**LIFE CONCEPT:** GOD CALLS PEOPLE TO BE JESUS’ DISCIPLES

**YEAR:** ...............  **SUGGESTED DURATION:** 4 weeks (approximately 100 minutes per week)

**DATE OF USE:** ...........................................  **FAITH STATEMENTS:** ① ② ③

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**UNIT SPECIFIC GOALS (highlighted)**

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<th>2. JESUS’ DISCIPLES ARE FORGIVEN AND FORGIVING</th>
<th>3. JESUS’ DISCIPLES LIVE BY GOD-GIVEN VALUES AND ETHICS</th>
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<td>1a explore Bible stories of Jesus and his disciples</td>
<td>2a investigate the Christian understanding of forgiveness</td>
<td>3a explore Bible stories in which people make choices</td>
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<td>1b identify ways Jesus is a friend</td>
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<td>1c explore the benefits of being a friend of Jesus</td>
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**STUDENT ASSESSMENT**

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<th>ASSESSABLE STUDENT OUTCOMES</th>
<th>ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES</th>
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<td>Identify choices they make in everyday life. (3b)</td>
<td>Time line, illustrations or sharing with a partner</td>
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<td>Predict the choice that Paul and Philemon may have made about Onesimus. (3a)</td>
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<td>Record choices they could make and the possible consequences of each option. (3b,3c)</td>
<td>TRS A3/4</td>
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<td>Illustrate what a follower of Jesus could do after making a wrong choice. (1c,2b)</td>
<td>work sample</td>
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**UNIT SUMMARY**

Students investigate the meaning of the word *disciples* and learn that Christians use the word to describe people who follow Jesus. They hear about Paul, a follower of Jesus, and consider the choice that Paul and Philemon had to make regarding the slave Onesimus. Students are helped to consider options and the consequences of choices they make, and hear the Bible’s message that God forgives when Jesus’ disciples make the wrong choice.
UNIT NOTES

This unit leads students to consider the choices they have and the consequences of decisions they make. If students have not had previous exposure to behaviour management programs which encourage them to think about their actions, they may need extra time to understand that they do have choices in the way they act. Allow time to explore this concept and make use of material from other curriculum areas, eg Health, Behaviour Management.

Students are also introduced to the word *disciple* as a person who follows Jesus. A more detailed study of Jesus’ disciples is done in model units for Band A Level 1 and Band B Level 1.

WORDS TO KNOW

| disciples | follow | slave | choice | decision | consequence |

Give students experience in making choices through activities like the following. These need not be done in Christian Studies.

- Read a choose-your-own-ending story.
- Play games which involve making choices.
- Model appropriate language in everyday classroom conversation, eg
  - What would you choose?
  - You decide.
  - You could decide to . . . or to . . .

INTRODUCTION

1. CHOICES

Students work in groups and either make a list or draw a time line of some of the choices they have made so far today, eg what to eat, what to play at recess. Students circle the choices that they think are the most difficult and the most important. As a class talk about choices that people make and begin to categorise them into easy and difficult choices.

DEVELOPMENT

2. WHAT IS A DISCIPLE

Write the word *disciple* on the board and ask students where they have heard this word and what they know about disciples. Through discussion develop the following concepts about disciples:

- When the Bible talks about disciples, it is talking about the people whom Jesus chose to follow him. These people became Jesus’ friends while he was on earth. They travelled with him, saw the things he did and learnt from him. When Jesus went back to heaven, they continued Jesus’ work of showing love to others and telling them about Jesus.
- People who believe in Jesus today can also be called followers of Jesus or disciples. Followers of Jesus today know that Jesus is their friend. They also want to show love to others and tell people about Jesus.

The Bible tells about Paul, another person who became a follower of Jesus and came to know that Jesus was his friend.

(The person, conversion and work of Paul are dealt with in the concept *God calls people to serve*. If you have already studied this unit, review the story of Paul’s conversion. If you have not done this, use a Bible story book to tell the story of Paul’s conversion.)

3. THE STORY OF PHILEMON

Use an adult Bible to show students the book of Philemon. Tell them that this book contains a letter written by Paul. This letter tells about a choice that Paul had to make. Because Paul followed Jesus, he wanted the choices he made to be choices that showed love to others. Paul had already written these words that are in the Bible: *Let love be your guide.* (1 Corinthians 14:1) Now it was time for Paul to think of the best way to show love.

Use Teacher Resource Sheet (TRS) A3/1 to share the story found in Philemon.

Tell students that the Bible does not say what decision Philemon made. Students write and illustrate what they think he did.

4. CHOICES AND CONSEQUENCES

When people make a choice, there is always a consequence. To help students understand the word ‘consequences’ use *Andrew’s Story* on TRS A3/2 and consider the questions at the end.

Students identify a time in their own life when they made a choice and experienced a particular consequence. Students could each tell a partner about this or illustrate what they decided to do on one side of a page and the consequence on the other.
5. MAKING THE RIGHT CHOICE

You are aiming to develop these concepts:
- People do have a choice about the way they respond to a situation.
- People make different choices. There is not always one ‘right’ decision.
- People can ask themselves questions to help them make a choice.
- People who follow Jesus will want to use what the Bible says to help them make the right choice.

Sometimes it is hard to make a choice that shows love. Students suggest times when they find it hard to show love. Record these scenarios for use in the following activity. For extra ideas use TRS A3/3.

As a class discuss at least one situation where it is hard to show love. Use the chart on TRS A3/4 to help students identify possible choices and consequences. Guide discussion with questions like the following:
- What choices do I have in this situation?
- What might be the consequences if I go ahead and make a decision to act in a certain way?
- How will my decision make me feel?
- How will my decision make the other person/people feel?
- What things would a follower of Jesus need to think about before making this choice?

Students choose a scenario and complete the chart on TRS A3/4 by themselves.

Allow ample time for students to talk about real-life choices and work through the decision-making process. Use support material from other curriculum areas, eg Behaviour Management, Ethics.

6. JESUS’ CHOICE

Sometimes people make the wrong choice and do things that hurt or upset others. Discuss times when this has happened to you and invite students to share their experiences.

The Bible tells that Jesus made a choice. His choice was to die for all people. The consequence of Jesus’ choice is that people can be friends with God.

Paul explained it like this: When Jesus died, God was making all people his friends. God doesn’t remember their sin any more. (a paraphrase of 1 Corinthians 5:18,19)

People who follow Jesus know they can say sorry for their wrong choices and that God will forgive them.

Select from the following options:
- Students illustrate a time when they know that they made a wrong choice. Discuss students’ illustrations with them on an individual basis, and through questioning talk about what they could have done. The teacher adds an appropriate caption to the illustration, eg The Bible tells you that you are God’s friend; The Bible tells you that God forgives you; The Bible tells you that God loves you.
- Tell or review the story of Paul’s conversion as a story of Jesus’ forgiveness. Discuss the readiness of Jesus to forgive Paul even before Paul said sorry.
- Use a children’s Bible to revisit stories of Jesus’ forgiveness that students have heard before, eg Zacchaeus, the thief on the cross. Discuss the wrong choices the people had made and what Jesus’ forgiveness meant for them.
- Students illustrate what they think a person who follows Jesus could do if they have made a wrong choice.

RESPONSE

7. SUMMARY

Students use one of the following options to summarise what they have learnt in this unit:
- Students make posters for the classroom or for their own use which outline steps to consider when making choices. Encourage students to add an appropriate step if the choice they make turns out to be a wrong choice.
- Students write and illustrate their own ‘choose your own ending’ story. Encourage students to include at least one choice that shows what they have learnt about people who follow Jesus.
GOD CALLS PEOPLE TO BE JESUS' DISCIPLES

YOU WILL NEED

- support material from Behaviour Management or Ethics curriculum documents
- an adult Bible. Read the story of Philemon yourself before telling it to the students.
- materials for the options you choose
- photocopies of TRS A3/4 for students’ use

INTEGRATING INTO OTHER CURRICULUM AREAS

ENGLISH: Literature: Through discussion, relate what is read and viewed to own knowledge and experience; appreciate that people can have different interpretations of the same text; predict what will happen next, pose discussion questions.

SOCIETY AND ENVIRONMENT: Investigation, Communication, Participation: Choose between alternative ways of interacting with others; develop strategies for making their own decisions.

HEALTH: Interaction, Relationships and Groups: Develop skills in listening, helping, negotiation, sharing, caring; cooperate with others, listen to others’ opinions. Community Practices: Identify right/wrong, good/bad; recognise community standards.

THE ARTS: Visual Arts: Use simple skills of visual communication, eg lettering, layout.

UNIT EVALUATION

Which activities worked well in this unit?

Which resources were useful in the implementation of this unit?

How did I respond to the range of students’ understanding of the word disciple as a person who follows Jesus?

How did I respond to the range of students’ attitudes and understanding that they are responsible for the choices they make?

What would I do differently if I was teaching this unit again? How will I use and build on knowledge, understandings, skills, attitudes, and values students have developed in this unit?
Before telling this story, use the following information to introduce the characters and the context of the story. You could make illustrations of the three people as you introduce them.

**Philemon:** Philemon was a Christian. He was an important man in the church. He was also rich and had many slaves who worked for him.

**Onesimus:** Onesimus was a slave of Philemon, but he had run away.
In those days, people who were slaves ‘belonged’ to their owners. Their owners were in control of their lives. If a slave ran away, the owner could order that the slave be put to death.

**Paul:** Paul was not one of the twelve disciples. But after Jesus went back to heaven, he chose Paul to be one his followers. Paul became an important leader of the Christian church.
Paul was good friends with Philemon and Onesimus.
Paul had met Philemon and told him about Jesus. Philemon was now a leader in one of the churches that Paul had started.
The Bible doesn’t tell where Onesimus met Paul, but Paul also told him about Jesus and Onesimus became a Christian.
When our story took place, Paul had been arrested by his enemies and kept under guard in his own house.
Onesimus helped Paul when he was under arrest and Paul loved him as much as would have loved his own children.

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**A LETTER TO PHILEMON**

**A DECISION FOR PAUL**

Paul had a problem. What would he do about Onesimus?

Onesimus was a good friend of his who was helping him while Paul was in jail.

But Paul knew that Onesimus should really be back with his master, Philemon.

What choices did Paul have?
He could keep quiet about it and not tell Philemon where Onesimus was.

He could send Onesimus back, knowing that the law said Philemon could kill Onesimus.

Paul knew that ‘love should be the guide’. How could he show love in this situation?

*Ask students:* What do you think Paul should do?

Paul decided to write a letter to Philemon. This is what he said:

**Philemon,**

*I thank God for a special friend like you.*

*I am writing to you to ask you to help Onesimus.*

Onesimus has become a dear friend to me, and it makes me very sad to think of him leaving.

I am asking you to take Onesimus back and not be angry with him. If Onesimus has stolen anything that belongs to you, I will pay it back.

I am sure you will do what is right.

I hope to come to see you soon. Please have a room ready where I can stay.

*From Paul*

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**A DECISION FOR PHILEMON**

Now Philemon had a choice to make.

He could take Onesimus back and punish him as he deserved.

He could forgive Onesimus and welcome him back to his house.

Philemon also knew that ‘love should be the guide’. What do you think Philemon did?
ANDREW’S STORY

**STORY**

Andrew’s aunty was going to take him to see a movie and have pizza on Saturday afternoon. All Saturday morning Mum had been telling Andrew that he had to tidy his room before he went, but Andrew kept putting it off. ‘It’s OK, Mum, I’ll do it later’, he said.

‘Andrew, you’re not going out this afternoon until your room is tidy’, warned Mum.

*Discuss: What choices does Andrew have at this stage?*

‘All right, I’ll do it’, said Andrew.

But at two o’clock when Andew’s aunty came to pick him up, it still wasn’t done.

*Discuss: What choices does Andrew’s mum have now?*

‘Sorry, Andrew’, said Mum, ‘you’re not leaving until your room is tidy’.

‘But, Mum, we have to go or we’ll be late.’

‘Sorry, Andrew. Tidy your room first, then you can go.’

Andrew begged and cried, but it didn’t work. He had to tidy his room before he was allowed to go.

**QUESTIONS**

What were the consequences of Andrew not tidying his room when he should have?

What could have happened if he had done as he had been told?
CHOICES CHOICES

Ideas of times when students may find it hard to show love.

1. A new person has come into your class. When you ask them to play, he/she says no and walks away.
   You ask again the next day, but he/she says no.
   At the end of the week you notice that this person doesn’t want to come to school, is looking very sad and is always by themselves.
   What could you do?

2. You belong to a group of three friends who always play together.
   There is someone from another class whom you would like to invite to join your games, but you know your friends don’t like him/her.
   What could you do?

3. You are working in a group and you know that the teacher wants you to work well and finish the task you are on.
   The other people in the group don’t want to work. They keep on talking. You know that your group will be the last to finish and the teacher will be upset with the way you have worked.
   What could you do?

4. It will soon be your birthday, and your parents have said you can choose six people to come to your party. You have three special friends whom you want to invite and other people you would like to ask.
   You know that there is someone in the class who almost never gets invited to parties.
   What could you do?

If you wish to challenge your students further, use the following scenario:
The first time you tell the story, supply a name for X, the second time, use ‘you’ for X.

A new family has moved next door to X. They have a child X’s age.
X’s parents have arranged for X to go to play at the new family’s house on Saturday.
Then X’s best friend invites X to go to a movie, have tea and sleep over on Saturday.
X’s parents say that X must decide what to do.
What will X choose? Why?

Develop the scenario further by asking students to put themselves in the story, but this time saying ‘this is the new child’ and adding a photograph. Options include using photos of children of both sexes, children from a variety of cultures, children with varying physical abilities.
MAKING CHOICES

The situation

Choice 1

Choice 2

Consequences of choice 1

Consequences of choice 2

for me

for other person or people

for me

for other person or people
JESUS’ DISCIPLES

‘Disciples’ is the name the Bible uses for the people whom Jesus chose to be his close friends when he was living on earth.

Jesus chose twelve people who went with him as he travelled around the country. The names of the disciples were: Peter, Andrew, James, John, Matthew, Philip, Thomas, Nathaniel, Thomas, two disciples called Judas and two disciples called James. The Bible also tells about other people who followed Jesus. Mary, Martha and Joanna were some of these.

Jesus chose ordinary people to be his disciples. Some were fishermen, another worked for the government as a tax-collector.

The Bible tells that sometimes the disciples argued among themselves and sometimes they couldn’t understand what Jesus was trying to teach them. One of the disciples (Peter) once said that he didn’t even know who Jesus was; another one (Judas) led Jesus’ enemies to him on the night he died.

When Jesus went back to heaven he sent the Holy Spirit to help the disciples. The disciples then kept doing the work that Jesus had started. They told others about him and started the first Christian church.

Christians believe that all people who believe in Jesus are his disciples. They ‘follow’ Jesus by learning about him, and doing what he wants — especially loving others as Jesus did.

Activities

1. Read the story of Jesus asking four fishermen to follow him. You will find it in a children’s Bible or in the book of Matthew, chapter 4 verses 18–22. This story tells that the four men left their boat and their father and went with Jesus.

Pretend you are one of the men. Write a letter home to your family telling them why you left and what you have been doing with Jesus.

2. Would you like to have been a disciple of Jesus? Why/why not. Write or illustrate your answer.

3. Use popsticks or clothes-pegs to make puppets of Jesus’ twelve disciples. Also make a puppet of Jesus. Work in a group to make up a play about Jesus and the disciples. You could use a story from a children’s Bible or you could make up a play about something you think might have happened. Practise this to show to the class.

4. Jesus chose ordinary people to be his disciples. Write the names of people you know who follow Jesus. Talk with them and ask them questions to find out what it is like for someone to follow Jesus today.