Alternatively, students explore how the Christian way of love can be lived out in a Christian school community. They imagine and present the encouragement and advice a New Testament leader would give to the students' school community about the relationships within the school. Students need to

- consider what is happening in the school. In what areas of school life do people need to

be encouraged? directed? praised? corrected? challenged?

- decide on the most effective means of communicating the message, eg video clip, series of bumper stickers, cartoon editorials, talkback show, screen saver, *60 Minutes* segment.

To help students and provide stimulus for their project, invite local pastors to share how they address or comment on current issues in their sermons. Alternatively, students examine excerpts from the writing of present-day writers who address current issues, eg *The Streets of Hope* by Tim Costello. (2,3)

GET INVOLVED Many volunteer organisations and even governments are — consciously or unconsciously — guided by God's intention that people love and respect all peoples of the world. Students investigate ways government, voluntary organisations and individuals are being pro-active in demonstrating love and respect for people with special needs. They invite both providers of the services and those who have received support to share their stories with the class. Students create a series of advertising flyers and brochures to promote the work of the services. They think of ways they can support one or more of the services, either as a class or as individual projects. (3a,3c)

START WITH YOURSELF Often the most challenging people to love and respect are those people closest to us. Students decide on a plan of action to resolve one of their conflicts or work on improving one of their relationships with people close to them, eg a member of the class, family or sports team. Students reflect on the motivation given to them by the gospel message. (1c,3b)

LIVING MORE SIMPLY Some people choose to 'live simply so that others may simply live'. It is a lifestyle that is based on 'being' rather than 'having'. It is a lifestyle that is conscious of the consequences of one's actions. Students examine this lifestyle.

- Contrast simple living with living in poverty and with living in affluence.
- List reasons for living simple, eg solidarity with the poor, saving money, conserving resources, healthier life, reduce pollution, conserving resources.
- List what would change in their lives if they were to live more simply.

Students brainstorm: How might living more simply help me to love and respect all people of the world?

If students see advantages of living more simply, they could

- commit themselves to one way of living more simply (eg forgo spending on unnecessary food such as chocolate bars);
 - keep journal entries over a period of several weeks in which they write about their experience of living more simply. At an appointed time students share their experience with the class and choose whether or not to continue with the project.
- (3c)

MENU

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

The introduction to LIFE contains suggested general resources for all Life concepts.
The following resources may be used in a unit about *God creates human relationships*.

Some of these resources may be out of print.
They are listed because they (or others similar to them) may be found in school libraries.

Preview these and any other resources you intend using
to be sure that they are appropriate for your students.

LITERATURE — NON-FICTION

General

- Baker P & Marshall M *Simulation Games*
Books 1,2,3,4 1986 Joint Board for Christian Education
- Barclay W *And Jesus Said: The Parables of Jesus* 1992 St Andrews Press
- Dowley T *A Lion Handbook: The History of Christianity* 1990 Lion Publishing
- Forell G *The Augsburg Confession: A Contemporary Commentary* 1968 Augsburg Publishing House
- Luther's Large Catechism* 1983 Lutheran Publishing House
- Reel to Real: Making the Most of Movies With Youth* 1997 Abingdon Press
- Smith S *Knock, Knock! Who's There? A holiday program for kids: Leader's Guide* 1998 Scripture Union
- Wangerin W *The Book of God* 1996 Lion Publishing
- Wendt H *The Parables of Jesus* 1997 Crossways International
- Yancey P *The Jesus I Never Knew* 1995 Zondervan Publishing House
- Yarham A *The Great Australian Scripture Book* 1989 A Yarham Publications

Exploring relationships

- Beman L *Conflict (Youth Search: Small Group Resources)* 1995 Abingdon Press
- Emmett J *Get More New Life* 1997 Joint Board for Christian Education
- Koch C *Creating a Christian Lifestyle* (student book and teaching manual) 1996 St Mary's Press
- Mackay H *Why Don't People Listen?* 1994 Pan Macmillan Publishers

Nummela TA (ed) *Bible Impact: Relationship-building Studies for Youth* (Books 1–4) 1993 Concordia Publishing House

Nummela TA (ed) *Power Plays, Skits and Scripture Studies for Youth* (Books 1,2) 1995 Concordia Publishing House

Sheanh G *Helping Kids Deal with Conflict* 1996 Pegasus Publishers

Wright C *Life Issues: a Christian Perspective* (students book and teacher handbook with photocopy masters) 1997 Lion Publishing

Exploring social issues

- Ahlers J & Wilt M *Christian Justice: Sharing God's Goodness* (student book and teaching manual) 1995 St Mary's Press
- Costello T *Streets of Hope* 1998 Allen & Unwin and Albatross Books
- Danes C & S *Today's Issues and Christian Beliefs* 1994 Lion Publishing
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