God creates and loves all people

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<th>Made in the image of God</th>
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God's image is distorted

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How God restores his image in people

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God loves as a parent

| Deuteronomy 32:6                     | Isaiah 49:15 |
| Isaiah 66:13                         | Hosea 11:1–4 |

How the restored 'image of God' is expressed in people's lives.

| 1 Corinthians 12:14–26               | Ephesians 4:22–5:1 |
| Colossians 3:12–14                   | 1 John 4:7        |

In Jesus we see what God intended human beings to be

| Isaiah 9:1–7                        | Isaiah 11:1–5 |
| John 1:18                           | John 14:9    |
| Colossians 1:15                      | Hebrews 1:3 |

The human life of Jesus

| Twelve-year-old Jesus             | Luke 2:41–52 |
| Jesus’ baptism                     | Luke 3:21,22 |
| Jesus’ attitude to and relationship with women | Luke 7:36–50; John 4:7–9; John 8:3–11    |
|                                  | John 11:17–35; John 19:25–27 |
|                                  | John 6:38; John 7:16,17; John 17:6–12 |

Jesus’ attitude to sinners, outcasts and those in need


Jesus attitude and response to religious leaders


Jesus’ attitude to the Roman government


Life through the eyes of Jesus in the book of John

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Jesus speaks with Nicodemus

| John 3:1–21 |

Jesus speaks with the Samaritan woman

| John 4:4–26 |

Jesus speaks with the Pharisees

| John 5:16–27 |

Jesus’ ‘I am’ statements

| John 6:35,48–51 |
| John 8:12; John 10:7–15; John 11:25,26 |
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Jesus’ treatment of people

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Jesus touches people

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Jesus reaches out to the ‘unclean’

| A centurion | Matthew 8:5–13 |
| A man with leprosy | Mark 1:40–42 |
| Ten men healed of leprosy | Luke 17:11–19 |
| A man with demons | Mark 5:1–20 |
| A sick woman | Mark 5:24–34 |

Jesus raises Jairus’ daughter

| Mark 5:21–24, 35–43 |

Jesus heals a man on the Sabbath

| Luke 6:6–11 |

Jesus raises a widow’s son

| Luke 7:11–15 |

A Syro-phoenician woman

| Mark 7:24–30 |

A deaf and mute man

| Mark 7:31–35 |

A profile of Judas

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A profile of Paul
Acts 9:13–17 Galatians 1:13,14

A profile of Peter
Matthew 14:25–31 Matthew 16:16–19
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A profile of Thomas
Matthew 10:3 John 11:16
John 21:1–14

Jesus demonstrates love and mercy instead of condemnation
John 8:1–11 John 9

SEXUALITY
Sex is God’s gift
Genesis 1:27,28 Genesis 2:22–25
1 Timothy 4:4,5 1 Corinthians 6:16,18–20

Expressing one’s sexuality
Song of Songs 2:8–16 Song of Songs 5:18,19
1 Corinthians 6:19,20

Marriage
Genesis 24 (Rebekah becomes Isaac’s wife)
Exodus 20:14 Proverbs 5:15–20
1 Corinthians 7:2–4 1 Corinthians 6:18
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Matthew 19:3–9

Adultery
Leviticus 20:13 2 Samuel 11
Hosea 3:1 Matthew 5:27,28

Rape
2 Samuel 13:1–22

Sexual morality
Genesis 39 (Joseph resists Potiphar’s wife)
Leviticus 18:22 Leviticus 20:13
Romans 1:21,26,27 Romans 12:1,2
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On the question of abortion
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Jeremiah 1:5 Acts 17:24,25,28
Romans 8:31–39 1 Thessalonians 4:3–5

2 God creates each person as a unique individual with characteristics and abilities

All people are treated equally
Genesis 1:26,27 Exodus 22:21
Exodus 23:9 Leviticus 24:22
Numbers 15:14–16 Deuteronomy 1:16,17
Deuteronomy 10:17–19 Psalm 10:17,18
Psalm 146:9 Matthew 25:34–46
Acts 10:34,35 1 Corinthians 9:19–22
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James 2:1–9

A person’s worth according to God
Genesis 1:26,27,31 Exodus 3:4–14
Exodus 4:1–17 1 Samuel 16:7
Psalm 8:3–6 Psalm 139:1–18
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Isaiah 43:1,2 Luke 12:22–29
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Jesus shows people they are valued
Jesus loved a rich young ruler Mark 10:17–22
Jesus heals Bartimaeus Mark 10:46–52
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Jesus washes his disciples feet John 13:2–5
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People have different abilities but the same responsibility
Genesis 1:26–31 Genesis 2:15,19,20
Deuteronomy 6:1–9
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Jesus empowers his followers
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Jeremiah 1:5 Acts 17:24,25,28
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**Freedom involves choice**

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**God creates all people to live in relationship with him**

**God forms relationships with people in the Old Testament**

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<td>The nation of Israel</td>
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**God forms relationships with all people in Jesus**

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**God has revealed himself to all people**

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**God extends his forgiveness**

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God creates and loves all people

IMAGES Students explore the different uses and meanings of the word ‘image’, e.g. baby is the ‘spitting image’ of his father, some people choose clothes to give them the ‘right image’, photographers use the word ‘image’ to describe their finished product. Students brainstorm what they think the Bible means when it says that humans were created in the image of God. (1a)

PROJECTING AN IDENTITY Christians believe that God ‘most clearly revealed himself’ in the creation of human beings. If a country, a school or a business wants to give strangers an understanding of its true identity, what images does it use to convey the appropriate message? Students discuss what can be learnt about God from a study of human beings. (1a,3a)

BEING HUMAN Students create a collage of inhuman behaviour, using words and pictures drawn from their experience of life and examples in the world news. They suggest what motivates both human and inhuman behaviour.

Go on to explore the Christian belief that God’s goodness and holiness was lost when human beings sinned against God and how this goodness and holiness can be restored for humans. (1a)

WHAT DO THEY REALLY SAY? Find articles on sexuality in teenage and adult magazines that students read, e.g. Girlfriend, Dolly, Cleo. View soap operas. Students examine these from different perspectives:

- Identify how the articles/shows take into account a person’s emotional, physical, intellectual, spiritual and social nature.
- Identify the long-term and short-term goals and effects for any course of action the articles/shows are reporting on or recommending.
- Investigate the personal motivation for issues relating to sexuality and boy/girl relationships. List the ideas which stress personal pleasure and fulfilment and the ideas which encourage acting for the good of the other person in the relationship.

- Contrast what magazine articles, shows and advertisements say about sex with the reality as it is presented in the problem pages or Agony Aunt letters.
- Contrast the messages about sexuality with the results of a survey (they have written) of their peer group.

Students write a definition of sexuality based on a study of the media’s presentation of sexuality. Continue with a study of what the Bible teaches about human sexuality. (1b)

UNDERSTANDING THE OPPOSITE SEX Divide the class into gender groups. Give each group a large sheet of paper on which to record their responses. Each group

1. lists what they think are the advantages and disadvantages of being the other gender.
2. lists what they think are the other gender’s favourite films, songs, sport, school activities.
3. describes what they think is the other gender’s emotional make-up.
4. describes what they think the other gender looks for in a friendship and in boy/girl relationships.
5. lists what it means to be a man or woman and the myths that exist about manhood and womanhood.

Give both groups time to read and respond to what the other group has written about their gender.

Students assess what has formed their ideas about the opposite sex and how well males and females in the class understand each other. They identify stereotypes about their gender.

Go on to read about the creation of male and female in Genesis 1 and 2 and discuss how each is a gift to the other.

Select appropriate quotes from books such as Men Are from Mars and Women Are from Venus to enrich student discussion. (1b)
GETTING STARTED

There are various ways of introducing the topic of sexuality, eg:

- Students cut out all the articles relating to sexuality in one edition of a newspaper. They list the ideas and issues which arise from the articles.
- Students complete a sentence beginning *Sex is . . .*
- Students list the sexual issues that are most important to them.
- Students describe what they think is a healthy boy/girl relationship, listing the important qualities and attitudes that each person needs to bring to the relationship.
- Students debate such statements as: *Recreational sex is just as acceptable as sex in marriage. No-one has the right to create a life thoughtlessly.*

You may need to conduct the above activities in separate gender groups or give each gender group different activities. Each gender group responds to and challenges the other group's conclusions. Go on to investigate what Christians believe about protecting God's gift of sexuality. (1b)

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

To introduce students to both terminology and concepts in sexuality, the teacher leads a discussion on the differences in meaning between such terms as:

- sex and intimacy
- infatuation and love
- chastity and abstinence
- sex and sexuality
- promiscuity and faithfulness
- sex as a gift or a compulsion
- virginity and revirginising (recommitment to celibacy until marriage).

Students go on to look at Jesus' offer of forgiveness and new life to people who have used sex in ways not intended by God. (1b)

THE FRINGE DWELLERS

Students view sections of films which explore the reality of life for people who are marginalised as a result of their race, colour, gender, sexuality, disability, social status etc (eg *The Fringe Dwellers, Philadelphia, My Left Foot*). Discuss:

- the factors which keep marginalised people as fringe dwellers even when they attempt integration into the dominant society;
- the lifestyle of people living on the fringes of society;
- the feelings and attitudes towards each other of the marginalised and the rest of society.

Students write a diary/journal entry from the viewpoint of a marginalised character in the film viewed.

Students list the types of people who are forced to exist on the fringes of their community. Students discuss the types of people who are 'fringe dwellers' in their own school. What makes them 'fringe dwellers'? Students go on to find examples in the Bible which demonstrate the Christian belief that human worth does not depend on a person's abilities, gender, social standing, but on the fact that each person is created and redeemed by God. (1c)

TOUCH

Christians believe that the great value God places on each human life is most clearly expressed in Jesus' unconditional acceptance of the unacceptable/untouchable people in his society. Students explore how touching communicates acceptance.

Students find out about the 'untouchables' in India — what makes them untouchable. They find out what difference the work of people such as Princess Diana, Gandhi, Mother Teresa has made to the 'untouchables' in society.

Students identify who would be considered the 'untouchables' in their community? Students reflect on their own attitudes and behaviour towards such people.

*Jesus Breaks the Barriers* in the Development Activities Menu explores the radical nature of touch in Jesus' healing ministry. (1c)

GRACE EXEMPLIFIED

Films provide examples of the undeserving or the rejected being shown mercy, love, acceptance, eg:

- In *Shine* David Helfgott's life is changed when three women help him and accept him as he is.
- In *Dead Man Walking* a nun struggles to counsel and care for a prisoner on death row because he is a human being.
- In *Forrest Gump* a simple man's love for his 'girl' remains unshakeable through all circumstances.

Use only appropriate sections from the films. Encourage students to provide their own examples.

Students arrive at a definition of grace/love based on the examples they have viewed. They contrast these contemporary examples with parables Jesus told, eg *The Lost Son, The Good Samaritan,* and with examples of Jesus' dealings with people (see stories listed in *Jesus Breaks the Barriers* in the Development Activities Menu). (1c)
GOD CREATES HUMAN BEINGS

2 God creates each person as a unique individual with characteristics and abilities

WHO ARE WE? Each student creates a profile of him/herself (either in written or pictorial format, eg coat of arms) including:

- family details
- cultural background
- how gender contributes to who they are
- thirty things they can do
- favourite foods, songs, clothes, TV programs, books
- a list of five important friends since birth
- three life-shaping events
- thoughts on the future, money and God

Ask for some volunteers to write the information belonging to each dot point on a separate OHT. Students share their profile with the class by superimposing each of the OHTs to demonstrate the complexity of their life experience and how different it is from someone else’s life experience.
Alternatively, students do personality tests such as Myer-Briggs (available on the Internet: http://kiersey.com/)

Lead on to a discussion on the uniqueness and sameness of each individual and the complexity and diversity of human beings. Each student reflects how his/her distinctive qualities and abilities is a gift to themselves and to others.

Students consider the diversity and complexity of human experience within the total school environment, the local community, a country. A community newspaper will reveal some information about the many different kinds of people who live in and contribute to the community, the diverse activities that are offered to members of the community, and the complex issues which face people and government. (2a,2b,2c,1a)

DIFFERENT FACES Give each student a different magazine. Each student finds twenty different faces, demonstrating the diversity in age, gender, race and mood in human beings. Students brainstorm possible life experiences of the people whose faces they have cut out of the magazine. The class creates a large collage of words and faces.

Students investigate the function of the various parts of the face and the workings of the muscles in the face. Discuss what the activity reveals about the complexity of human beings. (2a)

HAVE AN EXPERIENCE There are many different activities which can be organised to give students an appreciation of the diverse nature and experiences of human beings:

- View a video which shows aspects of another culture.
- Listen to a wide range of music from contemporary, classical and ethnic origin.
- Invite people of different ethnic backgrounds to speak on their tradition and how it shaped their lives.
- Conduct a survey in the class to see if anyone has exactly the same colour hair, same face shape, same leg length, same waist measurement, fingerprints, etc.
- Find out how many different sports, occupations and hobbies a person can choose from.
- Find examples of different ways people have expressed themselves in art forms.

Students discuss when and why people’s differences are either celebrated or ridiculed. They list ways we can be more accepting of people’s differences. (2a)

FIND OUT THE FACTS Students list the many body stereotypes which exist, eg

- If you are short and fat, you . . .
- If you are muscular, you . . .
- If you are tall and slim, you . . .

Students write what they would change about their body and appearance if they had the power to do so. What would they hope to achieve by this? List ways people try to change their appearance.

Along with science and medical books, many magazines have articles which promote a balanced attitude to dieting, exercise and beauty. Students find out as many facts as they can about what contributes to the body’s shape, size, rate of growth, health. They reword the body stereotypes to make them true statements (Real Gorgeous by Kaz Cook is a useful resource).

Students discuss the reasons people continue to be concerned about their appearance, even when they know the facts. If possible, invite adults to speak about their own body perceptions and how they deal with the myths that they are presented with.

Each student completes the activity with ten sentences beginning ‘I am’, emphasising their specialness.

Go on with a study of what the Bible teaches about the source of human self-worth. (2a,2b)
MIRROR, MIRROR ON THE WALL
Bring several mirrors to class. Students look in the mirrors, discuss when mirrors are used and what purpose they serve. Discuss
- how they generally feel when they look into a mirror (recall Snow White’s stepmother’s relationship with a mirror);
- what happens when they look at their reflection in the distorting mirrors at fun parks, in the pupil of another person’s eye or the glossy paintwork of a car. What creates the distortion — the mirror or the person?
- how other people’s words and attitudes can be mirrors for a person;
- how advertising and cultural influences act as mirrors.
Students draw an outline of themselves. Within the outline they create a collage of words, pictures of clothes, people, possessions etc, jingles, sayings, beliefs that are helping to form their self-image.
Students evaluate which messages are true, are fantasy, are stereotypes, deal with appearance, reflect the inner person. Follow this activity with How God Sees Us in Development Activities. (2b,1a)

OUR SENSE OF WORTH
Ask students to write on slips of paper (anonymously) any feelings of unworthiness, ugliness, inadequacy or loneliness that they have experienced or may be experiencing at the moment.
Summarise the student responses. Keep the summary to use in the Development Activity How God sees us. (Alternatively, use TRS D1/2 from the model unit God Created You.)
Students share what provokes such feelings at any one time. They share three special qualities they have which make them feel good about themselves. They find song lyrics, stories, and/or pictures which reflect the two extremes of feelings people have about themselves. Go on to examine what the Bible teaches about self-worth. (2b,1a)

REAL-LIFE SITUATIONS
Students write about a variety of situations they have experienced, evaluating the impact each situation has had on their personal growth and relationships. They write about a time when
- they were too dependent on a friend. How did this affect the decisions they made? How did they feel about themselves?
- they were bored. What made them bored? How did they overcome their boredom?
- they acted independently, with positive results. To what degree were they responsible for the results?
- they acted independently, with positive results. What is the strongest feeling they had about themselves?
- they avoided making a decision. What was the consequence?
Go on to explore what Christians believe about people’s responsibility to use their abilities. (2c)

IN CONTROL
Students make two lists:
1. things over which they have no control in their lives, eg natural hair colour, ethnic background, time and era in which they live;
2. situations in life over which they have control, eg how to use their time and money, who will be their friends.
Students discuss the constraints that both control and non-control of a situation place on them. They share how they respond to some of those constraints and to what degree they have control of their responses. Are there ever any times when people are not personally accountable for their actions and responses? Examine Bible stories of how people have exercised responsibility. (2c)

HOW FREE IS FREE?
Christians believe that God created human beings as free agents. Discuss different ways that the idea of freedom is presented in society, eg freedom fighters, ‘do your own thing’, ‘if it feels good, do it’.
What understanding of freedom is found in Hamlet’s speech ‘To be or not to be’ in Shakespeare’s Hamlet?
Students discuss the meaning of such terms as free will, choice, privilege, responsibility, consequence, accountability, relationship, community, in relation to freedom. Go on to investigate what the Bible teaches about individual freedom. (2c)

God creates all people to live in relationship with him

WHAT KIND OF GOD?
Students either draw or describe the god they believe in or don’t believe in.
Students explore the implications of such a god in their daily life. What kind of relationship would they have with this god and how would their relationship with this god express itself?
Divine Drama (OHT 3) outlines different hats people give to God. Students suggest what evidence there is in their society for these ideas of God. Listen to God. Version 1.0 (Robin Mann). (3a,3b)
RELIGIOUS STORIES AND PRACTICES  Students work in pairs, each investigating a different religious tradition, eg Egyptian, Norse, Roman, Greek, Hindu, Japanese. Students find and read sacred stories of the god(s) of that tradition. They take notes on the nature of the relationship between the god(s) and human beings.

Students report on the link between the rituals and worship practices of the religious tradition and the relationship that people in that tradition have with their god(s). Students compare different religions’ views of god with the ‘one true God’ presented in the Bible. (3a,3b)

COVENANTS  Students find the meaning of the word covenant and create a bank of contemporary synonyms, eg treaty, pact, contract, verbal agreement. They determine the kind of relationship which exists between two parties in different kinds of agreements, eg a contract between a landlord and a tenant.

Students suggest the type of contract that could exist between God and people.

Continue with an examination of the covenants God made with different people in the Old Testament and the new covenant instituted by Jesus. (3a)

DIGGING DEEP  Students record in their journals those things which
• are most important to them
• upset them the most
• make them laugh
• bring them a wonderful sense of wellbeing
• amaze them most.

Students find a poem, song, saying, painting, photograph, or object which has a lot of meaning for them. They share in small groups what is special to them about the items they have chosen.

Give students a range of definitions of ‘religion’. What do the definitions suggest is important to people? What answers are people looking for?

Create a class list of ‘tough’ questions about life that students would like answered.

Students go on to examine what insights the Bible gives to their questions. (3b)

BY ACCIDENT?  Provide the students with two scenarios:
1. A person has been planned for and been created by a loving creator.
2. A person is the result of the forces of chance (popular meaning: unplanned).

Students explore the implications of each scenario on that person’s view of themselves, their origin, worth, purpose, understanding of ethical issues, and view of death and the life beyond. Students examine the difference belief in God makes to people’s lives. (3b)
GOD CREATES HUMAN BEINGS

IN THE IMAGE OF GOD  Students analyse Genesis 1:26–31 and Genesis 2:7–25 to determine what it means that human beings were created in the image of God. They underline all the words which describe God’s action towards and instructions to human beings. Students describe
- the difference between the creation of human beings and of animals;
- God’s intention for human beings (their relationships with each other and with him, their sexuality and community life);
- God’s provision for human beings;
- the relationship between God and human beings (refer to Background Notes).

Students summarise what it means for people to have been created in the image of God. In what ways is bearing the image of God both a privilege and a responsibility? (1a,1b)

RESTORED  (This activity is a development of the Introductory Activity Being Human.) Students investigate how human beings lost the ‘goodness and holiness’ of God and what happened to the image of God (described in Genesis 1 and 2). The Bible passages listed under God’s image is distorted in the Bible References Menu show how the idea is developed in the Old and New Testaments. Students discuss what has become distorted: the image or God.

Students investigate what the Bible teaches about
- how God restores his image in people (see the Bible References Menu);
- how the restored ‘image of God’ is expressed in people’s lives (see the Bible References Menu).

Students reflect on what God’s action tells them about their worth to him. (1a)

TRUE HUMANNESS  Students investigate how Jesus’ life not only demonstrates what it means to be truly human — to be the image of God — but also restores the ‘image of God’ for those who identify with Jesus (Philippians 2:6–11). The study has three parts:

A. Students read Bible references which present Jesus as the one who is God’s image:
   - John 1:18
   - John 14:9
   - Colossians 1:15
   - Hebrews 1:3
   - As an extension, study pronouncements about Jesus before his birth in Luke 1,2; Isaiah 9:1–7; Isaiah 11:1–5.

B. In groups students examine the image of God portrayed in different aspects of Jesus’ life (see The human life of Jesus in the Bible References Menu).

C. Students find words in Bible references which show that the image of God is restored in all who believe in Jesus. See
   - Romans 6:3,4
   - 2 Corinthians 5:17
   - Galatians 3:26
   - Ephesians 2:4,5
   - Colossians 1:21,23.

Brainstorm differences this restored image can make in a person’s life. See Ephesians 4:22 – 5:1;
1 John 4:7. (1a)

PICTURES OF GOD  Students discuss what is meant by ‘metaphor’, why and when metaphors are used. They give examples of metaphors.

Students explore and discuss pictures of God as a parent — both father and mother — found in the Bible (see God loves as a parent in the Bible References Menu).

What characteristics of mother and father are emphasised? Which characteristics do students identify in themselves? Others?

What do these pictures of God tell us about the relationship God wants to have with his people? (1a,1b,3a)
LIFE

our society offers abortion as a viable and legal option. Abortion is an issue which demands a personal stance. There are Christians among both supporters and opponents of abortion.

Introduce the topic by asking the question: ‘If you/your girlfriend were to become pregnant while at school, would you choose abortion as the best way to deal with the situation?’

Students brainstorm the questions and issues that need to be explored before a person can reach a conclusive answer for themselves. The questions then become the basis for research.

View selected excerpts of films such as If Walls Could Talk, invite someone from Family Planning, examine the material supplied by Lutherans For Life, investigate case studies of abortion, look at the Bible passages related to the issue (refer to Bible References Menu). At the end of the research students write their answer to the introductory question.

Examples of questions that can be explored:

- What is the legal status and practice of abortion in Australia?
- When is a foetus a human being?
- What are the known short-term and long-term effects of abortion for ‘parent’ females and males?
- Is abortion right or wrong in cases of rape and incest? where the foetus is deformed? where the mother’s life is at risk?
- Is having a baby, which is a long-term commitment, too large a penalty to pay for a mistake when one is young?
- Is abortion OK if you do not believe in God?
- Will an unwanted pregnancy lead to child abuse?
- Whose rights are most important: the mother’s? the father’s? the foetus’s?
- There are too many people in the world already, so why bring an unwanted baby into the world?
- We live in a confusing world: abortions are performed up to 24 weeks, yet premature babies can be saved as early as 23 weeks.
- What does responsibility look like if I’m going to be sexually active?
- Does God condemn you if you have had an abortion? (1a,1c,2a,2b)

SEXUAL MATTERS Issues relating to sexuality are complex and need to be examined from several perspectives. Use one or more of the following statements to initiate discussion and research in an area of sexuality.

- To be masculine means to be in control, competitive, dominating, tough.
- Friendships between girls are generally closer than friendships between boys.
- The relationship in which sex takes place is more important than the age of the participants.
- Sex makes a relationship better.
- The best sex is in marriage.
- Sex without commitment demeans a person and the gift of sexuality.
- The girl should have most of the responsibility in deciding how far to go sexually in a relationship.
- There is no such thing as safe sex.
- Sex sins are no worse than any other sins.
- If you really love somebody you will try to look and act the way they want you to.
- To love means to give yourself to another person for their fulfilment.

Students determine the type of information they need to help them arrive at a reasoned response to the statement, eg students may need to consider the advantages and disadvantages of different methods of contraception, research the incidence of sexually transmitted diseases and how these are contracted, review their knowledge of the male and female reproductive system, find stories of people’s experiences of abortion.

Select appropriate biblical material from Sexuality in the Bible References Menu. (1b)

**IS GOD ANTI-SEX?** Give students a comprehensive selection of Bible verses listed under Sexuality in the Bible References Menu. Students list what the verses state about
- the context and purpose of sex
- the motivation for a person’s sexual activity
- the responsible expression of a person’s sexuality
- the consequences of choices made relating to sexual matters.

Students write a 300-word response to the question *Is God anti-sex?* They support their view with a reasoned explanation of appropriate Bible verses. They compare the biblical perspective of sexuality with various viewpoints held in their society. (1b)

**JESUS BREAKS THE BARRIERS**

Students investigate what made lepers, Gentiles, women, anyone associated with a dead body ‘unclean’ or fringe dwellers in Jewish society. Refer to commentaries (such as Crossing the Boundaries by R Strelan) and Bible dictionaries. Students read the following texts

**identify** the fringe dweller(s)

**make** notes on what Jesus does and says

**identify** which barriers of culture Jesus crosses and how he crosses them. Note instances when Jesus touches people (*).
will give students background material to help them complete the activity.
Students look up parallel texts to see what they reveal about Judas. Students contrast their view of Judas with how film-makers have represented him, e.g. in Jesus Christ Superstar and Jesus of Nazareth.
A character web can be created on other people Jesus chose to be his followers, e.g.
- Paul (The LIFE Concept Serving has an in-depth study of Paul.)
- Peter (The LIFE Concept Discipleship has an in-depth study of Peter.)
- Thomas.
See the Bible References Menu for suggested readings about these people.
Students discuss the chances of any of the above people — if they were living now — being chosen today for leadership positions in business, politics, the entertainment industry etc. Students suggest reasons for Jesus’ choice of these people to lead his church. (1c)

**JESUS’ ENTOURAGE** Jesus mixed with a whole cross-section of society. Divide the class into four groups. Each group skim-reads a gospel and lists all the different kinds of people with whom Jesus had dealings: from religious leaders to prostitutes.
As an extension, students make a reference card for each person/group of people, summarising the interaction between the person(s) and Jesus. Reference cards can be used with other activities during the year, as students revisit the same stories/characters. They can further examine and contrast the Pharisees’ reactions to Jesus and his followers with Jesus’ approach to people.
Students identify contemporary people and classes of people who correspond to New Testament people. Is there anyone Jesus would not mix with? (1c)

**RESPONDING TO SOMEONE’S ‘SPECIALNESS’** Students list ways they appreciate, esteem, love and care for others, reflecting on how they know they themselves are loved, cared for and esteemed. Jesus not only told people that he (God) cares, he also demonstrated it.
Choose and study stories that highlight Jesus’ concern for people (see Jesus shows people they are valued. Jesus reaches out to the ‘unclean’ and Jesus demonstrates love and mercy instead of condemnation in the Bible References Menu).
Students record the gestures, actions and expressions that show Jesus’ appreciation of people and his care for them. (2b)
HOW GOD SEES US  Students read the following passages and identify the value that God places on each person. Students draw up a table which shows the contrast between how God sees a person and how a person sees either him/herself or others.

Genesis 1:26,27,31  Exodus 3:4–14
Exodus 4:1–17  1 Samuel 16:7
Psalm 8:3–6  Psalm 139:1–18
Psalm 147:10,11  Jeremiah 1:4–12
1 Timothy 4:4,12

Select examples of a sense of unworthiness from the summary in Our Sense of Worth in Introductory Activities (eg people feel hurt, disillusioned, rejected). On slips of paper students write messages of encouragement they think God would send to people who feel this way. Computer banners can be designed and displayed in the classroom.

Students could then think of ways they could communicate to other people the Bible’s message of God’s love for each person at home, at school and in the community. (2b,1a)

EXERCISING RESPONSIBILITY

Students list the advice their parents and teachers have given them about their learning. They summarise in one sentence the main message which they receive from such advice. Students can also analyse the assumptions the study skills program given at the school makes about learning and the learner.

Students examine how the theme of personal responsibility (and accountability) for the gifts and abilities people possess is developed in various stories and contexts in the Bible. Students identify the common ideas that emerge about how people are to view their gifts and talents and how people are to use their gifts and abilities in each of the contexts:

God gives human beings responsibility over creation  Genesis 1:26–31; 2:15,19,20
Moses reminds God’s people of their responsibility to God  Deuteronomy 6:1–9
Deuteronomy 28:1–6,15–19
a father speaks about wisdom  Proverbs 4
an example of responsibility from nature  Proverbs 6:6–11
Jesus speaks about responsibility  Matthew 16:25,26; 25:14–30
Luke 12:48

As an extension, students use a Bible concordance to find other comments the writer of Proverbs makes about using one’s gifts and abilities. They write the advice they think the writer of Proverbs would give to students, in keeping with the message students have discovered in the Bible. (2c)

JESUS’ GIFTED DISCIPLES  Students draw around one of their hands and write on the drawing five things which are special about themselves.

Followers of Jesus believe that God has created them with gifts and abilities. Students examine several New Testament passages to determine how followers of Jesus are encouraged to make use of their God-given abilities (see Jesus empowers his followers in the Bible References Menu).

Students list ways in which they can encourage and empower members of their class to use their gifts and abilities. As a class create a poster which can be displayed in the classroom as a daily reminder to students of how they can support one another. (2c)

THE GIFT OF FREEDOM  This activity is a continuation of How free is free? in Introductory Activities. Students explore the concept of freedom as it is expressed in the Bible verses listed in Freedom involves choice in the Bible References Menu.

Students discuss the question ‘Why didn’t God create human beings in such a way that they couldn’t disobey him, corrupt his creation, etc?’

Students apply biblical ideas on freedom to a context where they can exercise freedom of choice, eg to choose not to do one’s homework, to choose to express one’s sexuality. Students can present their conclusions about what personal freedom looks like in the form of a concept map. (2c)

A SUBSTITUTE GOD  Human beings have a natural knowledge of God’s existence. If they don’t know the one true God, they tend to develop their own ideas of God. Students examine what different ideas of God emerge from a study of 1 Kings 18:16–39.

Students contrast Elijah with the prophets of Baal in behaviour, words, actions and relationship with their god. What is the major difference in the ways Elijah and the prophets of Baal relate to their respective gods? What two different understandings of God are evident in this story?

Students can further investigate in a Bible encyclopedia the nature of the Canaanite gods Baal and Asherah. Isaiah 40:18–31, Isaiah 41:8–10 and Isaiah 44:6–20,24 give a contrasting view of the Hebrew God and idols. Students explain in 200 words why the biblical
writers believed there can be no substitute for the God who had revealed himself to them. Students discuss what are people’s substitutes for God today, reflecting on whether they themselves have a substitute for God. (3a)

**GOD’S RELATIONSHIPS** In small groups students read and research various examples of the relationship between God and people in the Old Testament. Each group may look at one of the individuals listed in *God forms relationships with people in the Old Testament* in the Bible References Menu. Give all groups the same statements for which they must find evidence in the story that they are reading. Use a statement like:

- God initiates and sustains the relationships that exist between him and people.
- God has relationships with the most unlikely people.
- God wants people to relate to him.

Students give reasons for describing the above relationships as covenants formed between God and people.

As extension students examine how Jesus called people into a relationship with him, eg Zacchaeus, the disciples, young children. Students consider the significance of Jesus’ words in Matthew 11:28,29; John 7:37,38; John 17:20–23 for their own relationship with God. (3a)

**GOD IN JESUS** John 1:14 introduces Jesus as the person who makes it possible for people to know God and live in a good relationship with him.

Give each student a story which illustrates how Jesus related to people. Select from the wide cross-section of people Jesus interacted with (refer to the Bible References Menu). Students use an art form to represent the most significant aspect of Jesus’ relationship with the person/people in the story they have examined. Create a collective display of student artwork. Students write a one-page response entitled ‘God and People’.

Students examine several New Testament passages which emphasise that God wants to have a close relationship with all people (see *God forms relationships with all people in Jesus* in the Bible References Menu).

Where the situation is appropriate, students write a personal response entitled ‘God and I’.

**WAYS OF SEEING** Students identify several important questions they want answers to (see Introductory Activity Digging deep). They work in groups, each of which investigates how a different religion has sought to respond to their question. Using a Bible concordance and dictionary, the students find out how the Bible responds to the question. (3b)

**MADE FOR GOD?** Students investigate what evidence exists for a view commonly held by Christians that all human beings were created to be in relationship with God. This is sometimes referred to as a ‘God-shaped hole’ that people seek to fill. Such an investigation can involve:

- an examination of biblical passages such as Acts 17:16–32; Acts 19:23–27; Romans 1:18–23,28–32;
- a critique of the veneration of popular figures such as Princess Diana, Elvis Presley;
- the study of sport as a religion in Australia;
- an examination of the resurgence of religious and superstitious practices in contemporary society, eg witchcraft, Celtic practices, New Age Movement;
- a study of the worship of political leaders as gods, eg Julius Caesar, Hitler;
- an examination of the circumstances in people’s lives which led them to turn to God, eg Darren Beadman, Joni Eareckson-Tada (there will be an abundance of material in Christian biography).

Students work in groups and present their conclusions about the existence of a ‘God-shaped hole’ in all human beings. Give students time and space to reflect on their own sense of spirituality and with what they have filled their ‘God-shaped hole’. (3a,3b)
GOD CREATES HUMAN BEINGS

1. God creates and loves all people

WHO AM I? Students each present their personal story, using the medium of their choice. Their story needs to encompass their reflections on:
- their cultural and family background
- the different relationships they have had
- significant ideas, people and events which have shaped their life in some way
- what they hold to be of greatest importance
- how they react to the biblical teaching about the origin of life and what it means to be human. (It is not necessary for students to align themselves with this teaching. Rather, they are asked to reflect on how it makes them think about who they are.)

Possible ways of presenting their story:
- a scrapbook of photos, drawings, quotations, items, reflections
- a poem
- a picture book
- a recorded interview on cassette
- a series of documented songs that represent who they are. (1a,2b)

FORUM ON ABORTION This activity follows on from Abortion in the Development Activities Menu. Form five groups.
- **Group 1** prepares the arguments supporting the statement: A foetus is a human being.
- **Group 2** prepares arguments against: A foetus in a human being.
- **Group 3** prepares the arguments supporting: People have the right to terminate a foetus.
- **Group 4** prepares the arguments against: People have the right to terminate a foetus.
- **Group 5** prepares questions for the presenters about both statements.

Present the information in a forum either within the class or for another class.

Students will need to substantiate their positions, drawing on what they have learnt about biblical, legal, and medical positions regarding abortion and the effect it has on the people involved and on the wider community.

Alternatively, a class forum can be conducted on other topics related to human sexuality listed in Sexual Matters in the Introductory Activities. (1b)

2. God creates each person as a unique individual with characteristics and abilities

PSALMS OF PRAISE, CONFESSION AND THANKSGIVING Students write psalms of praise, confession and thanksgiving, celebrating people's uniqueness and 'specialness'. The psalms need to reflect how people's uniqueness and specialness is either valued or devalued in the school context. These psalms can be included in a school worship time. (2a)

ADVERTISEMENTS Students consider the many negative messages about life and self-worth which are promoted in and by the media and by life experiences.

Working in groups, students create a series of advertisements which emphasise that a person's worth rests on God's acceptance of him/her (eg John 3:16). The aim is to counteract the negative messages young people receive and to encourage students to value themselves and to recognise the gifts and talents they possess.

Students make poster-size advertisements to display around the school. The more adventurous students may present their advertisements in the form of street theatre one lunchtime. (2b)

CREATIVE MOVEMENT Students create a sequence of movements set to music and using colour and space creatively to demonstrate how people can esteem each other's worth. They look for their inspiration in the way Jesus approached and responded to people, as well as in the many examples that are present in their own families, school and wider community.

Alternatively, students can choose a gospel story such as the healing of a demoniac (Mark 5:1–20) or of a man born blind (John 9) to put to music and movement.

Include these creative expressions in a school worship time, so that all students can be inspired. (1c)

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Students make poster-size advertisements to display around the school. The more adventurous students may present their advertisements in the form of street theatre one lunchtime. (2b)
USE IT Students list practical ways that people — in particular, their peer group — can use and develop their gifts and talents at school, at home, in the community, serving God. These ideas can be presented in the form of a class booklet to be placed in the library, or a series of motivational messages that can be displayed in the classroom. (2c)

PEOPLE GALLERY Students create a gallery of posters featuring different groups of people, highlighting the theme ‘God has no favourites’ (Acts 10:34). The posters are to celebrate the contribution that all people make to a community, eg mothers in the workforce and those who care for their children full-time at home, the disabled, those who suffer mental illness, the unemployed, leaders, children, different ethnic groups. Students include information on the specific needs of different groups and how the community can support them.

Once the posters are ready and on display, students spend some quiet time examining the posters and reflecting on what it means for them personally that ‘God has no favourites’. (2a,2c)

3 God creates all people to live in relationship with him

COME TO ME The teacher conducts a meditation which will focus attention on God’s desire to be in relationship with people.

- Read a selection of appropriate Bible verses, eg Deuteronomy 30:11–16; Psalm 103:1–5; Psalm 139:1–18; Isaiah 43:1,2; Jeremiah 1:4–8; Mathew 11:28,29
- Present several representations of famous paintings, eg Rembrandt’s Prodigal son, Michelangelo’s fresco of the creation of Adam, William Blake’s image of creation.
- Listen to appropriate songs, eg Listen, Heaven Will Be Near Me, My Constant Love by Michelle Tumes (CD entitled Listen). You could accompany this with a slide presentation of different aspects of nature.

Give students time to write a personal response to the meditation, recording the thoughts that were prompted by the readings and visual display. (3a)

WHAT’S IT ALL ABOUT? The class researches a religion with the aim of uncovering what is central to its beliefs and practices. Students work in groups, each investigating a separate aspect of the religion but all seeking to answer the same question: ‘What does the religion see as the main purpose for life?’

Each group presents their answer to the question as an oral report with OHTs, a poster presentation, an explained diagram or a computer ‘power point’ presentation if time allows.

At the conclusion of the presentations students each write a one-page response on ‘what life is all about’ for them, drawing on their life experiences and influences to support their statement. (3b)

KEEPING A PERSONAL JOURNAL

Introduce students to keeping a personal journal, encouraging them to make at least two entries a week. One entry can be made in class time, the other at home.

Use the song One More Step (All Together Again 200) as a starting point for discussion about what to include in the journal. Students can include in their journal details, comments, pictures, sayings on any of the following:

- places visited
- food, music, books, TV programs, films
- relationships
- local and world events
- life experiences
- concerns and questions about life, God, the future, etc
- thoughts and feelings about home and school
- Bible passages, reflections and prayers.

Encourage students to see the journal as a ‘friend’ that can help them evaluate the influences in their lives and chart the developments of their faith or thoughts on religious issues. (1,2,3)
The introduction to LIFE contains suggested general resources for all LIFE concepts. The following resources may be used in a unit about God creates human beings. 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

#### GENERAL
- Fee G D & Stuart D, *How to Read the Bible For All Its Worth* 1993 Zondervan Publishing House
- *Luther's Small Catechism* 1996 Openbook Publishers
- Strelan R, *Crossing the Boundaries (a commentary on Mark)* 1991 Lutheran Publishing House

#### SEXUALITY
- Cook K, *Real Gorgeous*

#### RELIGION

#### AUDIO-VISUAL

#### FILMS
- *Dead Man Walking*
- *Fringe Dwellers*
- *Forrest Gump*
- *Philadelphia*
- *Shine*
**MUSIC**

dc Talk *Jesus Freak* 1995 Virgin Records
- Track 1 *So Help Me God*
- Track 10 *In the Light*

Jars of Clay *Much Afraid* 1997 Essential Records
- Track 1 *Overjoyed*
- Track 5 *Frail*
- Track 10 *Much Afraid*

Jars of Clay *Jars of Clay* 1995 Essential Records
- Track 2 *Sinking*
- Track 8 *Flood*
- Track 9 *Worlds Apart*

Michael W Smith *Live the Life* 1998 Reunion Records
- Track 4 *Never Unloved*
- Track 8 *I Know Your Name*

Michelle Tumes *Listen* 1998 Sparrow Records
- Track 6 *My Constant Love*
- Track 9 *Please Come Back*

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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.