

MENU

BIBLE REFERENCES

1

Sin and evil ruin God's creation

A perfect world

Genesis 2

The Fall

Genesis 3

Sin

Genesis 4:1–16

Genesis 6:5,6

Genesis 6:11,12

Genesis 11:1–7

Matthew 26:69–75

James 1:14,15

Romans 3:22–24

The devil — the enemy

Genesis 3:1–5

Luke 4:1–13

Ephesians 6:11–13

1 Peter 5:8

Human sinfulness and helplessness

Job 14:4

Psalms 51:5

Isaiah 59:1,2, 15–17

Mark 7:14–23

Mark 10:17–22

John 3:3,5,6

Romans 3:23

Galatians 3:10

Ephesians 2:1

James 1:13–15

2

God rescues people from sin and its consequences

Prophets warn of consequences of sin

Isaiah 5:1–25

Isaiah 28:1–13

Isaiah 59:1,2,12–16

Jeremiah 3:12–14

Jeremiah 7:1–15,21–29

Hosea 5

Hosea 11:1–4,8,9

Amos 5:4–27

Israel exiled, rescue promised

2 Chronicles 36:15–23

Psalms 137

Isaiah 40:1–5

Isaiah 43:1–7

Isaiah 49:8–26

Jeremiah 29,30

Jeremiah 31:7–9

Lamentations

Ezekiel 36:22–38

Ezekiel 37:1–14

Daniel

Israel's return from captivity

Ezra 1,3,4,5,6

Nehemiah 2,4,12

From death to life

Luke 15:11–32

Romans 6:1–14

Ephesians 2:1–10

Colossians 2:13–15

Jesus' temptation

Luke 4:1–13

Hebrews 2:14–18

Hebrews 4:15

Jesus rescues people

Mark 5:1–20

Luke 7:11–17

Luke 13:10–17

Luke 19:1–10

John 2:1–11

John 5:1–15

John 8:1–10

God's rescue plan

Genesis 12:1–3

God at work

Exodus 14:5–31

Joshua 5:13 – 6:20

Judges 6:1 – 7:25

Daniel 3

Daniel 6

Luke 23:32–43

Acts 5:17–42

God sends Jesus

Mark 9:7

Luke 2:25–32

Luke 7:1–9,16,17,20–23

Luke 8:38,39

Luke 10:22

John 6:38,51

John 7:16,17

John 8:42, 54

What has Jesus come to do?

Matthew 9:12,13

Matthew 20:28

Mark 8:31

Mark 10:45

Luke 3:4–6

Luke 4:18,19,43

Luke 5:13,31

Luke 6:6

Luke 15:8–10

Luke 18:31–33

Luke 19:10

John 3:17

John 4:34

John 5:17–19

John 7:7

John 9:39–41

John 10:10,11

John 12:46,47

John 17:4, 6–8

Jesus makes the dream a reality

Isaiah 53:4,5

Matthew 5:17

John 1:29

Romans 5:8

2 Corinthians 5:19,21

Galatians 3:13

Galatians 4:4,5

Colossians 2:13–15

Hebrews 2:14–18

Hebrews 4:15

1 John 2:1,2

Repentance

Psalms 51

Forgiveness

John 21:15–19

3**God offers eternal life
to all people****God's dream**

Isaiah 11:1–10 Micah 4:3,4

Citizens of heaven

John 3:3, 5–7, 16 Romans 8:17
 Galatians 3:26,27 Philippians 3:20,21
 Colossians 3:1, 12–17 Titus 3:4–7
 Hebrews 12:22–24 Hebrews 13:14
 1 Peter 1:3–5 1 Peter 2:11

New life

Acts 2,3,4 Romans 6:4–7
 2 Corinthians 5:17 Titus 3:4–7

Eternal life

John 3 John 4:13,14
 John 5:24 John 6:35,40
 John 8:12 John 11
 John 11:25,26 John 17:3

Faith in Jesus John 3:16,36

Victory over and death

1 Corinthians 15:42–44, 52–57
 Colossians 2:13–15 Revelation 1:8, 17,18

Combating the enemy

Ephesians 6:10–17 James 4:7–10
 1 Peter 5:8,9

Help in time of need

2 Corinthians 9:8 Hebrews 4:16

Children of God

John 1:12,13 Galatians 3:26,27
 1 Peter 2:9,10 1 John 3:1,2

Peace

Romans 5:1 Galatians 5:22
 Philippians 4:7 2 Thessalonians 3:16

Forgiveness

Acts 10:43 Ephesians 1:7
 1 John 1:9

Equality before God Galatians 3:28

Freedom

John 8:31–36 Galatians 5:1

Reconciliation

Romans 5:10 2 Corinthians 5:18,19

Purpose

Ephesians 2:10

Jesus' second coming

Matthew 24:3, 30 Matthew 26:64
 Luke 9:26 Acts 1:11
 1 Corinthians 15:20–23
 1 Thessalonians 3:12,13
 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18
 Revelation 1:7

Heaven

Isaiah 65:17–25 Micah 4:3,4
 Matthew 13:31–33, 44–46
 John 14:1,2 1 Corinthians 2:9
 1 Corinthians 15:42, 51–55
 2 Corinthians 5:1–4 Revelation 4:1–6
 Revelation 7:9–17 Revelation 21:1–4

Hell

Matthew 25:41 Luke 16:19–31
 Revelation 20:10 Revelation 21:8

End times

Matthew 24 Matthew 25:31–46
 Luke 21 1 Thessalonians 5:1–11
 2 Peter 3:1–14

Living in hope

1 Corinthians 15:56–58 2 Corinthians 5:1–4
 Colossians 3:1–4
 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18
 1 Thessalonians 5:1–11 1 Peter 1:3–9
 2 Peter 3:11–13

MENU

INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITIES

1

Sin and evil ruin God's creation

THE WORLD TODAY Cut out pictures and words from newspapers and magazines which show the condition of the world today. If you have a world map, place the clippings on or around the map. Discuss the students' impressions of what has become of the world. Are the problems fixable? What has gone wrong? (1a)

TOPSY-TURVY WORLD Make a list of instances when

- objects are treated like gods
- animals are treated like humans
- humans are treated like animals
- God is treated like an object. (1a,1c)

WHAT'S NASTY? In small groups students describe three nasty things they have done. Give them a rating of 'badness' on a scale of 0–10. Is being nasty the same as sin? Is it evil? (1a)

EVIL Ask students to draw what they understand by the word 'evil'. What other words do they associate with evil?

Analyse student responses.

- Which are symbols of evil?
- Which are concrete concepts of evil?

Discuss:

Where does evil come from?

Whom or what does evil affect? (1a,1b)

WHAT IS WRONG? Students conduct a survey of people of various age-groups, asking the following questions:

- *How do you know whether something is wrong?*
- *What do you understand by the word 'sin'?*
- *Give examples of 'sin'.*
- *Is there a difference between something that is wrong and sin?*
- *What do you think makes people do wrong?*
- *Do you see doing the wrong thing as a problem? If so, is there any way of solving the problem? (1a,1c)*

A PERSONAL TUG OF WAR In his letter to the Romans Paul writes:

Even though the desire to do good is in me, I am not able to do it. I don't do the good I want to do; instead I do the evil that I do not want to do.' (Romans 7:18,19 TEV)

Students share experiences of when they have found this to be true. They present this in a series of role-plays. Do governments or groups ever make decisions which seem well-intentioned but have ill effects? Why is this so? (1b)

HAVE YOU EVER TOLD A LIE?

In their journals students describe a situation in which they lied and found themselves with worse problems.

- To whom did they lie? about what? why?
- How did they feel?
- What happened afterwards?
- What did they do to solve the problem they had created?

Assure students that journals are treated with confidentiality. Follow this exercise with a study of God's forgiveness, eg *A God of Mercy* and *A Father's Love* in Development Activities Menu. (1a,1b,1c, 2c)

PERFECT WORLD Examine critically Genesis 2 as an introductory activity to a closer study of the story of the Fall. Students need to identify in particular the relationship between human beings and God, between the man and the woman, and the relationship of human beings to the earth as the writer presents them. What strong images emerge? (1a)

READ A STORY *The Gospel According to Star Wars* by Tony Morphet is one way to introduce the main themes of all three faith statements. Alternatively, view sections of *Star Wars* or *Batman* which highlight the theme of sin, rebellion, the fight between good and evil, rescue from evil, heaven. (1,2,3)

2

God rescues people from sin and its consequences

GOD THE PARTY POOPER? Students brainstorm and survey people's perceptions of God. What negative things do people have to say about God? What is it that they object to or accuse God of? (1a,2a)

HISTORY OF ISRAEL IN A

NUTSHELL In small groups prepare a dramatic presentation of Psalm 105, which summarises the history of Israel from the call of Abraham to Israel's entry into the promised land of Canaan. Go on to examine the theme of God's rescue in the history of Israel. (2a)

A FEW PROPHETS Working in small groups and using a Bible encyclopedia or the introduction to each book in a Bible, students build up profiles of the following prophets: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Amos, Hosea, Ezra, Nehemiah.

- During what period in Israel's history did the prophet live?
- What were the conditions under which the prophet lived?
- What are the main themes of the prophet's book? To whom was the book written?
- For what is the prophet mostly known? (2a)

FAR FROM HOME Students find the meaning of 'alien', 'refugee', 'exile', 'captivity', 'minority'. They research modern examples or interview people who have come to Australia as refugees. Under what circumstances do people find themselves to be refugees? captives? aliens? exiled? the minority? What emotions and difficulties do people experience in these situations? What are their special needs? Go on to examine how God helped the Israelites while they were in exile in Babylon. (2a)

GREAT RESCUES Students investigate modern rescues, such as the rescue of Stuart Diver trapped beneath rubble in a landslide at Thredbo NSW (1997) or Tony Bullimore's rescue by *HMAS Adelaide* from under his upturned yacht in the Southern Ocean (1997).

- What led to the situation that made rescue necessary?
- What could those trapped do for themselves?
- Who rescued them?
- What was done?
- How did those rescued respond once they were safe?
- Were there any long-term ramifications?

Readers' Digest has a rescue story in almost every issue. Students can access information on the Internet, eg *The Australian* on line. Go on to investigate Jesus' death and resurrection as the rescue operation par excellence. (2a)

HOW DO YOU FEEL WHEN . . .

Students describe and discuss: How do you feel when someone

- steals money out of your bag?
- bullies you in the playground?
- damages items you have lent them?
- talks about you unfairly?

How do they think God might feel about murder, abuse, rape of the earth? How might God respond? Go on to examine how God responds to human beings' rejection of God. (2a)

MISSION STATEMENTS Find examples of mission statements, eg school. What purpose does a mission statement serve? From the knowledge they have of Jesus, students write what they think his mission statement might have been while on earth. Students go on to compare their mission statement with what the Bible teaches about Jesus' mission and purpose on earth. (2a)

BAD NEWS, GOOD NEWS STORIES

Students brainstorm a list of disasters. Form two equal teams which line up facing each other. The first person on Team A begins with: 'Have you heard the bad news about . . .' to which the first person on Team B replies: 'Yes, but have you heard the good news that . . .' (same topic as A). Teams alternate to ask the question. Use the game to introduce the good news about Jesus. (2a,2b)

RECONCILIATION Students find a definition of the word 'reconciliation'. Brainstorm when and how the word can be used. Students investigate what Indigenous Australians understand by the word. Discuss:

- What is involved in the process of reconciliation?
- What is the difference between reconciliation and renewal?
- What is the relationship of past, present, and future in reconciliation?

Find examples of how reconciliation works in real-life situations, eg two friends being reconciled after an argument. Go on to examine the process/experience of reconciliation between God and people. (2c,3b)

3

God offers eternal life to all people

WHAT IF Survey student opinion on issues relating to judgment, life after death, and heaven, using *What if* questions, eg

- What if you were able to be the judge of the world for one day?
- What if you had the key to heaven?
- What if the world was to end within a week?
- What if you could create your own heaven?
- What if you had the power to terminate people's lives?

Ask students what they would do in each situation. They can use these questions to canvass other people's views. They compare the responses with the biblical teaching of what God does. (3a)

HEAVEN AND HELL Students draw or paint their impressions of heaven and hell. Find paintings and pictures which depict different people's impressions of heaven and hell. Choose images that span the centuries and cultures.

Brainstorm different words that are used for heaven and hell, eg Hades and Paradise. What questions do students have on the topic? Go on to look at the Bible's use of picture language for heaven and hell. (3a)

'LIFE AFTER DEATH' IN MOVIES

Students view extracts from films such as *Flatliners* and *Ghost*. Students discuss:

- How is life after death represented?
- Who has pleasant experiences? painful experiences?
- What is the connection between people's life on earth and their life after death?
- Where do you think film-makers get their ideas about life after death?
- Do you think there is life after death? What ideas and experiences have contributed to this opinion?

Students explore how different religions (including the Christian perspective) present life after death. (3a)

VISIT TO A CEMETERY

If appropriate, take students to a cemetery. Students record on a work sheet the inscriptions, Bible references and symbols found on the headstones. What can be learnt about how people view life, death, and the life beyond death? What is revealed about people's relationships with the dead?

Students share what their main concerns are about death.

Students find out what comfort (or discomfort) the Bible offers people facing death and compare this with other religions' approach to death. (3a)

THE FUTURE Students predict what life will be like fifty years on. How does their point of view compare with the future presented in films, eg *Bladerunner*, the *Mad Max* series, science fiction films? To what degree is the students' view of the future determined by their present and past experiences?

Students predict their ideal future. To make that a reality, what would have to change in the present? Go on to examine the picture language used by the Bible for the future. (3a)

RENOVATING Students interview people who like fixing up old furniture or cars or houses. What motivates a person to remake things? What do they hope to gain from it? How do they feel when the job is complete?

Students go on to investigate Christians' experience of God's redeeming work in their lives, eg see *A Case Study* in Development Activities Menu. (3b)

A NEW IDENTITY Investigate situations where people need a new identity to escape death, eg a witness protection program, as in the last ten minutes of the film *The Client*. A witness whose life is endangered will be given a new identity, new passport, new location, home and work. In Christ we are offered new citizenship.

Students then investigate what Jesus meant when he said 'no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again.' (John 3:3). (3a,3c,2b)

MENU

DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

1

Sin and evil ruin God's creation

THE STORY OF THE FALL Give a clear, expressive reading of Genesis 3:1–24. (If students are not familiar with the biblical account of the creation of people, read Genesis 2 prior to this activity.)

Examine the story of the Fall in terms of its characters: the snake, the man, the woman, God. Divide the class into small groups, assign a character to each group. The group's ideas are recorded on a large sheet of paper.

What can be learnt about the characters from

- what they do?
- what they say?
- how they relate to other characters?
- how they react to situations?

What is the motivation for each character's actions?

Each group gives the story their own title which sums up the story. Students justify their choice of title. (1a)

IT ONLY TAKES A SPARK List the different expressions of sin in the story of the Fall, eg corruption of truth, pride, disharmony.

Read

Genesis 4:1–16 Genesis 6:5,6,
Genesis 6:11–12 Genesis 11:1–7.

Students plot the consequence of sin for human beings (see TRS D2/1). (1a,1b)

A MODERN VERSION

We are tempted by our own desires that drag us off and trap us. Our desire makes us sin, and when sin is finished with us, it leaves us dead. (James 1:14,15 CEV)

There are numerous novels and films which portray the depravity of human nature, eg *Batman*, *Wall Street*, *A Nightmare on Elm Street*, *Lord of the Flies*. Students reflect on and discuss how the films and novel explore what is said in James 1:14,15. Students can also plot the chain of events of the problems for which they themselves are responsible. (1b)

WHAT IS THE PROBLEM? The Bible often describes the battle between good and evil in terms of warfare.

Who is the enemy? See

Genesis 3:1–5 Luke 4:1–13
Ephesians 6:11–13 1 Peter 5:8.

What does the Bible say we should do when we face the enemy? See

Ephesians 6:10,11 James 4:7–10
1 Peter 5:9.

What is it about human beings that makes it so difficult to conquer the enemy? See

Psalms 51:5 Mark 7:17–23
Romans 8:7,8 James 1:13,14.

What can give human beings the victory over the enemy? See

Colossians 2:13–15 Colossians 3:9,10.

Students draw the 'spiritual' battlefield represented in the biblical texts, labelling it appropriately. (1b,2b)

HUMAN BEINGS ARE GOOD Students discuss the following belief some people have about the goal of life.

Human beings are good. If you educate people to value themselves, others and their world, then the world will be a better place and human beings will be able to evolve into better people capable of more and more.

Students test the validity of the belief against their experience. Students design the perfect education system. Contrast this with Jesus' words in Mark 7:17–23. (1b)

SO WHAT? What difference does it make what you believe about human beings?

Students record in a grid what various religious and secular groups believe about the nature of human beings, evil and the goal of life.

- How is the problem of evil resolved in each system of belief?
- What part do human beings play in the solution to the problem of evil?
- Where does God fit in the picture?

Students determine in what ways Christianity approaches these issues differently from the other belief systems. Use resources such as *A Lion Handbook: The World Religions* and refer to the Bible References Menu. (1b, 1c)

DAVID AND BATHSHEBA

(See 2 Samuel 11,12) Take the role of a storyteller. Give students the sordid details of Uriah's death. Conclude your story with the announcement that David marries Uriah's wife who is already pregnant with David's child.

Canvass student reactions to David. Should punishment be meted out, or does being king give David the right to behave as he wishes?

Students investigate the events that led to Uriah's death, as well as the consequences of David's actions. Provide students with necessary background information on customs of the day, eg wives were seen as property, so David was guilty of theft as well as adultery and murder — hence the significance of Nathan's illustration.

Alternatively, use the above approach with the story of Solomon's disobedience of God recorded in 1 Kings 11.

Students determine whether the impact of present-day leaders' behaviour and morals is any different to David and Solomon's day. (1a,1c)

THE QUESTION OF SUFFERING The book of Job can offer a valuable study on the question of suffering, explanations as to why there is suffering, and God's action in the midst of people's suffering. Refer to an outline of Job such as the one given in *The Lion Handbook to the Bible. Why Do People Suffer?* (A Lion Manual) provides some excellent discussion starters and approaches for an exploration of students' questions about human suffering and the answers given in the Bible.

Students engaged in this study could present their findings in the form of a play. (1a,1b,1c)

2

God rescues people from sin and its consequences

THE FALL OF JERUSALEM

2 Chronicles 36:15–23 summarises

- Israel's disobedience and idolatry (v15,16)
- (which led to) their exile in Babylon (v17–21)
- God's ever present mercy and Israel's return to Jerusalem under Cyrus king of Persia (v22–23).

Students identify the pattern of sin, consequences, restoration. What evidence is there in the text of God's grace and love for his people? What is the significance of the words 'and there was no remedy'? (v16).

To explore this topic in greater depth complete the following three activities

1. WARNING BELLS The prophets of God in Israel's history had the unenviable task of pointing out to God's people their total disregard for God's words. The prophets also reminded the people of God's continued care for them, despite their actions. The prophets warned that if Israel did not repent, they would forfeit God's gracious gifts.

Students investigate in small groups what different prophets said to the people of God.

Isaiah 5:1–25	Isaiah 57:13–19
Isaiah 58:1–10	Isaiah 59:1,2, 12–16
Jeremiah 3:12–14	Jeremiah 7:1–15, 21–29
Hosea 5	Hosea 11:1–4, 8,9
Amos 5:4–15	

Action groups in our communities inform households of their visions via letterbox flyers. Students produce flyers proclaiming the prophets' main message to the people of God.

- What are Israel's sins? What is their greatest sin?
- How does God feel?
- What do the prophets urge Israel to do?
- What warnings from God do the prophets pass on to the people? (2a)

2. LIFE IN BABYLON Using Bible references, handbooks and encyclopedias, students create fact sheets on the following topics:

- the rise and fall of the Babylonian empire
- Babylonian religion
- living conditions for Israelites during captivity
- Israelites' longing for Jerusalem and the temple
- prophets' words of hope.

Psalms 137	Isaiah 40:1–5
Isaiah 43:1–7	Isaiah 49:8–26
Jeremiah 29,30	Jeremiah 31:7–9
Lamentations	Ezekiel 36:22–38
Ezekiel 37:1–14	Daniel. (2a)

3. ISRAEL'S RETURN FROM CAPTIVITY

Divide the class into two groups. Each group reads appropriate portions of either Ezra or Nehemiah. They present a play or narrated tableau of several scenes.

REBUILDING THE TEMPLE

- | | |
|----------------------------------|----------|
| 1: Cyrus helps the exiles return | Ezra 1 |
| 2: Rebuilding the temple | Ezra 3 |
| 3: Dealing with opposition | Ezra 4,5 |
| 4: Completion of the temple | Ezra 6 |

REBUILDING THE WALL OF JERUSALEM

- | | |
|--|-------------------|
| 1: Nehemiah sent to Jerusalem | Nehemiah 2 |
| 2: Dealing with opposition | Nehemiah 4 |
| 3: Dedication of the wall of Jerusalem | Nehemiah 12:27–47 |

Students discuss how God works through events and people. What evidence is there of God's grace towards the Israelites? Students compare Israelites' attitude to God before, during and after the exile. What will God need to do to solve the problem of sin? (2a)

THE IMPOSSIBLE DREAM *The Impossible Dream* is a song from the musical *The Man of La Mancha (Don Quixote)*. The story can be seen as a parallel to Jesus' life. Students identify the way in which Jesus accomplishes the very things the man from La Mancha believes are desirable yet unachievable. Alternatively, look at the life and death of *Braveheart*. What parallels are there with Jesus? Use appropriate selections from the Bible References Menu. (2a)

A GOD OF RESCUE Students read Psalm 107. The psalm can be divided into a series of stanzas each of which describes a different instance of God's grace.

- In what predicament do those needing rescue find themselves?
- What has brought about their situation?
- What does God do to rescue them?
- What message about God does the writer give through his song?

Students give a dramatised reading of the psalm. (2a)

GOD AT WORK Students investigate various stories in the Bible in which people depend on God to save them from threatening situations. Students retell the story (role-play, cartoon strip, interview, paint/draw pictures) in the form of *problem* and *solution*.

- Israel at the Red Sea Exodus 14:5–31
- Israel at Jericho Joshua 5:13 – 6:20
- Gideon Judges 6:1 – 7:25
- Three men and the fiery furnace Daniel 3
- Daniel in the den of lions Daniel 6
- Persecution of Christians Acts 5:17–40 (3c, 2a)

JESUS FACES TEMPTATION Students read Luke 4:1–13. Examine each of the temptations.

- How does the devil tempt Jesus?
- What was the devil hoping to achieve?
- How does Jesus deal with the temptation?

Compare Jesus' temptation with the temptation scene in Genesis 3.

- Are the snake's tactics any different from the devil's?
- What did the snake achieve with the woman?

Read Hebrews 2:14–18; Hebrews 4:15.

- What important information do these verses give us about Jesus?
- What does it mean that Jesus was tempted in every way that human beings are tempted?

Students discuss how they see temptation at work in their lives (James 1:13,14).

- Do you think you are tempted in similar ways to the woman and Jesus?
- How does 1 Corinthians 10:13 comfort people who put their trust in God? (2b)

GOD SENT JESUS Jesus' identity is studied in greater depth in the LIFE Concept *Jesus*. However, in this concept it is important for students to be aware that Jesus does not see himself as working on his own behalf, but he knows that he is doing God's work and has been sent by God on a defined mission.

Help students to see the link between the temptation of Jesus and his sense of mission. Students discuss how being sent by God gives Jesus the authority to act, to do God's work.

See Luke 7:1–9, 16,17, 20–23

Luke 8:39	Luke 9:20
Luke 10:22	Luke 23:47
John 6:38, 51	John 7:16,17
John 8:42, 54	(2b)

WHAT HAS JESUS COME TO DO?

Using the Bible references below, students write a job description for Jesus as well as his mission statement.

Matthew 9:12–13	Matthew 20:28
Mark 8:31	Luke 3:4–6
Luke 4:18,19, 43	Luke 5:13, 31
Luke 6:6	Luke 18:31–33
Luke 19:10	John 3:17
John 4:34	John 5:17–19
John 7:7	John 9:39–41
John 10:10	John 12:46,47
John 17:4, 6–8.	(2b)

JESUS OFFERS ETERNAL LIFE

Jesus mentions eternal life repeatedly in the book of John:

4:13,14	5:24	6:35, 40
8:12	11:25,26	17:3.

Jesus' meeting with Nicodemus (chapter 3) and the raising of Lazarus (chapter 11) provide an added focus on the topic of eternal life.

Students discuss:

- What is eternal life?
- Who can have eternal life?
- How can a person receive eternal life?
- What added understanding of eternal life is given by images of water, bread and light?
- In light of what has been read and discussed, do we need to be afraid of death? (2b, 3a)

JESUS ON A RESCUE MISSION

Put students into seven groups and give each group a different Bible passage.

Mark 5:1–20 Luke 7:11–17
 Luke 13:10–17 Luke 19:1–10
 John 2:1–11 John 5:1–15
 John 8:1–10

Students read and discuss how Jesus rescues people in each situation.

- From what are people rescued?
- What difference does the rescue make to their life?
- What did the person have to do to be rescued?

Groups of students conduct role-plays in which the main character of their Bible passage is interviewed. Highlight Jesus' rescue operation and the change this makes to the person's life. (2b, 2c)

'CHRIST' FIGURES Students read stories of people whose life and death will help them understand and appreciate the enormity of Jesus' sacrificial death, eg

- church martyrs (Polycarp, Bonhoeffer, Kolbe)
- missionary heroes (Jim Elliott)
- church leaders (Romero, Father Gabriel in *The Mission*)
- historical heroes (Simpson and his donkey). (2a)

PSALM 51 This psalm explores the relationship between repentance and renewal, between repentance and being reconciled to God. Involve students in a guided discussion of the psalm:

- How does David feel about his wrongdoings? (refer to 2 Samuel 11,12)
- What does David believe about God?
- What does David want God to do for him?
- Why does David ask for a 'pure heart'?
- What makes sacrifices unsatisfactory to God?
- What can human beings do to make themselves right with God?

Divide the psalm into several sections: verses

1,2 3–6 7–9 10–12
 13–15 16,17 18,19.

In small groups students rewrite a section in their own words. Students' modern version of the psalm can be submitted to the worship committee of the school or a local congregation to use. (2c)

A GOD OF MERCY Students revisit stories in Genesis 1 – 11.

- How does sin affect God?
- What does God do about sin?
- How does God's love continue to be shown to people who have rejected him?

Note that it is God who comes looking for the people each time.

- God clothes Adam and Eve
- God places a mark on Cain
- God preserves Noah and his family.

Continue this investigation with the call of Abraham and the promises God gives him, Genesis 12:1–3.

The evidence of God's mercy in people's lives can be further explored in the life of Israel, in Jesus' dealings with people and in Christians' testimony today. (2c)

3**God offers eternal life to all people**

HEAVEN AND HELL In small groups students draw the picture of heaven and hell given in the Bible and compare them with famous artists' works. They should pay close attention to the imagery used. Students share their drawing with the class.

Heaven

Isaiah 65:17–25 Matthew 13:31–33, 44–46
 John 14:1,2 1 Corinthians 2:9
 1 Corinthians 15:42, 51–55
 2 Corinthians 5:1–4 Revelation 4:1–6
 Revelation 21:1–4

Hell

Matthew 25:30, 41 Luke 16:19–31
 Revelation 20:10 Revelation 21:8

Discuss: What experiences already in this life come closest to what heaven and hell will be?

In the same groups students investigate other religions' view of heaven and hell, eg Moslem, Mormon, Buddhist. Students write a short essay on 'Heaven and hell in _____'. (3a)

LIVING FREELY Students brainstorm the concerns they have about death and the life beyond. Students read some passages written by the apostles:

1 Corinthians 15:56–58 2 Corinthians 5:1–4
 Colossians 3:1–4 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18
 1 Thessalonians 5:1–11 1 Peter 1:3–9
 2 Peter 3:11–13.

What advice and hope do the apostles offer their readers? What role does Jesus play in these matters? Students imagine that the apostles are writing to their class. What would be the content of their message? (3a)

ANOTHER SET OF WARNINGS

Students compare warnings concerning the end of the world spoken by Jesus (Matthew 24: 25:31–33, 41–42) with predictions made by various people throughout the centuries, eg Nostradamus and cult groups such as the ones led by David Koresh and Jim Jones, which place great emphasis on the end of the world. There is a reasonable amount of information on cults available through the media, eg feature articles in local papers and magazines such as *Time*, *Bulletin*, *Australian magazine*, *Women's Weekly*; current affairs programs.

Jesus' warnings could also be compared with the warnings given by Old Testament prophets. Students use their journals to reflect on:

- How does talk about the end of the world affect me emotionally?
- How does the end of the world affect my ideas about the future?
- Did Jesus aim to scare his listeners or did he have another purpose?
- What can our attitude be to life in light of these warnings?
- Where does God's love fit in? (3a)

A CASE STUDY: PETER

- Jesus predicts Peter's denial
Matthew 26:31–35
- Peter disowns Jesus
Matthew 26:69–75
or John 18:15–27
- Jesus reinstates Peter
John 21:15–29.

Students write a letter Peter might have written to a close friend living in Capernaum in which he explains his actions and feelings, and his encounter with the risen Jesus.

The new Peter : Students read Acts 2,3,4 or view same story on the video *Acts*.

Students work in small groups and report back to the class about Peter's status in the group of believers, his personality, the content of his speeches, his work, his reactions to Jewish leaders, his faith in God.

Students compare the Peter they meet in the later chapters of the gospels with the Peter in the early chapters of Acts. What has brought about the change?

Students write a newspaper article that could appear in the *Early Christian Movement's Bulletin* or the *Pharisees' Chronicle*.

Alternatively, students dramatise sections as if they had been visitors in Jerusalem during the early days of the church who are now re-enacting the events for their village. (2b,2c,3b)

STRUGGLING TO BE FREE Trace Martin Luther's struggle to free himself from sin and God's anger through good works.

Investigate the role of penance, indulgences, pilgrimages in dealing with people's sins in the Middle Ages.

Focus on Luther's discovery that he did not have to make himself right; release and freedom from sin comes from *grace alone*, *Christ alone*, *faith alone*. (2b,3b,3c)

A FATHER'S LOVE Students read and reflect on the parable of The Lost Son (Luke 15:11–32). The parable can be studied in three sections: sin and its consequences, a father's gracious love, a fresh start.

Students can work in small groups doing a character analysis of the two sons and the father.

Students retell the story through a series of monologues given by each of the characters at different dramatic points in the story. (2c,3b,3c)

CITIZENS OF HEAVEN Students produce a series of documents for a citizen of heaven. They work in groups, each producing a different document: a birth certificate, a passport, a credit check, a credit rating, a will taken out after the death of Christ of which the resident is a beneficiary.

Use the following Bible references as a starting point:

John 3:3, 5–7, 16,	Romans 8:17
Galatians 3:26–28	Philippians 3:20
Colossians 3:12–15	Titus 3:4–7
1 Peter 1:3–5	1 Peter 2:11 (2b, 3b)

MAKING IT TO HEAVEN Many sects and religious groups are preoccupied with dealing with sin and with assuring for themselves a place in heaven when they die. For example:

- Jehovah's Witnesses and The Church of the Latter Day Saints doorknock for two purposes: to spread their message and to earn believers merit points.
- The main aim for a Hindu is to find release from the cycle of birth and rebirth.
- Buddhists have clear guidelines to help them achieve nirvana.

Students research and report on different religious groups' beliefs about

- sin
- salvation from sin
- death
- life after death
- the desired goal for life after death
- how this goal can be achieved.

Contrast the various beliefs with what the New Testament teaches about these things. See John 3:16, 36 Romans 3:22–24 1 Corinthians 15:42–44, 52–57 1 Thessalonians 5:13–18 Revelation 7:9–17.

OR students design a poster which advertises different religious groups' beliefs about life after death and how a person can achieve a happy life after death. (3a,3c,2b)

MENU

RESPONSE ACTIVITIES

1

Sin and evil ruin God's creation

A MODERN STORY OF THE FALL

Students identify the plot/pattern of the story of the Fall in Genesis 3. They create a new story of the Fall in a modern setting. They can present it as a cartoon strip, play script, picture book or as a traditional story. (1a)

A BOARD GAME Working in small groups, students create a board game which demonstrates

- the many ways (eg good actions, religious rituals) people try to make themselves into better people
- people's failure to do the right thing in many different circumstances.

The game ends when a person attains perfection. The game should incorporate the Christian understanding of

- sin
- the consequences of sin
- and what makes a person good.

Students are to

- name their game
- design and make the game board and playing pieces
- write the aim of the game and the rules of play.

Students can then spend an enjoyable lesson testing out each others' games, assessing how well each game fulfils the criteria. (1b, 1c)

REPORTING ON THE BATTLE

Students write a series of newspaper articles which appear in an edition of their choice over a period of time. The articles have as their focus the battle between God and Satan for control of people and the world. Students select from several contexts:

- Genesis 2 – 11
- King David and Bathsheba incident
- the story of the people of Israel
- Jesus' encounters with Satan
- the apostle Peter's struggles
- a person caught in the web of a cult

The final article reports on the end of the battle, the victor, consequences for the vanquished and the new regime which the victory brings. (1a, 1c, 2a, 3a)

2

God rescues people from sin and its consequences

A PLAY Students prepare and perform a dramatised version of any of the many rescue stories found in the Old and New Testaments. The play should clearly show

- WHO is being rescued
- WHAT the people in the story are being rescued from
- WHO rescues
- HOW the rescue is achieved
- THE CONSEQUENCES of the rescue. (2a)

STAINED-GLASS PANELS Students create a series of stained-glass panels on the theme 'Jesus comes to the rescue'. The focus of the content should be on what Jesus has come to do and by what authority he does these things (see Background Notes for Teachers *Why Jesus?*) Each group of students can take a different aspect of the theme. Display panels in the worship area of the school. (2b)

A HOPE CARD There are many people who suffer loss, personal fears, daily hardships. This is evident in the news items which are reported to us daily. Students select a news item which highlights some form of human suffering. Students design a card which conveys the message of what God wants to do for every person and the hope that God can bring into a situation. (2c, 3b)

3

God offers eternal life to all people

A CD Working in small groups, students select songs for a compact disc which celebrate the new status and identity that faith in Jesus gives to Christians. Students

- give the CD a title
- design a cover
- provide a short description of each song
- write an inside cover note which explains selection of songs in the CD.

Different groups' CDs can be presented to the class in the form of a publishers' launch. Students will therefore need a marketing campaign. (3a)

A BIOGRAPHY Students write a two-page biography to be included in a new publication to be titled *Changed Lives*. The publication seeks to highlight the hope and new direction in life that faith in Jesus has given to people. As subjects for their biography students can

- choose Bible persons such as the apostles Peter or Paul
- interview Christians they know
- research known Christians in history, eg Polycarp, Augustine
- or write their autobiography as a reflection of what faith in Jesus has given them. (3b)

POSTER Students design a poster which illustrates what each student believes will be his/her life after death. Students should include how they arrived at that 'point'. One possible student response could be a blank page. In that event the students need to attach an explanation. (3c)

MENU

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

The introduction to LIFE contains suggested general resources for all LIFE concepts.
The following resources may be used to develop a unit about *God saves people from sin and evil*.
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 RESOURCES

Ambrose G et al *The Discovery Wheel* 1993
National Society Church House Publishing
Cetron M & Davies O *Probable Tomorrows*
1997 St Martin's Press
Dowley T et al *The History of Christianity*
1977 A Lion Book
Hanks G *70 Great Christians* 1992 Christian
Focus Publications
Hunkin O *Dangerous Journey (the Story of
Pilgrim's Progress)* 1985 Candle Books
Lefevre P *One Hundred Stories to Change
Your Life* 1990 St Pauls
Lewis C S *The Screwtape Letters* 1990
Barbour & Company, Inc
Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation
1986 Concordia Publishing House Openbook
Publishers
McCaffrey T *Storytellers of God* 1996 Sheed
and Ward
Morphett A *Hole in My Ceiling* 1985 Hodder
and Stoughton
Nummela TA *Bible Impact Book 2* 1993
Concordia Publishing House
Pfitzner V *Masterplan* 1985 Lutheran
Publishing House
Pinchbeck L *Theme Games* 1993 Scripture
Union
Saraga J *How It was — The Medieval Church*
1994 BT Batsford Ltd
Sciacca J & Woods P *What, Me Holy?* 1993
David C Cook Publishing Co
Shibley D&N *The Smoke of a Thousand
Villages* 1989 Thomas Nelson Publishers
Short RL *The Gospel according to Peanuts*
1965 Collins Fontana
Smith L *All about Living, Book 2* 1986 Lion
Educational
Suzuki D *Time to Change* 1993 Allen & Unwin

Weiss N *According to Plan* 1984 Lutheran
Publishing House
Wendt H N *The Divine Drama* 1983 Shekinah
Foundation Inc
Wright C *Life Issues — a Christian
Perspective* 1997 Lion Publishing
Wright C *Key Christian Beliefs* 1995 Lion
Educational Eerdmans

THE FALL

Grant A & G *Once upon a Time* 1990 Tirian
Publications
Renner J T E *Genesis* 1984 Lutheran
Publishing House
Westermann C *A Thousand Years and a Day*
1962 Fortress Press

ISRAEL IN EXILE

Evans M J *The Progress of God's People
(Discovering the Bible series)* 1984 Hulton
Educational
Healy M *Nebuchadnezzar, Scourge of Zion*
1989 Firebird Books Ltd
Jerusalem Rebuilt — Ezra and Nehemiah The
Great Bible Discovery Book 16 1995

DEATH AND LIFE AFTER DEATH

Jones J *Why Do People Suffer? The Scandal
of Pain in God's World* 1993 Lion Publishing
Smith L *Death: The Final Journey?* 1988 Lion
Educational
Van Biema D *Does Heaven Exist?* March 24
1997 *Time* magazine

OTHER RELIGIONS AND CULTS

Borthwick P & Petersen R *Beliefs to Beware
Of* 1993 David C Cook Publishing Co
Keene M *Seekers after Truth* 1993
Cambridge University Press
Langley M *World Religions A Guide to the
Faiths That Shape the World* 1993 Lion
Publishing
Martin W *The Kingdom of the Cults* 1985
Bethany House

Mather G A et al *Dictionary of Cults, Sects, Religions and the Occult* 1993 Zondervan

McDowell J & Stewart D *The Deceivers* 1992 Scripture Press

There is a reasonable amount of information available on cults through the media, eg feature articles in local papers and magazines such as *Time*, *Bulletin*, *Australian magazine*, *Women's Weekly*; current affairs programs.

The World's Religions: A Lion Handbook 1994 Lion Publishing

LITERATURE — FICTION

Golding W *Lord of the Flies* 1962 Faber and Faber

VIDEO

Acts volumes 1–4 1995 Visual International

The Mission

Romero

Flatliners

Ghost

MUSIC

To dream the impossible dream from *The Man of La Mancha*

CD ROMS

Logos Bible Software 2.0 *Heaven*

Put a plastic sleeve in this section of your LIFE binder to keep your own collection of clippings, cartoons, stories, photos, etc which you can use for these units. Add to your collection whenever you come across something that might be useful.