The Christian church is the community of believers created by the Holy Spirit.

**Unity of the church**
- Romans 12:4,5
- 1 Corinthians 10:17
- 1 Corinthians 12:12–18
- Ephesians 4:1–16
- Ephesians 5:23
- Matthew 18:20

**Images of the church**
- A holy temple: Ephesians 2:19–22
- Bride of Christ: Ephesians 5:25–27
- John 10:14–16,27,28; 1 Peter 5:2a
- Matthew 12:48–50; Ephesians 2:19
- 1 Corinthians 12:12–31
- Ephesians 1:23; Ephesians 4:15,16
- 1 Peter 2:4–8
- John 15:1–17
- Mark 10:43–45; John 13:12–16
- Matthew 5:14–16

**Beliefs of Christian communities**
- 1 Corinthians 12:3
- 1 Corinthians 15:1–4
- Ephesians 4:5,6
- Philippians 2:6–11
- 1 Timothy 2:1–6
- 2 Timothy 1:8–10

**Living as a Christian community**
- Colossians 3:5–17
- Ephesians 4:30–5:2
- 1 Peter 4:10,11

**Activities of Christian communities**
- Acts 2:1–47
- Acts 4:5–20
- Acts 4:32–37
- Acts 9:36–42
- Acts 10:1–48

**Word and sacraments**
- Acts 2:42
- Acts 17:11
- 1 Corinthians 10:17
- Ephesians 5:6–13
- Acts 17:11
- Acts 8:26–39
- Acts 19:5
- Romans 6:3,4
- Acts 26:26–30
- Acts 2:46
- 1 Corinthians 10:16,17
- 1 Corinthians 11:23–26

**God has gathered his people together throughout history**
- Matthew 28:19,20
- Colossians 3:12–17

**Jesus’ commission**
- Matthew 16:18

**New commandment**
- John 13:34,35

**Jesus’ promise**
- Matthew 16:18

**Lutherans in Australia work together in ministry and mission**
- John 3:16
- John 8:31,32
- Romans 1:16,17
- Romans 3:21–28
- Romans 5:1–5,8
- Romans 6:23
- Galatians 2:16
- Galatians 3:26
- Ephesians 1:5–9
- Ephesians 2:4–9

**Key Bible verses to hear and remember**

*God loves you and has chosen you as his own special people.*
**Colossians 3:12 (CEV)**

*Jesus said: . . . I’ll build my church, and death itself won’t have any power over it.*
**Matthew 16:18 (CEV)**

*You were saved by faith in God, who treats us much better than we deserve.*
*This is God’s gift to you, and not anything you have done on your own.*
**Ephesians 2:8 (CEV)**

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GOD GATHERS PEOPLE INTO THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

1. **The Christian church is the community of believers created by the Holy Spirit**

2. **God has gathered his people together throughout history**

**QUESTIONS ABOUT THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH**

Brainstorm a list of questions people have about the Christian church, e.g.,
- Do you have to go to church services to be a Christian?
- Why do Christians worship on Sundays?
- What do Christians believe? Students use printed resources and interviews to research answers to the questions. (1a,1c)

**CHURCH**

Write the word ‘church’ on the board. Ask the students to draw or write what they understand by this term. Share ideas and develop a class definition of church. (1a)

**THE MEDIA’S VIEW OF CHURCH**

Collect and display a range of newspaper and magazine articles and advertisements that discuss or depict religion, Christians or the church. Discuss society’s and the media’s view of the Christian church. How accurate are these images of the church? (1a)

**BELONGING**

Students respond to

_Belonging means that..._ Students list the groups that they belong to. Discuss:
- What are the benefits of belonging to a group?
- What does it mean to belong to the church? (1a,1b)

**WHICH RELIGIOUS GROUPS ARE CHRISTIAN?**

Students brainstorm a list of as many religious groups as they can. Tell students we want to identify those groups which are ‘Christian’. Discuss:
- How do we decide whether a group is Christian or not? Students identify those groups which are Christian. Tell students that groups within the Christian church are usually called denominations. (1a,1b)

**CENSUS STATISTICS**

Examine the census statistics on the number of people belonging to the major Christian churches in Australia. See TRS C3/1
- Which denominations have the largest numbers? Why?
- Which denominations are represented in the local area? (1b)

**LOCAL CHURCHES**

Study a map of the local area. Mark the locations of churches. If appropriate, go for a walk in the local area to identify church buildings and record details about their denominational affiliation from their congregational signboard. (1b)

**LITTLE RED BOOK**

Students develop a cover for a ‘Little Red Book’ which contains definitions of words that relate to the Christian church. Students may brainstorm a list of words or phrases they want to find definitions for and add to the book as the unit progresses. Include words and phrases such as ‘sacrament’, ‘the body of Christ’. (1a,1b,1c)

**HOW DID THE CHURCH BEGIN?**

Students work in groups to complete a pre-test about the history of the Christian church, e.g.,
- Where did the Christian church begin?
- Who started the Christian church?
- Who were some of the leaders in the first Christian church? (2a)

**HEROES AND GREAT LEADERS**

Brainstorm a list of great heroes or leaders in history. Discuss:
- What qualities do the students admire?
- Which of the people listed do the students admire?

Students highlight any people on the list who were Christian leaders or heroes. Go on to investigate great Christian leaders through history and the contribution they made to the Christian church. (2a,2c)

**HOW DID LUTHERAN SCHOOLS BEGIN?**

Students work in groups to discuss the following questions:
- What do you think is different about a Lutheran school?
- What other Lutheran schools do you know of?
- How did Lutherans schools begin?

Groups share their responses and develop a list of questions students have about Lutheran schools and Lutherans in Australia. Go on to investigate the history of the Lutheran church in your state or local area. (2b)
THE CHURCH: ALWAYS THE SAME
In groups students discuss the statement:
*The church is the same today as it was 1000 years ago.*
Students list questions they have about changes in the church. (2a,2c)

Lutherans in Australia work together in ministry and mission

LOGOS
Examine and compare a range of logos, including the logo of the Lutheran Church of Australia. What do the logos reveal about the organisations they represent? What do you think the Lutheran logo shows? (3a,3b)

LUTHERAN LISTINGS
Locate the listings under Lutheran on the Internet and in the state’s capital city phone book. Discuss what is listed. Groups of students investigate the work of different Lutheran organisations. What does the Lutheran church do? (3a,3b)

VIDEO
View the video *Hand in Hand* about the work of the Lutheran church in Australia. Go on to investigate the work of Lutheran church agencies. (3a,3b)

WHAT DO LUTHERANS DO?
Ask the students to draw a ‘Lutheran’ person. In the drawing they can include what they think Lutherans do and believe. Share drawings. Discuss: What does ‘Lutheran’ mean? Use the discussion to formulate a list of questions for an investigation about the Lutheran church. (3a,3b)
The Christian church is the community of believers created by the Holy Spirit

BIBLICAL IMAGES OF THE CHURCH
Explore the 'word pictures' used in the Bible to describe the church. See Bible References Menu. What do the 'word pictures' reveal about the church? Why do you think the church was described in this way?
Students investigate the early Christian church, its beliefs and practices. Students use the information to write their own word picture about the church. (1a)

ALL CHRISTIANS BELIEVE . . .
Students brainstorm in groups a list of things they think all Christians believe.
Students investigate the history and importance of the Apostles’ and Nicene creeds.
Students gather statements of belief from different Christian denominations, listing the similarities and differences in Christian beliefs, eg:
- What does each church believe about Jesus?
- What does each church believe about the Bible?
- What does each church believe about the sacraments?
- What does each church believe about the way to heaven?
Students write a creed that could be used by Christians all over the world. (1b)

THE HOLY SPIRIT CREATES THE CHURCH
Students use a concordance to find Bible references about the work of the Holy Spirit in the early Christian church. The book of Acts is an excellent starting point.
Students record responses to: How did the Holy Spirit bring growth to the Christian church? (1a)

THE BODY OF CHRIST
Study Paul’s description of the church as the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12: 12–31). List and discuss the roles listed. Encourage the students to reflect on their own spiritual gifts. Consider what the image of the body of Christ reveals about the church. Students draw or write their own reflection on this image of the church. (1a)

BELONGING
Students interview members of the local congregation to discover why they belong to the church.
Research the sacraments as practices of belonging, eg baptism as an initiation rite, holy communion as an identification of those who belong and a strengthening of those who belong.
- What are the benefits of belonging?
Use dictionaries to define the word 'communion'.
- Why do you think the Lord's supper is sometimes called communion?
Students develop packs with information about what it means to belong to the Christian church. (1a,1c)

SACRAMENTS OF THE CHURCH
Students draw or write what they understand by the term 'sacrament'. Investigate baptism and holy communion as celebrations of the Christian church. Use Luther's Small Catechism to investigate what Lutherans believe about the sacraments. (1c)

GUEST SPEAKERS FROM CHRISTIAN DENOMINATIONS
Arrange for guest speakers from Christian denominations to share the beliefs and practices of their denomination. Students may ask them about the importance of the word and sacraments in their church and about the reason they belong to their denomination. An investigation could also be conducted into the various titles given to leaders in Christian denominations, eg pastor, vicar, priest, pope, bishop. (1b,1c)

SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES
Investigate denominations represented in the local area by arranging visits or inviting the ministers of Christian denominations to school. Include Eastern (Greek or Russian Orthodox), and Western (Catholic and Protestant) Christian churches. Investigate the history, main doctrines, patterns of organisation and emphases of the denominations. Analyse the similarities and differences. (1b)

THEN AND NOW
Each student chooses a New Testament letter to read and study, eg I and 2 Corinthians, Ephesians, Philémon, James, 1 Peter. Students compile a list of beliefs and practices of the first Christian congregations.
Students investigate Christian congregations today to compare and contrast the first congregations with congregations today. Discuss and record:

- What has changed in Christian congregations?
- What has remained the same?

Read and discuss Matthew 16:18 and Ephesians 1:22.

- Who do Christians believe is the head of the church?
- What impact would this belief have on the way Christians view the church? (1c)

**DEBATE:** Students investigate and prepare for a debate on the topic: *The world would be a better place without any churches.*

In preparation for the debate the class could investigate and record ways in which the church contributes to society, eg welfare organisations in Australia and the world. (1c)

**ECUMENICAL ACTIVITIES** Students use dictionaries to define 'ecumenical'. Investigate how the local Christian churches are working towards unity.

- What ecumenical activities are happening in your local area, eg school and industrial chaplaincy Christmas carol evenings? (1b)

**HEROES AND GREAT LEADERS OF THE CHURCH** Tell stories or read biographies of important people from various denominations, eg Martin Luther, Pope John XXIII, John Calvin. Discuss to which denomination they belonged, what they believed and the contribution they made. (2a)

**TIME LINE** Develop a time line to show the emergence of different denominations in the history of the Christian church. Investigate what led to the formation of the different groups. Students could focus on the denominations represented in the class or school and prepare a report about the history of the denomination in the local area or in Australia. (2a,2b)


**WHAT IS CONSTANT AND WHAT HAS CHANGED** Investigate the features of the Christian church in different times in history. What are the features of the church that have remained constant and what aspects of the church have changed? (2c)

**HISTORY OF LOCAL CONGREGATIONS** Investigate the history of local congregations. Interview pastors and contact the local council or library for information. How have the local congregations changed over time? What features remain the same? (2a)

**ACTIVITIES OF LOCAL CHRISTIAN CONGREGATIONS** Investigate local Christian congregations. Find out about and list their beliefs and practices. Compare them with stories in Acts about the early church. See Bible References Menu. (2c,1c)


Write reports on the research and compile the reports into a class book. (2a)

**WHO AM I?** Develop a ‘Who Am I?’ game based on the lives of great Christian leaders, eg Martin Luther, John Calvin, David Livingstone. (2a)

**CITIES OF IMPORTANCE** Using encyclopedias, investigate the first major centres of Christianity established by the followers of Jesus: Rome, Antioch, Alexandria, Constantinople.

Although Christians in these centres shared a common faith, the rules and practices for each centre evolved according to local traditions and customs. Students work in groups to develop reports on each city. (2a)

**THE CHURCH HAS CHANGED** Interview older members of a local congregation to explore how the congregation has changed. What has not changed? (2c)

**THE HISTORY OF THE LUTHERAN CHURCH OF AUSTRALIA** Investigate the history of the Lutheran church in Australia. Use family history books to consider the reasons for settlement. Research what the first Lutheran congregations and schools in Australia were like. (2b)
LUTHERAN ORGANISATIONS Identify Lutheran organisations listed in the phone book of the state’s capital city. Students write to the organisations for information about their work and ministry. Students share their research with the class. (3a,3b)

SURF THE NET Surf the Internet to find listings for Lutheran. Students list ten countries which have Lutheran congregations. Analyse the home pages of Lutheran congregations in the world. What are common features of Lutheran congregations around the world? (3a,3b)

LUTHERAN WORLD SERVICE Write or fax Lutheran World Service for a project kit. Locate on a world map the places where LWS is working. Use the project sheets to develop posters or a school worship service. (3a,3b)

ACTION PLAN Develop an action plan for supporting the work of Lutheran World Service. Consider how the students can support and promote the work of LWS in the school community. Give students who are active in other denominations the opportunity to support equivalent organisations. (3a,3b)

DATABASE Study the brochure Introducing the Lutheran Church. Students work with a partner to choose an aspect of the Lutheran church’s ministry and mission to investigate and report on. Pairs add their information to a class database about the ministry and mission of the Lutheran Church of Australia. (3a,3b)

MINISTRY AND MISSION OF THE LCA IN THE WORLD Investigate the ministry of the Board for Church Cooperation in World Mission from their magazine Mission Panorama and calendar (both available from BCCWM office). The teacher may contact them, asking for the names of people who may be willing to correspond with the class, eg Bible translators or missionaries who are working overseas. (3a,3b)

LUTHER’S DESCRIPTION OF CHURCH Use Luther’s explanation of the third part of the creed in the Large Catechism to explore Luther’s understanding of the Christian church. Students investigate the local Lutheran congregation and consider what Luther might say to it today. (3a)

GENERAL ACTIVITIES

BIBLE VERSE Students learn an appropriate Bible verse (see page 10).

SONGS Students learn songs related to the concept (see Music and Worship Ideas in the appendix).

TIME LINE (A recommended activity for Level 1) If the class is developing a time line for Christian Studies, place information about the historical development of the Christian church on the time line.

GOD FILE (A recommended activity for Level 2) If the class is developing a God File, add information about the relationship Christians believe God has with his church.
### Books About the Church
Develop books entitled: *Everything you wanted to know about the Christian church*. Include the questions and answers to common questions people have about the Christian church. (1a,1b)

### Artistic Representations of the Church
Design a sculpture or painting to convey your understanding of the worldwide Christian church, its unity and diversity. (1b)

### A Current Affairs Interview About the Church
Prepare an interview for a current affairs program to explore: ‘What does it mean to belong to the Christian church?’ (1a,1b,1c)

### Songs
Study songs about the Christian church. Use a familiar tune (or develop your own) to compose your own song about the Christian church. (1a,1b,1c)

### Role-plays
Write a series of role-plays to teach others about the importance of God’s word and the sacraments for Christian communities. (1c)

### Christian Denominations
Write a non-fiction text about the Christian denominations. Include the similarities and differences in beliefs and practices. (1b)

### Ecumenical Activity
Plan an ecumenical activity for the local Christian congregations. What would be the aim and message of the activity? (1b)

### Board Game
Develop a board game about important events and people in the history of the Christian church. (2a)

### Leaders of the Past with Messages for Today
Prepare a message from a great Christian leader to present to the class. Use research about the leader’s life to provide the main features of the talk. (2a)

### Lutheran History
Students prepare posters explaining the history of the Lutheran church in their area. Student could interview members of the local council to gain information about the contribution Lutherans have made to the local area. (2b)

### TV Commercials
Script a TV commercial to advertise your local congregation to the community. Include in your advertisement the beliefs, practices and activities of your local congregation. (2c,1a,1c)

### Images of the Church Through History
Design a series of paintings to depict common features of the Christian church through history. (2a,2c)

### Mural
Make a mural for the school about the work of the Lutheran church in Australia and the world. In the mural show the different aspects of the church’s work and mission. (3a,3b)

### Brochure
Examine a range of brochures to explore the features and layout of brochures. Design a brochure about the Lutheran church. Consider the information that will need to be included. (3a,3b)

### Home Page
Design a home page for the local Lutheran congregation on the Internet. Use the home pages of congregations around the world as models of what could be included. (3a,3b)

### School Assembly
Prepare a school assembly to share with the school community information about the work of Lutheran World Service. (3a,3b)
The introduction to LIFE contains suggested general resources for all LIFE concepts. The following resources may be used in a unit about God gathers people into the Christian church. 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**

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Berthier R *The Birth of the Church* 1980 Hodder and Stoughton
Berthier R *The First Christians* 1980 Hodder and Stoughton
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**Lutherans**
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Floyd E *Makers of History* 1980 Hamlyn
Nohl F *Martin Luther* 1963 Concordia
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Polack W *The Story of Luther* 1941 Concordia
Schild M & Hughes P *The Lutherans in Australia* 1996 Australian Government Publishing Services
Williamson F *Pilgrimage to Truth: The Life of Martin Luther* OMF Publishing
**The Story of Lutherans in Australia** Lutheran Teachers College 1988 Lutheran Publishing House
**Eternal Word (Year 7: Called to Witness)** 1981 Concordia Publishing

**MUSIC**

**Scripture in Song**
*God Version 1.0* 1998 Robin Mann (book, CD, tape)
As *One Voice* 1994 Willow Connection Manly Vale NSW:
**Come All You People** Bell J 1994 Glasgow:
Wild Goose resource
**Love from Below** Bell and John 1997 Glasgow:
Wild Goose Resource
**Deep Waters** Watts T 1992 Dee Why NSW:
Willow Connection
**Many and Great** Bell J 1990 Glasgow: Wild Goose Resource
GOD GATHERS PEOPLE INTO THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

AUDIO-VISUAL

VIDEOS
Hand in Hand: LCA Congregations’ Joint Ministries Traeger I 1997 Lutheran Church of Australia
Acts of the Apostles Part 6 Spreading the Good News Don Bosco Multimedia’s Special Catechetical Edition
Children’s Heroes from History (Video) 1996 Christian Multimedia North Ryde NSW

COMPUTER/CD-ROMS
Christian Church Christian History (CD ROM) 1996 Christian Multimedia North Ryde NSW (A division of Australian Religious Film Society)
Encarta Encyclopedia

OTHER
Introducing the Lutheran Church (brochure) 1996 Openbook Publishers
Lutheran Church of Australia home page: http://lca.org.au

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Lutheran Church of Australia
Bainton R Here I Stand: A Life of Martin Luther 1978 Abingdon Press
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1993–94 History of the Lutheran Church in New Zealand King J
1992–93 Luther Seminary: The First 25 Years
1991–92 Lutheran World Service in Australia
1990–91 The Lutheran Church in Western Australia Roocke F & Altus B
1988–89 Ten Days’ Tribulation: The Lutheran Church under Persecution in Prussia Schubert D
1987 Cedars in the Wilderness: Hope Vale—Wujal Wujal Mission Gropel L & Rose G
1986 The Trumpet Is Sounding: Forward to New Guinea Hage H B
1985 On Four Continents: Autobiography of Dr HPA Hamann
1984 Koonruba on the Cura Puni: The early years of Koonibba Mission
1983 Luther Quincentenary Pahl PD
1982 Like a Bird on the Wing: Luise Homann’s Journal of a Life of Many Moves
1981 How Beauteous Are Their Feet: The story of Zion’s Hill, the first mission station in Queensland Gropel L B
1980 The Emigrant to South Australia (extracts) Doeger, G
1979 Altjira Rega Ekalta (Praise to the Lord, the Almighty): Hermannsburg Mission
1978 The Heart of a Man: a biography of missionary G H Schwarz Rose G
1977 The Bell Sounds Pleasantly: History of Lutherans in the Wimmera and Mallee districts of Victoria
1976 The Coming of the Wends
1974 Death on ‘The Line’ (Hermannsburg)
1973 From Joiner’s Bench to Pulpit: Autobiography of Adolf Hermann Kempe
1971 Sedan Centenary Scherer PA
1969 One Hundred Years: Jindera New South Wales 1868–1968
1968 From Farm to Factory: One hundred years of Lutheranism in New South Wales

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.