# Seeking to follow the path of Christ: Gemma Bell

## Lesson overview

Gemma Bell is a Team Leader for Fusion Mornington Peninsula. For many years, she and her husband and daughter have lived onsite at Fusion’s accommodation service for young people experiencing homelessness, where they provide love, support, community and a home for vulnerable and marginalised young people.

### Learning intentions

Students will learn about:

* Gemma Bell’s difficult childhood and the role of the Bible in comforting her
* How Gemma became in involved with other Christians
* The work Gemma does with Fusion and why she does it.

### Success criteria

Students will be able to:

* Explain what the Bible says about engaging with the world of the occult
* Articulate how Gemma’s life and work relate to what the Gospels show us about Jesus’ earthly ministry and teaching.

### Note to teacher

One part of this lesson focuses on the occult. You may wish to prepare some materials in advance for students who could argue that such things are harmless, and be mindful of how far (and in what directions) you want this discussion to go based on the students in your class and their experiences and backgrounds.

### Bible content

Leviticus 19:31; Psalm 23; Isaiah 8:19; Matthew 7:1–5; Matthew 25:31–46; Mark 2:13–17; Luke 7:36–50; Luke 19:1–10; John 4:1–26; Ephesians 5:8–11, 6:10–17; Philippians 4:6–8.

### Link to Australian Curriculum

General capabilities – Personal and Social Capability, Ethical Understanding

## Lesson plan

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| Preparing the lesson  * View the video content and read the questions that accompany each segment. * Read through the material provided and select the activities and Bible content you wish to use with your students.   **Note:** there are quite a few activities and Scripture passages provided for this lesson. You may wish to give greater focus to some activities and/or some Bible verses than others. You can omit or modify content as appropriate for your class and the time you have available.   * Use the resources listed in ‘Further reading’ if you wish to explore the topic more fully for your own reference before teaching. |

### A. Activate knowledge (2 mins)

Ask: *How do people get through really dark times in their lives?* (Students should be free to suggest anything here, whether helpful or unhelpful coping strategies.)

Say: *We’re going to watch a video about a woman who needed to work out how to get though some really dark times. Now she works with an organisation called Fusion where she helps kids experiencing homelessness to find the help they need.*

### B. Storyboarding (8 mins)

Ask students to read Psalm 23 and quickly ‘storyboard’ the psalm. They should download 5 separate images that provide an illustrative summary of the psalm and caption them with verses from the psalm. (If time is tight, you could ask each group to find one image, or display something similar and read the Psalm aloud.)

The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing.

He makes me lie down in green pastures,

he leads me beside quiet waters,

he refreshes my soul.

He guides me along the right paths

for his name’s sake.

Even though I walk

through the darkest valley,

I will fear no evil,

for you are with me;

your rod and your staff,

they comfort me.

You prepare a table before me

in the presence of my enemies.

You anoint my head with oil;

my cup overflows.

Surely your goodness and love will follow me

all the days of my life,

and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever. (Psalm 23)

### B. Show video segment 1 (approx. 6 mins including questions)

While the video is playing/after it has finished, ask students to write answers to the following viewing and listening questions:

1. Why do you think Gemma found Psalm 23 so comforting when she found it in the old Bible?

2. What caused Gemma to overcome her initial reluctance to get involved with church and Christians?

### C. Group activity (6 mins)

Divide students into groups and give each group all of the following Bible readings: Leviticus 19:31; Isaiah 8:19; Ephesians 5:8–11; Ephesians 6:10–17; Philippians 4:6–8.

Say to students: Based on these verses, why do you think the Bible says not to get involved with the world of the occult? Write 1–2 sentences and be ready to report back to the class.

Allow time for each group to read out their sentences, and time for follow-up class discussion as necessary.

### D. Show video segment 2 (approx. 7 mins including questions)

While the video is playing/after it has finished, ask students to write answers to the following viewing and listening questions:

1. Based on Gemma’s story, how do you think a person’s faith can affect the way they live?

2. What qualities of Jesus does Gemma highlight when she speaks about him?

### E. What do the Gospels say? (8 mins)

Read the some or all of the verses from the Gospels in the table below. You could divide students into groups, give one reading to each group, and ask students to briefly summarise what the verses are saying and how they relate to Gemma’s life and work. (You can give students this table to fill in or just discuss.)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Bible verses | Summary/main point of reading | How this relates to Gemma’s ministry to young people |
| Matthew 7:1–5 |  |  |
| Matthew 25:31–46 |  |  |
| Mark 2:13–17 |  |  |
| Luke 7:36–50 |  |  |
| Luke 19:1–10 |  |  |
| John 4:1–26 |  |  |

### F. Closing discussion/writing question (3 mins)

Say to students: What do you think Christians are called to do as members of a community? What examples of this do you know about?

### G. Going deeper: optional extension ideas

Depending on available lesson time, students’ interests and school priorities, teachers may wish to build on this lesson plan and further explore:

* The Bible’s teaching on spiritual warfare and the great battle between Jesus and Satan
* Other Christian organisations (such as Dusty Feet Mob mentioned in the video – <https://www.eternitynews.com.au/australia/child-dancers-carry-on-the-legacy-of-archie-roach/>) who reach out and meet people where they are
* The relationship between faith, works and salvation (e.g. Romans, James).

### H. Further reading

* Karl Faase with George Marriot, *Faith Runs Deep Anthology: Unearthing stories of faith in Australia*, Olive Tree Media, 2022
* Article about youth homelessness: <https://www.eternitynews.com.au/australia/pray-volunteer-and-donate-mission-australias-plea-to-ease-youth-homelessness/>
* Fusion website: <https://fusion.org.au/>
* An article about Christians and the occult: <https://www.christianity.org.uk/article/the-occult>