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John 11:1–42  Lazarus
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The Lord is my protector; he is my strong fortress.
My God is my protection, and with him I am safe.
Psalm 18:2 (TEV)

Jesus said to her, ’I am the resurrection and the life.
Whoever believes in me will live, even though he dies.’
John 11:25 (TEV)

For I am certain that nothing can separate us from his love:
neither death nor life, neither angels nor other heavenly rulers or powers,
neither the present nor the future, neither the world above nor the world below —
there is nothing in all creation that will ever be able to separate us from the love of God
which is ours through Christ Jesus our Lord.
Romans 8:38,39 (TEV)
GOD SAVES PEOPLE FROM SIN AND EVIL

INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITIES

1 Sin and evil ruin God’s creation

EVIL Provide students with newspapers and give them five minutes to cut out articles that prove the existence of evil in the world. Students share their findings.

Allow five more minutes for students to decide who is to blame for the evil in each article.

Discuss with the students who/what they believe is the cause of the evil. To gauge students' understanding about evil, discuss:
- Where does evil come from?
- What causes people to do evil things?

Consider moving on to the Christian question: Why does God allow evil and suffering in the world? (1a,1b,1c)

THAT’S TEMPTING! Students use dictionaries to define ‘temptation’. Discuss and make a class definition of the term.

Students identify common temptations for students their age. Students rate the temptations in order from the most tempting to least tempting. Discuss:
- Why are some temptations difficult to resist?
- Does it matter whether or not we resist these temptations?

Consider moving on to the Christian question: Why does God allow us to face temptations? (1a,1b)

IF IT FEELS GOOD DO IT!

Students discuss in groups:
- What might happen if all people lived according to the code of ‘If it feels good do it’?
- Who promotes ideas like this?
- What are the beliefs underlying messages like this?
- How do you decide what are ‘good’ and ‘bad’ things to do?

Students make a list of acceptable and unacceptable things which might be considered under this code. Students share their classifications. (1a,1b,1c)

PERFECT PEOPLE Students discuss and prepare statements which explain their answers to the question: Is it possible for people to be perfect? Make a list of things that students believe prevent people from being perfect. (1a,1b)

SIN WEBS Students choose a common sin for their age, eg saying something nasty. Make a ‘sin web’ of the possible people and events affected by the sin. Discuss the destructive nature of sin for ourselves and for our relationships. (1b,1c)

THE DEVIL Students and teacher gather examples of ways people portray the devil. Discuss as a class:
- What attributes are credited to the devil?
- What do the images show about the beliefs concerning the devil and his purposes?

Students could survey the school community to find the most common image of the devil. Students record the most common views about the devil.

Students discuss and respond to:
- Do you think these views would benefit or disadvantage the devil? Why? (1a,1c)

2 God rescues people from sin and its consequences

GREAT RESCUES View a video or read a novel or picture book about a great rescue. Discuss as a class:
- Why did the person(s) need rescuing?
- How were the rescuer and the rescued affected by the rescue?
- What is the relationship between the rescuer and the rescued. (2a)

MY HERO Students draw or write about their hero. In their drawing or writing students describe why this person is their hero. In groups students share stories about their heroes and make a list of the characteristics common to their heroes. Discuss as a class:
- What is a hero?
- What effect do heroes have on other people’s lives?
- What do you think would be the greatest heroic act? Explain your answer. (2a,2b,2c)

JESUS LOVES ME Students work in groups to read the words of the song ‘Jesus loves me’ and to discuss:
- Why does Jesus love me?
- How do I know Jesus loves me?
- Why do you think the Bible is sometimes called ‘God’s love story’?
Students share their responses with the class and make a list of questions the students have about Jesus’ love for them. The questions could form the basis of an investigation of the Bible’s teaching about God’s love and how it was demonstrated in Jesus. (2b)

GOD’S LOVE Students bring and listen to contemporary songs about love and develop a chart entitled ‘The world’s view of love’. Students listen to contemporary Christian songs which present descriptions of God’s love for all people. Provide time for students to respond individually to each song, using questions such as:
- How does the song describe God’s love?
- What is the message of the song?
- In what way does the song say God’s love is different from the world’s love? (2b)

GOD AND ME Students create an illustration to show how they view their relationship with God. Students can include what they think of God and what they imagine God thinks about them. Provide time for students to explain their illustrations. (2c)

GOD’S VIEW OF THE WORLD As a class, view the international and national news. Students keep a list of the stories reported. On the basis of what they know of Christian teaching about God, students individually record in their journals responses to questions such as:
- What do you think God thinks and feels about the people he created?
- How do you think God feels about the suffering and evil in the world?
- What would you do about the world if you were God?
Students share responses. Tell students that the Bible provides information about what God wants for people. It even contains his plan to deal with the suffering and evil in the world. (2c)

3 God offers eternal life to all people

God’s gift of eternal life is a present reality which rescues us right now from grief, suffering and death.

GRIEF Discuss the broad spectrum of losses people experience which may cause grieving, eg changing schools, divorce, death. Students discuss or write about personal experiences of loss and the emotions involved. Read poems about loss and grieving. Students record the emotions associated with loss and grieving. (3a,3b)

DEATH ON TELEVISION Students record and tally the deaths shown on television between 4 pm to 8 pm on a particular night. Assign channels and time slots to different students. Discuss the results of the tally and the different ways in which death is presented. Show and contrast movies with a realistic portrayal of death, eg Terms of Endearment or Shadowlands with movies like Terminator. Students discuss in groups and report on:
- In what ways were the deaths on television realistic or unreal?
- How did the movie present the feelings and emotions related to death?
- In what ways can television and movies make us aware of the realities of death?
- In what ways can television and movies give false messages about death? (3a,3b)

DEATH Students use dictionaries to develop a definition of ‘euphemism’. They list euphemisms for ‘death’, eg kick the bucket, pass away, meet your Maker. Discuss:
- Why do you think people avoid using the words ‘death’ or ‘died’?
- What do you think most people think or believe about death?
- Why do you think people have such ideas?
Read obituaries in the daily newspaper. What do these reveal about people’s attitudes towards death and dying? (3a,3b)

HEAVEN AND HELL Write the words ‘heaven’ and ‘hell’ on the board and ask students to draw or write what they know of these terms. Students share their writing or drawings. Discuss:
- What is heaven/hell?
- Who do you think is in heaven/hell?
- How do people get to heaven/hell?
- Why do you think people believe in heaven/hell?
Discuss the images of heaven and hell presented in films. Do students consider the images realistic? Students list questions they have about heaven and hell. (3a,3b)

FREE Students cut out from newspapers or magazines advertisements with promises of something free. Students share their advertisements in groups and discuss whether it is possible to obtain something free. Discuss as a class whether the students agree or disagree with the statement: ‘You don’t get anything for nothing’.
Students could make a list of things they believe to be free. (3c)
1 Sin and evil ruin God’s creation

**PERFECT PEOPLE** Discuss in groups or as a class the statement: ‘The Bible is about perfect people.’

Students read and research stories from the Bible to explore the validity of the statement, eg Cain and Abel, Jacob and Esau, David and Bathsheba.

Students develop a file with information of what the stories in the Bible do teach us about God, people, sin and forgiveness. (1a,1b,1c)

**THE PROBLEM AND THE SOLUTION**

Using verses from the Bible Reference Menu, students investigate and record what the Bible says about sin and how it is overcome.

Students investigate and record what *Luther’s Small Catechism* explains about sin: what it is, what it means for all people and how it is overcome.

Students interview the pastor or adult Christians to investigate what Christians believe about sin and how sin is overcome.

Students summarise the Christian beliefs on cards which are pinned on posters entitled ‘The Problem’ and ‘The Solution’. (1a,1b,1c)

**ROMANS** Students use Bible handbooks to help them study the book of Romans. In preparation for their study students find out who was the author and who was the intended audience. In small groups, students investigate:

- What does Paul teach us about sin?
- What is God’s plan to deal with people’s sin?
- How does Paul describe his struggle with sin? Why might Paul have a special understanding of sin and forgiveness? (1a,1b,1c)

**GOOD VS EVIL** Students investigate the war between good and evil in the world. They use the Bible (see Bible References Menu), *Luther’s Small Catechism* and other Christian reference material. They explore such questions as:

- Who do Christians believe are the opposing forces in the war of ‘good’ and ‘evil’?
- What are their aims for the world?
- In what ways has the war already been won?

Students explore Bible readings which reveal God’s power over the devil and how Jesus obtained the victory. Students present the information in the form of a newspaper article or television current affairs program. (1b,1c)

**GUILT** Students talk about times when they have experienced feelings of guilt. They record in their journals responses to: How is ‘feeling guilty’ different from ‘being judged guilty’?

Students read about the guilt of biblical characters, eg David, Judas and Peter and create cause-and-effect diagrams for each character.

Students record responses to:

- When is guilt a positive thing?
- How can guilt be destructive?
- How do people deal with guilt?

Students read Psalm 6 and 32 to consider the way in which biblical people expressed their guilt.

Students read Romans 3:23 to explore what the Bible says about human guilt.

Students read Romans 3:21–26 to explore how God puts people right with him, and Romans 4:4–8 to explore how God removes people’s guilt and sets people free.

As a class discuss how being set free from guilt might affect the way a person lives.

Students develop lists of ways God deals with guilt and ways students can deal with guilt. (1a,1b)

**JOB** Students use Bible handbooks to explore the book of Job. Students record the message of the book of Job and respond to:

What do each of the following think and say about suffering:

- the devil?
- Job?
- Job’s friends?
- God?

Tell students of the possibility that Job was written as a play. Students choose sections to present as plays. (1a,1b,1c)
God rescues people from sin and its consequences

**HERE COMES THE JUDGE!** Students investigate the rescue stories in the book of Judges. Each student chooses a judge to research and to be the focus of a character profile, e.g., Deborah, Gideon, and Samson. As a class record the events in each story and explore the pattern in the relationship between God and the Israelites.

What do these stories say about God and people? (2a)

**THE GREATEST RESCUE STORY**

Christians believe that Jesus permanently rescued people. Students write about this in a news article on the greatest rescue story ever. In the article students explore the way in which Jesus has rescued people and changed the relationship people can have with God.

(2a, 2b, 2c)

**GOD RESCUES THE ISRAELITES**

Students investigate and map the events of the story of Moses and the Israelites’ exodus from Egypt. (See Bible Reference Menu.)

Students use the mapping to identify the pattern of sin, repentance, and rescue in the relationship between the Israelites and God.

Students write descriptions of events and how they demonstrate God’s love for his people, or they design symbols that the Israelites might have used to remember what God had done for them. (2a, 2b)

**JONAH**

Students read and compare different versions of the story of Jonah in Bible story books and picture books. Focus on God’s message for Jonah and God’s message for the people of Nineveh, rather than on the physical aspects of the story, e.g., staying alive in a whale.

Students record what message God gives people today in the story of Jonah. Students discuss in groups how the story demonstrates God’s love for people.

Students prepare a version of the story to tell younger classes. (2a, 2b)

**GOD’S MESSAGE**

Students read Mark 15:1 – 16:20. They record what Mark says Jesus has done for all people and how he indicates that God’s message is for all people. Students create posters for the school presenting God’s message for the world.

(2b, 2c)

**SAVE THE LOST**

The Bible often uses the image of ‘lost’ to describe the broken relationship between people and God. Sin and its consequences often make us feel lost and far away from God. Students read Psalm 13; 22; 38; 119:169–176 with a partner to explore the way in which people call out for someone to rescue them from being lost.

Students record in their journals experiences of feeling lost.

Students read in Luke 19:10 what Jesus said was his mission.

Students study the story of Zacchaeus, using Bible handbooks and encyclopedias. They imagine they are Zacchaeus making journal entries before and after meeting Jesus. They include in their journal the ways in which Zaccheus was ‘lost’ and ‘found’. (2b)

**GOD IS LOVE**

The Bible says, ‘God is love’ (1 John 4:8). Students conduct an investigation of the validity of this statement.

They read and study the Bible descriptions of God’s love for people, using a concordance or the Bible References Menu.

Students develop a web of words used to describe the love God has for people.

Students study Old Testament stories in which God demonstrates his love for people, e.g., Abraham, Moses.

View a video which depicts Jesus’ death.

Discuss as a class how this demonstrates God’s love for people, and read Romans 5:6–10 and Romans 8:31–39.

Students read songs in which Christians describe the love God has for people. They write their own songs or poems describing God’s love for people. (2a, 2b, 2c)

**JESUS’ DEATH AND RESURRECTION**

Students use Bible handbooks to investigate the different audiences for whom Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John were written. Students read and list the key events of each gospel’s account of Jesus’ death and resurrection. They compare the gospel accounts and discuss the similarities and differences. Students work in groups to discuss:

- What special emphasis does each writer have?
- How does each writer convey the message that Jesus completed God’s plan to rescue all people?

Students prepare posters in which they highlight the messages and emphasis of each gospel account. (2a, 2b, 2c)
JESUS TO THE RESCUE  Students study stories in which Jesus came to the rescue, eg the paralysed man, Zacchaeus, Jarius’ daughter, the ten with leprosy, Lazarus. Students imagine themselves in the shoes of the person who was rescued by Jesus and retell the story from their point of view. They emphasise in their retelling the ways Jesus’ rescue changed people’s lives.

Tell the students the Bible’s good news that Jesus has rescued all people through his death and resurrection.

Students read statements from contemporary Christians, eg in The Gods of Sport, and list the ways in which Jesus’ rescue has changed these people’s lives. Students prepare a school worship session with the theme ‘Jesus: the Life-changer.’ (2a,2b,2c)

VISIONS OF HEAVEN  Students read Isaiah 11:1–9 and Revelation 21:10 – 22:5 to explore the Bible’s images of heaven. Students paint images of what these passages evoke in their minds.

Students also investigate and record the Bible’s message about how people can go to heaven. See John 3:16; John 11:25; John 14:1,2.

Students interview Christians in the school community to investigate how the hope of eternal life affects the way people live their lives. Students record:
- What hopes do Christians have?
- What direction and security does eternal life give Christians now? (3a,3b,3c)

LOSS AND FEELINGS OF GRIEF

Students list times they have experienced loss, eg moved interstate, parents divorced, pet died. Students choose one event and record their feelings when the loss happened after a short time now.

Students investigate the stages of grief by interviewing a Christian counsellor. Provide opportunities for students to consider the stages and reflect on times when they have experienced similar feelings.

Students read the following psalms and consider which would be appropriate for different stages of grief:
- Psalm 6
- Psalm 22
- Psalm 23
- Psalm 25
- Psalm 77
- Psalm 142.

Students design a pamphlet to give to people in times of grief and loss. (3a)

DEATH AND GRIEVING  Arrange an excursion to a local funeral home, or invite a funeral director to talk to the class about what happens when people die. Some funeral homes also provide courses or information about the stages of grief. The funeral director may be able to provide the class with information about grieving.

Invite a Christian doctor or nurse and the local pastor to visit the class to share in which they deal with death and grieving.

Students develop informative booklets about death and grieving for use in the school and local congregations. (3a)

LIFE AFTER DEATH  Students investigate different beliefs about life after death, eg the Egyptians and Hinduism.

Students investigate what Christians believe about life after death, using a concordance and interviewing the local pastor.

Students develop a comparative poster showing what each group believes. Discuss:
- What are the similarities and differences between the groups?
- How does a person’s beliefs about death affect the way in which the person lives?
- In what ways is Christian belief about death and resurrection unique? (3a,3b,3c)

Students survey people in the school community to find out whether people believe in heaven and what people think they have to do to go to heaven.

Students investigate the Bible stories of Jesus and Lazarus (John 11:17–44) and Jesus and Nicodemus (John 3:1–21) and record what Jesus says is the way to heaven.

Students investigate readings about faith in Jesus as the key to heaven (see Bible References Menu).

Students discuss how they might best communicate to the school community the message about Jesus as the way to heaven.

Students plan, prepare and present the message. (3c)
**GENERAL ACTIVITIES**

**BIBLE VERSE**  Students learn an appropriate Bible verse (see page 12)

**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, put on the time line some of God’s rescue activities recorded in the Old Testament, and Jesus’ rescue of all people by his death and resurrection.

**GOD FILE**  (A recommended activity for Level 2) If the class is developing a God File, add information to the file about God rescuing people from sin and its consequences.
## RESPONSE ACTIVITIES

### 1. Sin and evil ruin God’s creation

**SIN AND FORGIVENESS** Students create two pieces of art (either painting or sculpture): one to depict sin and the other God’s forgiveness. Students may use the effect sin and forgiveness have on people as the focus for their sculpture. (1a,1b,1c,2b,2c)

**THE GREAT WAR** Students prepare a video or written news presentation about the great war between God and Satan. Students include information about:
- the opposing forces
- their tactics
- the winner and loser
- the ways Christians view the war
- how God’s promises affect the way in which Christians live in the war-torn world. (1b,1c)

**MY ASSURANCE** Students make a plaque of a favourite verse about the protection and assistance that God gives us in our battle with sin (see Bible References Menu). (1b,1c)

### 2. God rescues people from sin and its consequences

**GOD’S GREAT RESCUES** Students create newspaper articles about God’s great rescues. Students consider the features of newspapers and design headlines to grab people’s attention. (2a)

**BUMPER STICKER** Students create a bumper sticker that gives a message about sin and God’s rescue of people. Use plain white or coloured Contact and permanent markers. (2b,2c)

**GOD IS LOVE** Students identify and discuss a range of Bible readings and stories which depict God as faithful and loving. Students read psalms and poems in which people describe God’s love. Students write poems to express the love God has for people. (2a,2b)

**RECONCILIATION** As a class examine symbols of reconciliation, eg the olive branch, shaking of hands. Students develop their own symbols to depict the reconciliation that Jesus has made possible between God and people. (2c)

### 3. God offers eternal life to all people

**LOSS AND GRIEF** Students prepare cards about loss and grief. The cards are to be designed for students who have suffered loss in some way. The cards include:
- information about the grieving process
- Bible passages that offer comfort to people experiencing loss and grief. (3a)

**PATCHWORK QUILT** Students create a patchwork quilt design, using small pieces of various kinds of paper with messages and images of comfort for people who are experiencing loss and grief. Students can use the quilt design to explore their own feelings about loss and grief. (3a)

**EVERYTHING YOU WANT TO KNOW ABOUT LIFE AFTER DEATH** Students prepare and present an informative session or a newsletter for fellow students or parents about Christian beliefs in relation to death and eternal life. Students could invite guest speakers to share information at the information session. (3a,3b,3c)
LIFE IS FOR LIVING. Students consider ways the hope of eternal life affects the way people live in the world.

- How does eternal life affect people’s priorities in life?
- What do you think Jesus meant by: ‘I have come that you might have life—life in all its fullness.’?

Students design posters to share messages about life. (3b,3c)

IT’S FREE! Students prepare role-plays to share the message of God’s free gift of salvation for all people. The role-play must include information about the gift and what it cost God to allow us to have it free. (3a,3b,3c)
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**

Crocetti E and Giordano M  *A Crowd of Witnesses*  1994 St Paul Books and Media, Boston  
Weiss N  *According to Plan*  1984 Lutheran Publishing House  

**Bible story books**

Frank P  *Gideon Fights for God*  1987 Lion Publishing, England  
Hartman B  *The Lion Story Bible*  1995 Lion Publishing, England  
Hastings S  *The Children’s Illustrated Bible*  1994 R D Press Surry Hills NSW  
Hastings S  *The Birth of Jesus*  1994 R D Press, Surry Hills  
Simon M  *Hurray for the Lord’s Army (Gideon)*  1994 Concordia Publishing House  
Singer C and Hari A  *Experience Jesus Today*  1993 Editions Du Signe  
Storr C  *Samson*  1986 Methuen, Australia  

**ARCH BOOKS**

Head C  *The Story of Deborah*  1978 Concordia Publishing House  
Kolbrek L and Larson C  *Samson’s Secret*  1970 Concordia Publishing House  
Kolbrek L and Larson C  *Samson*  1994 Concordia Publishing House  

**PALM TREE BIBLE STORIES**

Singleton K  *Gideon the Brave*  1982 Lutheran Publishing House  

**Christian faith reference books**

Field D and Toon P  *Real Questions*  1982 Lion Publishing, England  

**Drama**

Johnson V  *Let’s Make a Scene Two*  1991 Lutheran Publishing House  
Johnson V  *Let’s Make Another Scene*  1995 Openbook Publishers  

**FICTION**

Lewis C S  *Screwtape Letters*  1942 Collins, Great Britain  

**Rescue**

Asquith R  *Nora Normal and the Great Shark Rescue*  1996 Hodder, England  
Lindgren A  *Mardie to the Rescue*  1993 Reed, London  

**Relationships/broken relationships**

Danzinger P  *The Divorce Express*  1987 Pan, London  
Silverstein S  *The Giving Tree*  1964 Harper and Row  

**Death**

Crew G  *Lucy’s Bay*  1993 Jam Roll Press, Queensland  
Fox M  *Sophie*  1989 Drakeford, Melbourne  
Mahon K  *Just One Tear*  1992 Angus and Robertson, Melbourne
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Mellonie B  Beginnings and Endings with Lifetimes in Between  1983 Hill of Content
McDaniel L Somewhere between Life and Death  1993 Bantam, Toronto
Nystrom C  What Happens When We Die?  1981 Anzea
Patterson K  Bridge to Terabithia  1981 Penguin
Smith D  A Taste of Blackberries  1987 Penguin
Thiele C  Timmy  1993 Walter McVitty, Montville
McNamara J W  My Mom is Dying  1994 Augsburg Fortress
Wild M  Toby  1993 Omnibus

The life of Jesus
Hunt A  The Tale of Three Trees  1989 Lion Publishing
Wild M and Huxley D  Light the Lamps  1994 Margaret Hamilton Books

MUSIC
Gospelling to the Beat Book 2  1997 Scripture Union

AUDIO-VISUAL
COMPUTER/CD ROMS
The Jesus Story Begins  Lion Multimedia 1996 Lion Publishing, England
Risen Jesus: the Week That Changed History  Lion Multimedia 1995 Lion Publishing, England

VIDEO
The First Christmas and Other Bible Stories and Jesus and His Kingdom  The Oxford Vision
Children’s Video Bible  1988 Lion Publishing
Good Friday (with Easter Sunday)  Scripture Union
The Children’s Story of Jesus Part 1 and 2  The Open Book (video)
Jesus  Here’s Life Ministries (video)

TEACHER RESOURCES
Blackburn B  The LIFE Project: Forming Christian Attitudes towards Death and Dying  1995 Ligouri Publishing
Chapman C and Clifford R  The Gods of Sport  1995 Albatross Book, Australia
Glassock G and Rowling L  Learning to Grieve  1992 Millennium Books
Wilson I and Bruce R  Life after Death  1987 Cassell Publishers
Children and Grief  Lutheran Tract Mission

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.
GOD SAVES PEOPLE FROM SIN AND EVIL