

**GOD SAVES  
PEOPLE FROM  
SIN AND EVIL**



**BAND**

**D**

**PLANNING GUIDE**



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*God saves people from sin and evil* is one of twelve concepts covered by LIFE curriculum. This BAND D planning guide contains model units for two secondary school levels.

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# **GOD SAVES PEOPLE FROM SIN AND EVIL**

## **AIMS**

The ultimate aim of LIFE curriculum is that

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

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

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

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

## ***GOD SAVES PEOPLE FROM SIN AND EVIL***

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

Our aim in teaching this concept is that students

- hear,
- explore and
- reflect on

these faith statements:

1. Sin and evil ruin God's creation
2. God rescues people from sin and its consequences
3. God offers eternal life to all people

# BACKGROUND NOTES FOR TEACHERS

## GOD SAVES PEOPLE FROM SIN AND EVIL

**THE ORIGIN OF SIN** God could have created human beings as creatures for whom sin was an impossibility, but he did not want human beings to be puppets or robots. He gave them free will. Before they sinned, human beings could choose to obey or disobey God.

God put one very simple restriction on Adam and Eve's life in the garden: they were not to eat the fruit of one tree (Genesis 2:15–17). The devil tempted them to question why there should be any restrictions at all. Why shouldn't they be on the same level as God? The first sin set the pattern for every sin — human beings wanting to be God, doing what they want instead of what God has commanded.

Sin is not just wrong actions, thoughts, words or feelings; it is above all a condition, a spiritual disease that infects every human being (Romans 5:12; John 3:6). The first (original) sin contaminated the whole human race; it corrupted human nature completely (Ephesians 2:1–3). By choosing to disobey God, human beings lost their free will; now we are by nature free only to choose to go against God. The sinful nature we inherit from our parents is not just neutral towards God; it is actively opposed to God (Romans 8:7). We can never live up to the standard of goodness God expects: perfect love for God and for all people. As history and our own experience teach, any human being is capable of the greatest wickedness (Matthew 7:17).

**THE EFFECTS OF SIN** The fall into sin brought into the world guilt, disharmony, suffering, and death —spiritual, physical and eternal. It resulted in **broken relationships**

- **with God.** Adam and Eve tried to hide from God because they knew they were guilty and were afraid God would punish them (Genesis 3:7–10). Their sin put a barrier between them and God so that they could no longer live in fellowship with him. We are totally unable to do anything to repair our broken relationship with God.
- **with ourselves.** Guilt, bad conscience, fear, insecurity, despair and every other

negative aspect of human personality can be traced back to the fall into sin.

- **with other people.** Note how Adam and Eve fell out with each other as soon as they fell out with God. They were ashamed of their nakedness in front of each other. A pattern of blame, disagreement, strife, self-centredness, hatred, anger and violence was soon apparent (Cain and Abel [Genesis 4], Flood stories [Genesis 6 – 9]).
- **with nature.** Nature now tends to work against human beings (Genesis 3:17–19), and we exploit nature instead of faithfully managing it as God's servants.

**GOD DEALS WITH SIN** As God had warned Adam and Eve, the moment they sinned they began to die physically, but they

also plunged themselves into spiritual death (separation from God in this life) and eternal death (separation from God forever).

But God loved the human beings he had created. The Old Testament tells how God

graciously rescued his people again and again. Through the events of their history and through his prophets, God encouraged his people to look forward to the time when he would send a Saviour to forever rescue them and all people from sin and its consequences.

**WHY JESUS?** Because God is holy and just, he cannot simply shut his eyes and ignore human sin. God's demands have to be met. The penalty for sin has to be paid.

God planned to send someone to take the place of all human beings. The Saviour had to be

- a perfect human being, uncontaminated by the original sin and guilt;
- willing to take on the sin and guilt of the entire human race;
- willing to pay the penalty for all the sin and guilt of the human race;
- able to overcome death and all the consequences of sin.

God is not responsible for sin and evil. Everything God created was good. It is the fault of human beings that God's creation has been ruined by sin and evil. The story of the Fall (Genesis 3) explains why there is sin and evil in the world and in us.

No ordinary human being could meet these requirements. God so much wanted to save the world and bring people back to life with him that he sent his own Son (John 3:16). Born as a human being, but perfect, free from sin and guilt, Jesus Christ lived for us human beings the perfect life we are supposed to live. He also took the blame for our sins and was punished instead of us. He defeated Satan and death for us by rising again from the dead (2 Timothy 2:9,10). For Jesus' sake God has forgiven the sins of the whole human race completely and unconditionally. Everyone who repents of his/her sin, trusts God's mercy and believes in Jesus has the forgiveness of all sin.

**ETERNAL LIFE** Jesus reconciled the human race to God so that God's original intention for human beings could be achieved, namely, that we can live forever in perfect harmony and fellowship with God. Whoever believes in Jesus has eternal life (John 3:16) as a present reality (John 3:36; 5:24) and as a future hope (1 John 3:1–3; 1 Peter 1:3–9).

Eternal life is one of the gifts God gives in baptism. All who believe and are baptised are

given new life as children of God (Galatians 3:26,27), who are no longer under the control of sin or under the threat of the law and judgment, but who live under God's grace (John 3:18; Romans 8:1,2)

If we believe in Jesus we also have the certain and 'living' hope that life with God will not end when we die. We will not 'perish'. Not even death can snatch us out of the Father's hand (John 10:28,29). We will still be in fellowship with God — which is what 'heaven' or 'paradise' means (Luke 23:43). Our 'perishable' bodies will be raised to life again to be like Jesus' glorious body (Philippians 3:20,21; 1 Corinthians 15:35–57).

The Bible uses picture language (eg in Revelation) to describe the bliss of heaven, which is beyond all earthly experience and human imagination (1 Corinthians 2:9). We will no longer be subject to the restrictions of physical laws (time and space; compare with Jesus' body after his resurrection) or to the things that now spoil our life — sin, evil, suffering, sorrow (Revelation 21:3–4). There will be only perfect joy (Psalm 16:11).

### FOR REFLECTION AND/OR DISCUSSION

1. What questions do the *Background Notes* raise for you? What questions do you think your students will have on this topic?

2. Why is this an important topic to teach to your students? What implications might the topic have for the life of your school?

3. Comment on the following:

*Adam and Eve together are the human race as God created it and as it turned away from its Creator — the human race as represented in every one of us.*

*The story of Adam and Eve . . . the man and the woman, is the story of all of us and not only of two people who lived long ago in a day with which we have no connection . . . We know them well, not from archaeological excavations, but from ourselves.*

(*The Church's Faith*, Regin Preter pp 52, 53)

4. 'There is no person so bad and sinful that his or her sins have not been forgiven.' Do you agree or disagree? Does this mean, for example, that God has forgiven the sins of people who go to hell?

5. Eternal life is both a present reality and a future hope. Do you think that in our church's teaching we emphasise both aspects sufficiently? Do we, for example, talk too little or too much about heaven? . . . too little or too much about life with God here and now?

### FOR FURTHER READING

Augsburg Confession Article II (Original Sin), *Book of Concord* p29;

Apology pp 100–107;

Article XVIII (Free Will), pp 39,40;

Apology pp 224–226;

Article XIX (The Cause of Sin), p 40,41;

Article IV (Justification), p 30; Apology pp 107–168.

Also Article I of Smalcald Articles and Articles I–III in the Formula of Concord.

Luther's Large Catechism and Small Catechism: the Second Part of the Apostles' Creed.

*Good Question*  
pp 76,77 (Jesus' death);  
p 80 (Life after death)

*Doctrinal Statements and Theological Opinions* I 1–3 (the body-soul question)

# BAND D STUDENTS

<b>DEVELOPMENTAL CHARACTERISTICS</b>		<b>IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHING</b>
Students want to be able to slot new ideas and knowledge into an existing framework of reference.	➡	Avoid getting sidetracked from the important issues dealt with in the biblical stories by questions such as 'Were there other human beings created apart from Adam and Eve?' 'Did Cain marry his sister?' Provide students with an explanation of the Bible's frame of reference.
Students live in a secular society which has little or no knowledge of biblical times and culture.	➡	What contemporary symbols, images, language do students associate with loss, death, rescue, the future, hope? Use these to form a bridge to understanding the biblical symbols and images.
Students are curious. Cults, other worlds, evil spirits, angels etc fascinate students. Students can be easily impressed by media sensationalism on these topics.	➡	Encourage students to examine critically films and literature on heaven, hell, life after death: Whose views are represented? Is the view of life after death for effect or a genuine exploration of the issues? etc
Students have a strong sense of justice.	➡	Discuss the consequences of sin, Jesus' death and resurrection in terms of God's sense of justice. It is important to place God's justice in the context of his love and grace towards people.
Students can experience a high level of anxiety as they come to terms with their changing person, changing friendships and changing roles.	➡	The theme of rescue is most appropriate for this stage of development. The good news of God's love and rescue must not be lost in a study of sin and its consequences.
This is a time when students are developing their self-identity.	➡	Rebirth, a new identity, transformation from the old to the new are part of God's offer of eternal life. Use the language which students use to communicate their identity to talk about Christians' identity being linked to God and Jesus.
Students are developing in their ability to reflect on their feelings and the world around them. They are sensitive, reluctant to expose their inner thoughts.	➡	Provide ample opportunities for journal writing and reflection on the relevance of God's good news for their own situation. Provide creative tasks and outcomes where students can explore and share their ideas in a less personal manner.

# NOTES