

SERVICE

GOD CALLS

SERVICE

PEOPLE TO

SERVE

SERVICE



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PLANNING GUIDE

SERVICE



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God calls people to serve 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 CALLS

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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 CALLS PEOPLE TO SERVE

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

Our aim in teaching this concept is that students

- hear,
- explore and
- reflect on

these faith statements:

1. God's love inspires and equips Christians to love and serve others
2. God calls all people to work for peace and justice
3. God calls Christians to share the Good News by words and actions

BACKGROUND NOTES FOR TEACHERS

GOD CALLS PEOPLE TO SERVE

God calls us and all people to serve at various levels and in various ways: by helping individuals, families, and people in our various communities (school, church, regional, national, world). We are to serve unselfishly and without thought of reward. This goes against our natural self-centredness which asks 'What's in it for me?', and looks for recognition from God and/or other people.

It is true that we don't have to be Christians to be able to do good things for other people. If we wanted to, we could train students to perform acts of service without any reference to the gospel of Christ. We could condition them to serve simply by telling them this is what they ought to do, by rewarding acts of kindness and showing disapproval of selfishness. However, our teaching about serving would then be legalistic moralising, little different from the teaching students might get in non-Christian schools.

Christian service flows from a person's relationship with Christ. For our sake Jesus 'made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant' (Philippians 2:7). He 'did not come to be served, but to serve and to give his life a ransom for many'. In his kingdom the servant is greatest (Mark 10:35–45; John 13:1–17).

By giving himself for us in humble service, Christ has set us free from the slavery of selfishness so that we can serve God and other people in self-giving love (agape). By means of the gospel the Holy Spirit transforms us, giving us a new heart and a right spirit, so that we can truly love God and our neighbour. As Jesus said, 'a good tree produces good fruit' (Matthew 7:17); the branches are fruitful because they grow from the vine (John 15:1–5). We are not saved **by** good works, but we are saved **for** good works (Ephesians 2:9,10).

Christian service is an expression of the self-giving love which we have experienced from God and which God has 'poured' into our hearts (Romans 5:5). 'We love because God loved us first' (1 John 4:19).

SERVE IN OUR CALLING Christians serve by attempting to meet the needs of others (eg the poor, sick, disadvantaged and oppressed) in their local and wider communities. This includes sacrificial giving, personal involvement in charitable work, and working with others in the churches and community to change factors which contribute towards the misery of others.

God's love inspires Christians to serve others also in their daily calling, for example as parents, children, teachers, students. 'Christians view their calling, their job, their occupation as the chief way in which they can serve, help and benefit their fellows' (H Hamann, *On Being a Christian* p 61). It is not too early to teach students this view of their future occupations.

Even the smallest and 'lowliest' act of service that is done in faith is acknowledged by God. In

the parable of the last judgment the king says: 'Whenever you did it (gave food, drink or clothing, welcomed strangers etc) for any of my people, no matter how unimportant they seemed, you did it for me' (Matthew 25:40; see also 10:42).

PEACE AND JUSTICE We can serve other people by striving to establish and maintain peace and justice for all. Peace (shalom) does not mean only the absence of war; it also means wholeness and well-being. Justice includes upholding the rights of every individual person. Christians' motivation in striving for peace and justice flows from the gospel, which proclaims Jesus as the one who has brought peace and righteousness into our broken world. He is the 'Prince of Peace' (Isaiah 9:6) through whom we are reconciled to God and to one another.

We don't have to be Christians to be concerned about peace and justice, and being concerned about these things certainly doesn't make us Christian. But the very fact that we are God's people in the world means that we can and should take the lead in serving the world in this way. The Bible says: 'Speak up for

God calls us to walk with him in the way of love and service . . . There are many people in the world whose lives have been wrecked by brokenness of many kinds. Disciples love them, stand beside them and bring the healing and help of Jesus into their lives and work for justice in society.
(Theological Foundations of LIFE Curriculum)

those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy' (Proverbs 31:8,9 NIV).

As Christians we are God's gifts to the world because we have been entrusted with the gospel. This is the power that can change human nature, so that peace, reconciliation and justice become realities.

GOD'S SPECIAL AGENTS The Bible encourages Christians to see themselves as God's servants who are sent to serve the world for God. They are to bring God's kingdom — God's loving rule — to people by their words and deeds.

Already in the Old Testament God's people were supposed to see themselves as his agents or representatives in the world. By what they said and what they did as God's chosen people they were to present God to the world (eg: 'I will . . . make you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring my salvation to the ends of the earth'. Isaiah 49:6). Prophets had a special role as God's spokespersons to tell their own and other nations God's warnings and promises.

In the New Testament Jesus sent his disciples out as his 'special agents', giving them 'power and authority' to preach the gospel, heal the sick, and drive out demons in his name (Luke 9:1–6; 10:1–16). Later he told them to go to 'all nations' (Luke 24:47; Matthew 28:19,20). They were to be his 'witnesses' (Acts 1:8), who would tell the world what they had seen and heard. They were 'apostles' — people who were sent out, commissioned to speak and act for God (eg Mark 3:14). They were 'evangelists' — people who had good news to tell. Paul spoke of himself and other Christians as 'Christ's ambassadors' (2 Corinthians 5:20) to whom God had given 'the ministry of reconciliation'. They were people on a mission, sent to carry on Jesus' peace mission (John 20:21).

All Christians are witnesses who are called to testify of God's love (1 Peter 2:9). They do this individually and corporately (eg as a congregation or school) when they tell other people the good news about Jesus. But the loving and serving lives of Christians — their response to the gospel of Jesus Christ — are also a powerful witness (Matthew 5:13–16).

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. Students sometimes say: 'Why should we help people who are poor? It usually is their own fault; either they are lazy or they have not used their resources and opportunities wisely.' How would you respond to this?
4. 'The church should concentrate on preaching the gospel and leave issues such as reconciliation to secular bodies.' Comment. Discuss to what extent, if any, the church should be involved in social justice issues.
5. Explore the concept of your school as an 'embassy' for Christ in your community.

FOR FURTHER READING

Explanations of the Ten Commandments in Luther's Small and Large Catechisms

Formula of Concord, Article IV: Good works (*Book of Concord* pp 551–558). See also Friedemann Hebart's commentary on this in *One in the Gospel* (chapter 6: *Fruits on a Good Tree*).

On Being a Christian, H Hamann, Lutheran Publishing House, pp 58–63: *Freed to love others; Freed in our view of work*.

Good Question, ed Brian Schwarz, Openbook Publishers: *Poverty, Social Justice*.

Statement on Poverty LCA Commission on Social Questions (includes discussion questions)

Human Rights Doctrinal Statements of LCA (Vol 2)

The Servant Congregation by Ian Rentsch (available through National Schools Office)

BAND D STUDENTS

DEVELOPMENTAL CHARACTERISTICS
<p>Students' sense of justice and compassion for the suffering are developing (not so much for their peers as for the marginalised and alienated people elsewhere).</p> <p>Responses by students may well be emotional/sympathetic rather than knowledgeable and empathetic.</p>
<p>Students are idealistic, attracted to genuine love and concern yet quick to identify hypocrisy in others, in particular the gap between what Christians say and do.</p>
<p>Students are growing in their ability to deal with abstract concepts, broadening their world view and their ability to relate one set of ideas to another.</p>
<p>Students are reflecting more on their emotions and actions, beginning to ask probing questions on the meaning and purpose in their lives.</p> <p>Students are beginning to become aware of their own prejudices, weaknesses and hypocrisy.</p>
<p>Students are increasingly given greater responsibilities and resources. Some students have already begun part-time employment out of school hours.</p>



IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHING
<p>Help students both to identify the marginalised in the world and to understand what marginalises people.</p> <p>Help students to understand the context of the suffering they may see.</p> <p>Present students with the radical nature of God's love, which embraces the marginalised and challenges people to respond to others in love and service.</p> <p>Help students to be aware of and to counter marginalisation in the class.</p>
<p>Direct students' attention to the many positive contributions Christians have made and continue to make to the welfare of the community in which they live. An investigation into what local Christians are doing may help to break the stereotypes of Christianity students have.</p>
<p>Teach students how to formulate questions that will help them investigate, analyse and evaluate views on love, peace, justice they encounter in the media and society. Explore with students Jesus' more difficult teachings on peace, love and justice.</p>
<p>Students ask many questions. Often there are no clear, easy answers. It is important to treat students' questions with respect, to engage in dialogue with them, to share our own questions with them. Topics of Christian service, vocation, working for peace and justice open themselves to questions about the meaning of life, as well as to an evaluation of one's beliefs, attitudes and behaviour.</p> <p>Provide times of quiet, reflection, journal writing (stressing confidentiality) to give students time to absorb the material given to them.</p>
<p>Encourage students to identify in their workplace evidence of issues relating to peace, justice and Christian service.</p> <p>Give students opportunities to reflect on how they make use of their talents and resources.</p>

Students are full of imagination, demonstrating a wide range of ability, preferring to do rather than to listen or read.



Encourage ownership and enjoyment of units of work by involving students in the planning of a unit of work, finding resources etc. Give students a range of creative tasks and outcomes to choose from, so that they can explore, share and reflect on their ideas on the topic of research or discussion.

Provide opportunities for students to serve one another, the school, the community etc.

Be prepared for some service tasks undertaken by students to 'fail' (as a result of poor preparation, poor execution, unsuitability, etc). Treat these 'failures' as growing and learning experiences.