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## Part Two

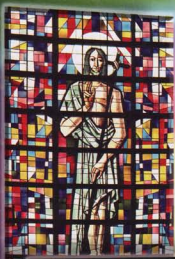
The opener pages are designed to assess, through a variety of questioning techniques, the students' prior knowledge and understanding of the key faith concepts presented in each part of the student book. Processing these pages should not take more than ten or fifteen minutes.

### USING ILLUSTRATIONS

Pictures help stimulate the religious imagination. The first opener page contains pictures that illustrate some of the important concepts presented in this part of the text.

- Have the young people look at and think about the three pictures to gain insight into the mysteries of faith portrayed by the pictures.
- Invite volunteers to describe what each picture says to them about the faith of the Church.
- Ask several volunteers to share a response to the question at the bottom of the page.

## PART TWO The Gift of Salvation



What did Jesus reveal about God?

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### Teaching Tip

**Begin with Prayerful Reflection.** Spend a few moments in prayerful reflection as you prepare for the teaching of Part Two of *Mystery of God*. Recall that at Baptism we receive the gift of the Holy Spirit who guides and helps us live as adopted sons and daughters of God the Father. Ask the Holy Spirit to enkindle in your heart zeal for living the Gospel and to strengthen you with courage and wisdom to witness to the difference living the Gospel has made in your life—and the difference it will make for those you are with.



## Getting Ready

### The Paschal Mystery

What do you know about the events of the Paschal Mystery of Christ?

Passion and death

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Resurrection

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Ascension

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### Questions I Have

What questions about Jesus' work of salvation do you hope these chapters will answer?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### A Scripture Story



The Transfiguration

What do you know about this event from the life of Jesus?

### Faith Vocabulary

Put an X next to the faith vocabulary terms that you know. Put a ? next to the faith vocabulary terms that you need to know more about.

\_\_\_ Immaculate Conception

\_\_\_ kingdom of God

\_\_\_ Incarnation

\_\_\_ Transfiguration

\_\_\_ Messiah

\_\_\_ original sin

\_\_\_ Redemption

\_\_\_ prophet

\_\_\_ Resurrection

\_\_\_ Ascension

\_\_\_ Advocate

\_\_\_ charism

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## Teaching Tip

**Working on Concentration Skills.** Some learners have disabilities that affect their ability to concentrate. Here are a few suggestions to consider in working with these learners:

- Give the young people very clear and specific tasks.
- Provide them with opportunities to choose activities that interest them.
- Be very clear when giving directions.
- Rephrase the directions and invite questions to assure everyone understands them.

## GETTING READY

The second opener page invites the young people to reflect on key faith concepts presented in this part of the text and to identify questions they wish to have answered.

### The Paschal Mystery

Brainstorm brief answers to the question in the box labeled "The Paschal Mystery." List the responses on the board.

### Faith Vocabulary

This section is a quick assessment of the students' familiarity with some of the faith words used in this part of the text. During the review at the end of this part of the text the young people will be asked to return to this page and once again share their understanding of the words.

### Questions I Have

This section encourages the students to reflect on Jesus' work of salvation. Have the students do the activity privately. Then invite the young people to write their question on a chart you have prepared in advance. As you work through the text always refer back to this chart and integrate responses to the questions into your lessons as appropriate.

### A Scripture Story

This section encourages the young people to reflect on the Gospel story of the Transfiguration. Have the students share what they know about the story and its significance in Jesus' work of salvation.

# Jesus Christ, the Son of God

## CHAPTER BACKGROUND

### True God and True Man

The early centuries of the Christian era were an intense and important time for the deepening of the Church's struggle to find appropriate language to correctly formulate the faith in Jesus Christ, true God and true man. In the fourth century at the Council of Nicaea and at the Council of Constantinople, the Church, guided by the Holy Spirit, succinctly stated its faith that Jesus Christ is "one in Being with the Father."

Jesus Christ is fully and truly God and fully and truly man, without confusion or division, in the unity of his divine Person (see *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 464–469). It is comforting to realize that God really feels our pain and suffering because the Son of God became one with us in all things except sin.

### Hail Mary, Full of Grace

The Incarnation of the Son of God came about when the Blessed Virgin Mary, in an obscure village in a defeated nation, responded to God's invitation to become the mother of his Son, saying, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word" (Luke 1:38). By her

willingness to trust in God, Mary was already collaborating in the work of her Son. She gave birth through the power of the Holy Spirit to the Messiah. Through the same Spirit, Mary gave birth to our hope of eternal life.

The Church honors Mary with many titles. Mary is "the master-work of the mission of the Son and the Spirit in the fullness of time" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church* 721). She is the Seat of Wisdom, the Blessed Virgin, and full of grace. The ancient Fathers of the Church honored her as all-holy. She is "free from every stain of sin, as though fashioned by the Holy Spirit and formed as a new creature" (*DOGMAIC CONSTITUTION ON THE CHURCH [LUMEN GENTIUM]* 56).

"Mother" is the title that seems most fitting for Mary and is probably the title that pleases her the most. It is the title spoken by Jesus and cherished by Mary. Mary gave birth to Jesus. With the help of Joseph, her husband, Mary raised Jesus, helping to prepare him for the work he was sent to do. In the Holy Family "Jesus advanced [in] wisdom and age and favor before God and man" (Luke 2:52).

The title "Mother" is also the Church's most cherished title for Mary. From the cross, Jesus



handed the care of his mother over to the beloved disciple and the care of the disciple over to his mother (see John 19:26–27). "Mother" describes who Mary is for the disciples of Christ. We confidently claim her, love her, and trust the mother of Jesus as our mother.

## FOR REFLECTION

*How would I describe my relationship with Jesus and with Mary, his mother?*

*How will I present both the humanity and the divinity of Jesus to the young people?*

## Catechist to Catechist

### The Word Among Us

The mystery of the Incarnation is the mystery of the only Son of God becoming man without giving up his divinity. With the arrival of Jesus in the world, the Word of God lived among us as a child, a teen, and an adult. Help the young people in your group understand that the Word of God took on flesh and was truly one of us—someone who struggled and laughed, someone who cried and grew strong. Emphasize that Jesus, the Word made flesh, is both true God—who we yearn to fully love and believe in, and true man—who was like us in all ways but sin.

### Christian Symbols

You might find it helpful to gather some symbols of the Church's faith in Jesus to share during this lesson. Symbols that express our belief in Jesus can visually enhance your prayer together. In addition, allow the students to see and touch some of the very symbols that they will discuss in this chapter on the Incarnation.



## The Church Teaches . . .

Pope John Paul II reminds us in his encyclical *On Catechesis in Our Time* (CT) that

at the heart of catechesis we find, in essence, a Person, the Person of Jesus of Nazareth, "the only Son from the Father, . . . full of grace and truth." (John 1:14)

CT 5

Faith in Jesus begins in the classroom. In this chapter the students will further their knowledge of Jesus through the study of his birth and public life.

## See the Catechism . . .

For more on the teachings of the Catholic Church on the Immaculate Conception, the Incarnation, and the early life and public life of Jesus, see *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 456–478, 484–507, 522–524, and 535–560.

## CATECHIST PRAYER

*Spirit of God,  
help us grow in  
understanding,  
grace, and truth.  
Empower us to  
follow Jesus Christ  
with passion.  
Amen.*



# LESSON PLANNER

**FOCUS** To discover how the word *incarnation* helps us express our beliefs about Jesus Christ

## Engage

Page 63

### Focus

To describe how a family's preparation for the birth of a baby reflects God's preparing the world for the birth of Jesus, the Son of God

## Teach and Apply

Pages 64–68

### Focus

To describe how the Catholic Church explains that Jesus is true God and true man

## Connect

Pages 69–71

### Focus

To describe some of the symbols the Christians have created to help us understand the Church's faith in Jesus Christ and how we can be living symbols of Christ

## Pray

Page 72

### Prayer Form

Prayer of Blessing

### Prayer

Pray the Benediculus together.

## Pray Together

### Discussion

What was Mary's role in God's plan of salvation?

### Presentation

Read, discuss, and summarize content.

#### Scripture

- Galatians 4:4
- Luke 1:28, 4:18–19
- John 1:1, 14

#### Did you know?

Ecumenical Councils

#### Faith Connection

- Design a poster.
- Discuss Luke 4:18–19.

## Our Church Makes a Difference

Identify some symbols Christians use that help us understand and express the Church's faith in Jesus Christ.

## What Difference Does Faith Make?

Develop a respect for individual differences.

#### Activity

Small groups

#### Faith Decision

Identify a way to be a sign of Christ in school this week.

## Review

- Use the review to reinforce the main concepts of the lesson.
- Point out the "Family Discussion" question and encourage the students to share it with their families this week.

## Materials

- pens or pencils
- markers or colored pencils

## Enriching the Session

### Blackline Masters

*Activities and Assessment Tools* booklet:  
Chapter 6

*Called to Prayer and Liturgical Lessons:*  
Junior High

Use appropriate liturgical year and prayer pages.

### Enriching the Lesson (CG page 133)

ICHTHUS—More Than Just a Fish

The Life of Jesus

Living Symbols of the Church

### Music Connection (CG page 133)

## www.FaithFirst.com



We update the *Faith First* Web site weekly. Check each week for new content and features. Here are some places to begin:

### Catechists and Teachers

- Current Events
- Chapter Downloads
- Catechist Prayer

### Faith First for Families

- Bible Stories
- Family Prayer
- Make a Difference

### Teen Center

- Faith First* Activities
- Chapter Reviews
- Game Alley

**Don't Forget!** You can make lesson planning a breeze—check out the **Online Lesson Planner**.

## Jesus Christ, the Son of God



### FAITH FOCUS

How does the word *Incarnation* help us express our beliefs about Jesus Christ?

### FAITH VOCABULARY

Immaculate Conception	YIWHH
Lord	Incarnation

*What might family members do or talk about as they wait for the birth of a new baby?*

Excitement fills a family as they await the birth of a child. Family members carefully prepare for the newest member of the family to be born. A name is chosen. The crib is carefully made up.

God worked for centuries among his people, the Israelites, preparing the world for the birth of Jesus, the Son of God.

*What does the Old Testament say that points to Jesus?*

*Madonna and Child, wood carving*

*But when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son,  
born of a woman, born under the law.*

Galatians 4:4

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### Background: Scripture

**Old Testament Prefigures Christ.** "All divine Scripture speaks of Christ, and all divine Scripture is fulfilled in Christ" (Hugh of St. Victor). Based on this faith in the unity of the Old Testament and the New Testament, the Church teaches that God's "works of the Old Covenant [prefigure] . . . what he accomplished in the fullness of time in the person of his incarnate Son" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church* 128). Jesus is the "Son of David," the "Messiah," and the "Holy One of God" promised to Israel who would suffer for the sins of many.

### PRAY

- Gather the group for prayer.
- Pray the Sign of the Cross together.
- Invite the group to look at and reflect on the image of the wood carving of the Madonna and Child.
- Proclaim Galatians 4:4 as a group.

### FAITH FOCUS

Read aloud and invite brief responses to the "Faith Focus" question. Point out to the group that in this chapter they will deepen their understanding of Jesus, the Son of God, and of the role of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the divine plan of salvation.

### DISCOVER

Assess the group's prior knowledge of the Church's teaching that Jesus, born of the Virgin Mary, is true God and true man.

- Write the "Faith Vocabulary" terms on the board. Ask volunteers what they already know about the meanings of these faith terms. Write their responses next to the appropriate terms on the board.
- Select a volunteer to read the opening paragraph. Then ask volunteers to share the things families might talk about as they await the birth of a new baby.
- Have the young people read silently the next paragraph and briefly share what they remember in the Old Testament that points to Jesus Christ.



## FOCUS

Remind the group that God gave Mary a unique role in the divine plan of salvation. Tell the young people that these pages invite them to learn more about that unique role of Mary.

## DISCOVER

- Have the group look at the stained-glass representation of the Annunciation. Ask them what they think it is trying to show. Affirm all appropriate responses, such as, "It shows the Holy Spirit's action in bringing about the conception of Christ. It depicts Mary's acceptance of her role in God's plan of salvation."
- Ask volunteers to read aloud "Preparing the Way" and "Blessed Mary, Ever-Virgin."
- Have the young people listen so that they are able to describe the unique role God gave to Mary in the divine plan of salvation.
- Have the young people read "The Mother of God" and "Jesus Is Truly God" in pairs.
- With their partner, have the pairs develop a list of reasons the Church teaches that Jesus is true God and true man.

## The Word Became Flesh

## Preparing the Way

In ways that we still do not fully recognize, the Holy Spirit was always at work in human history, bringing about God's plan for the birth of the Savior, Jesus Christ. Paul the Apostle wrote:

But when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law.

GALATIANS 4:4

In the fullness of time, the Holy Spirit brought that plan about in Mary. By the action of the Holy Spirit in the Virgin Mary, she carried in her womb and gave birth to her only Son, Jesus (see Isaiah 7:14 and Matthew 1:22-23). The name Jesus means "God saves."



## Blessed Mary, Ever-Virgin

We honor Mary as Blessed Mary, Ever-Virgin. Mary remained a virgin in conceiving her Son and in giving birth to him. After giving birth to Jesus, Mary remained a virgin her whole and entire life (see *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 510).

The Virgin Mary is God's "favored one" (Luke 1:28), who was full of grace from the very beginning of her existence. Prepared by the grace of the Holy Spirit for the unique role that she would play in the divine plan, Mary is "the most excellent fruit of redemption." Because of the saving work of her Son, Mary was totally preserved from the stain of original sin. Neither did Mary commit any personal sin throughout her entire life. We call this the Immaculate Conception of Mary.

## The Mother of God

Mary is truly the Mother of God because she is the mother of Jesus, the eternal Son of God. Through the work of the Holy Spirit, the Father gives the world his Son, whom the prophet Isaiah named *Immanuel* (see Isaiah 7:14), a Hebrew name that means "God with us." Through Mary and in her Son, Jesus, everything in the Old Testament converges and comes to fulfillment.

*Describe the unique role of Mary in God's plan to send us the Savior.*

The Annunciation, stained-glass

## Background: Catholic Tradition

**Christian Art.** Point out to the young people that Mary holding the infant Jesus, as depicted on page 63, is one of the most popular subjects of religious art and sculpture. Mary holding the infant Jesus is often referred to as "Madonna and Child." Christians of all cultures and periods of history have rendered this theme in a variety of art forms. This gives us an indication of how close Mary and Jesus are to the hearts of Christians. Mary's visit to Elizabeth, the Gospel story of the Visitation, is another popular event depicted by Christian artists. Halos, which frequently appear in art, were often used to depict holiness, and a dove was often used to symbolize the presence of the Holy Spirit.

## Jesus is Truly God

All four Gospels make it clear that Jesus' relationship with God the Father is unique. The Gospel according to John, which begins with this profession of faith in Jesus, helps us understand that relationship.

In the beginning was the Word,  
and the Word was with God,  
and the Word was God. . . .  
And the Word became flesh  
and made his dwelling  
among us. . . . John 1:1, 14

Jesus is the eternally existing Word, who has always existed with the Father and the Holy Spirit. This has always been the faith of the Church. Jesus is true God and true man. He is truly and fully God. The Son of God took on flesh and became like us in all things except sin without giving up his divinity.

In the New Testament we read "Jesus Christ is Lord" (Philippians 2:11). This statement is a clear profession of the faith of the Church that Jesus is truly divine, or God.

The English word *Lord* translates the Greek word *kyrios*. *Kyrios* is also the Greek word the writers of



the New Testament used to translate YHWH. YHWH are the Hebrew letters for the name God revealed for himself to Moses (see Exodus 3:14). It is the name that the writers of the Scriptures used only for God.

In order to be a Christian, a person must believe that Jesus Christ is truly the Son of God. The willingness and readiness of Christians to make this profession of faith in Jesus Christ is what makes us Christians.

## FAITH CONNECTION

Design a poster that proclaims the faith of the Church in Jesus.

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## REINFORCE

- Ask volunteers to discuss the statement, "In order to be a Christian, a person must believe and profess that Jesus Christ is true God and true man."
- Add new words or phrases from pages 64 and 65 that clarify the meanings of the vocabulary terms *Immaculate Conception*, *Lord*, and *YHWH* on the board.

## INTEGRATE

Have the students work in groups of threes to complete the "Faith Connection" activity. When they are finished, ask volunteers to share some of the words and pictures they used in their designs.



## Background: Catholic Tradition

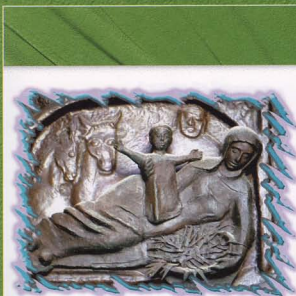
**Christian Symbols.** Remind the students of symbols that have been used by Christians. Tell the legend of the Roman Emperor Constantine seeing the vision of the cross in the sky and hearing "In hoc signo vinces," which means, "In this sign, you will conquer." Within a year of that vision, Emperor Constantine became a believer in Christ and Christianity became a recognized religion in the Roman Empire.

## FOCUS

Remind the group that the Church's teaching that Jesus Christ is true God and true man is a dogma of faith. Point out to the students that these pages invite them to explore further the teaching of the Catholic Church on this mystery of faith.

## DISCOVER

- Have the group read silently "Two Natures in One Person." Ask everyone to highlight key words and phrases as they read along, especially noting the faith vocabulary words.
- Ask volunteers to summarize the Church's belief that Jesus Christ, the Son of God and the Son of Mary, is true God and true man.
- Ask the group to brainstorm events surrounding Jesus' infancy and childhood. Write these events on the board.
- Paraphrase "The Infancy and Childhood of Jesus" on page 67, emphasizing the key events named in the text.
- Have the young people compare the list on the board with the events as they are named in the text. Add to the list on the board any events named in the text that are not on the board.



Nativity detail. Bronze doors, Church of the Annunciation, Nazareth

### Two Natures in One Person

Jesus is true God and true man. For many centuries Christians searched for the words to express this great mystery of our faith. They knew that Jesus was human—he lived and walked among us, he died and was raised from the dead and appeared to his disciples before he ascended to his Father. The evidence for this is unmistakable. It is found not only in the four accounts of the Gospel but also in other Christian and non-Christian writings.

But how can we express the faith of the Church that Jesus is both human and divine? What words can possibly help others understand this great mystery of faith?

Drawing from the language of the philosophy of their day, the bishops at the first two **ecumenical councils** of the Church, Nicaea I (A.D. 325) and Constantinople (A.D. 381), chose

the words *nature* and *person*. Our nature makes us what we are. Our person makes us who we are. For example, our human nature is what makes us human or gives us our humanness. This is different from the nature of an animal, like a squirrel, which gives the squirrel its "squirrelness."

In Jesus, the Incarnate Son of God, there are two natures, a human nature and a divine nature, that are united in a single divine Person, the Son of God, the second Person of the Holy Trinity. God the Son became truly and fully human, or "took on flesh," without ceasing to be God. Out of love, the Son of God became one of us so that we might share in the very life of God. We call this the mystery of the **Incarnation**.

In Jesus there is the wonderful union of the divine and human natures in the one Person of God, the Son who became one of us. Jesus is true God and true man. This teaching does not mean that Jesus is part God and part man. Jesus Christ is true God and true man. The Son of God truly became human while remaining truly God.

Jesus' entire life—his words and actions, his gestures and silences, everything about him—reveals the mystery of God, who is Father and Son and Holy Spirit, at work among us. As one Christian put it: Jesus is, in a real sense, the human face of God among us.

*Describe how the Catholic Church explains that Jesus is true God and true man.*

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## Teaching Tips

**Making a Mass Connection.** Encourage the young people, when participating in Sunday liturgy, to listen for various times when the Church's teaching that Jesus Christ is true God and true man is professed. In addition to the Creed, have the young people listen closely to the readings, the homily, the Eucharistic Prayer, and so on. Have a follow-up discussion to see what the young people have noticed.



## The Infancy and Childhood of Jesus

Only the Gospel accounts of Matthew and Luke share with us stories about the infancy and childhood of Jesus. Each of these Infancy Narratives, as they are sometimes called, points to what the early Church came to believe about Jesus.

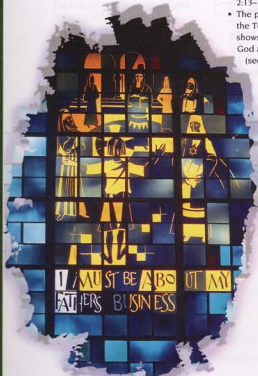
- Jesus' birth in Bethlehem points to him as the Savior whom God promised would come from the house of David (see Matthew 1:18–25, Luke 2:1–20).

- The adoration of Jesus by the Magi tells us that Jesus is the Savior of all people (see Matthew 2:1–12).
  - The circumcision and naming of Jesus, the Savior, fulfill the Law of Moses and the Covenant that God entered into with the Israelites (see Luke 2:21).
  - The flight of the Holy Family to Egypt and their return to Nazareth remind us of the Exodus. In Jesus all people would be freed from the power of sin (see Matthew 2:13–15, 19–23).
  - The presentation of Jesus in the Temple in Jerusalem shows that he is dedicated to God and to the service of God (see Luke 2:22–40).
    - The finding of the boy Jesus in the Temple in Jerusalem teaches that doing his Father's will was the focus of Jesus' whole life on earth (see Luke 2:41–51).
- What do the Infancy Narratives in the Gospel accounts of Matthew and Luke teach about Jesus?*

## Did you Know...

An ecumenical council is a meeting of the bishops with and under the leadership of the pope. An ecumenical council has supreme authority over the Church in matters of doctrine, morals, worship, and discipline. There have been twenty-one ecumenical councils of the Church. The most recent council, Vatican Council II (1962–1965), was held in four sessions in Saint Peter's Basilica in Rome, Italy.

Blessed Pope John XXIII convoked Vatican II and opened its first session on October 11, 1962. Pope John died on June 3, 1963. Pope Paul VI, the next pope, reconvened the council for three more sessions. The fourth and last session ended on December 8, 1965.



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## REINFORCE

- Ask volunteers to share what the infancy stories tell us about the identity of Jesus and the work his Father sent him to do.
- Add new words or phrases from pages 66 and 67 to the board that clarify the meaning of the faith vocabulary word *Incarnation*.

## INTEGRATE

- Have a volunteer read “Did you know . . .” to guide them in learning more about the work of the ecumenical councils of the Church in passing on and explaining the faith of the Catholic Church.
- Have the young people take turns creating “We Believe” statements about the Church's faith in Jesus Christ from what they have learned. *Affirm* all appropriate responses, such as, *Jesus is true God and true man. Jesus Christ is the Son of the Blessed Virgin Mary.*

## Teaching Tip

### Integrating Music Appreciation into the Lessons.

Hector Berlioz, a French composer who lived from 1803 to 1869, tells the story of the infancy of Jesus in the oratorio *L'Enfance du Christ*, which is French for “The Childhood of Christ.” When Berlioz was asked to describe his musical composition, he compared it to visual art, saying that it was music written “in the manner of the old, illuminated missals.” One of the most popular sections of this oratorio is the soft and gentle chorus “The Shepherd's Farewell.” As Mary and Joseph prepare to flee with the child Jesus into Egypt to escape the wrath of Herod, a shepherd sings a farewell to the Holy Family.

# TEACH

## FOCUS

Remind the group that each of the four Gospels, in its own way, presents the faith of the Church in Jesus Christ and the meaning of his work on earth for humanity. Tell the group that this page will explore briefly the public life, or ministry, of Jesus.

## DISCOVER

- Write “The Public Life of Jesus” on the board. Have the students silently read the section and become more familiar with the events of Jesus’ public ministry and their role in his overall work on earth.
- Summarize by rereading Luke 4:18–19, emphasizing that this passage from the Book of Isaiah gives a focus to the work of Jesus and clearly states that in him the biblical writings of ancient Israel are fulfilled.

# APPLY

## REINFORCE

Lead the group in a discussion of the meaning of Luke 4:18–19 for their own lives.

## INTEGRATE

Introduce the “Faith Connection” activity. Have the students discuss with a partner specific and concrete ways Luke 4:18–19 might be calling them to live their Baptism.

## The Public Life of Jesus

Details of the public life, or public ministry, of Jesus vary in each of the four accounts of the Gospel. Jesus’ public ministry began with his baptism in the Jordan River by John the Baptist (see Luke 3:21–22).

Filled with the Holy Spirit, Jesus journeyed into the desert. There the tempter, the devil, tempted Jesus to betray his Father and the work given to him (see Matthew 4:1–11).

After rejecting the devil’s offers, Jesus returned to Galilee and his hometown of Nazareth. There on the Sabbath he met in the synagogue with his neighbors as he had so often done. All eyes were riveted to Jesus. He stood and took the scroll of the prophet Isaiah.



He deliberately unrolled it, obviously looking for a particular passage, and finding the passage, he read aloud:

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring glad tidings to the poor.

He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives and recovery of sight to the blind,

to let the oppressed go free, and to proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord.”

Jesus’ entire public ministry is marked by a tireless proclamation that the kingdom promised by God through the prophets “is at hand” (Mark 1:15).



## FAITH CONNECTION

Discuss with a partner how Luke 4:18–19 calls Christians to live their Baptism. Summarize your discussion in this space.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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## Teaching Tip

### Integrating Sacred Scripture into One’s Daily Life.

When discussing the public ministry of Jesus with the young people, be sure to emphasize that Jesus’ life and work on earth revealed to us that our own words and actions give witness to our love for God and others. Encourage the students to reflect on their own “public ministry” and provide them with examples of ways they might show their love for God and for others.

# OUR CHURCH MAKES A DIFFERENCE

## Symbols for Jesus Christ

From the beginning of the Church Christians have created and used symbols that help us understand and express the Church's faith in Jesus Christ. Christian symbols express in images the same Gospel truths about Jesus that the Bible and the Church also express in words.



**Chi-Rho**  
Chi-Rho is an abbreviation of *Christ*. Chi and rho are the first two Greek letters of the word *Christ*.



**Alpha and Omega**  
Alpha and Omega are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. In the New Testament Book of Revelation, Jesus calls himself the Alpha and the Omega. He existed before anything else and will always exist. He is the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End.



**Lamb of God**  
The lamb is a symbol of both innocence and sacrifice. The Lamb of God is an ancient symbol of the sinless, innocent Christ who shed his blood and sacrificed his life on the cross.



**Butterfly**  
The butterfly is a symbol of the Risen Christ. A butterfly metamorphoses from a caterpillar to a chrysalis and finally becomes a butterfly. Christ was born of Mary, was crucified and buried in a tomb, and then was raised from the dead as the glorified Christ.



**Fish**  
The Greek letters *ICHTHUS* spell the Greek word for "fish." These Greek letters are also an acronym for Jesus Christ, Son of God, Savior.



**Loaves and Fishes**  
Each of the four Gospels contains the account of Jesus feeding the crowd with loaves of bread and fish. From the earliest days of the Church, loaves and fish have been a symbol both of Jesus, the Bread of Life, and for the Eucharist.

*Think about your faith in Jesus Christ. Choose a belief of the Catholic Church about Jesus. What symbol would you create to share your faith in Jesus with others?*



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## CONNECT

### HIGHLIGHT

Recall with the group that Jesus Christ is true God and true man. He is truly human in all ways except sin. He committed no sin and "bore our sins in his body upon the cross" for our salvation (1 Peter 2:24). Christians express this faith in Jesus Christ in many ways. One of the ways is through the use of symbols.

### DISCOVER

- Look over the symbols for Jesus Christ on page 69 and ask the group to summarize their descriptions.
- Have the young people think of and share any other symbols that they know the Church uses to express her faith in Jesus.

### INTEGRATE

Ask the group to think about the Church's faith in Jesus and challenge them to design a contemporary symbol that expresses the statement "I am a Christian" that would be clearly understood by teens today.

## Teaching Tip

**Evaluating Contemporary Symbols.** People commonly use symbols to show who they are and what they believe. Throughout your time together, identify and learn about the symbols that are popular with young people and help them explore whether these symbols support the Christian message or are in conflict with it.



# CONNECT

## HIGHLIGHT

Share with the group that while the cross or butterfly and other artistic symbols are used as symbols for Christ, Christians are the greatest signs of Christ to others. Respecting others and accepting others are the keys to their being a living symbol of Christ.

## DISCOVER

- Point out the graphic used on these pages and ask the group what they think it means.
- Have the young people silently read “What Difference Does Faith Make in My Life?” on pages 70 and 71.
- Tell them they will discover the relationship between how Jesus treated people and the way he commanded his disciples to treat one another.
- Discuss how they see the five skills named on page 71 being lived out by themselves and by their friends.
- Generate a discussion with the group about how peer pressure might affect their acceptance of others and be an obstacle to their being living symbols of Christ.

# WHAT DIFFERENCE

## Does Faith Make in My Life?

### Respecting and Accepting Differences

You are a follower, or disciple, of Jesus Christ. As his disciple, you are a living symbol of Christ. When members of your family, classmates, and neighbors see you and listen to you, you are a living symbol of Christ's saving love for them. Christ works through you to bring his love, healing, understanding, and compassion to others.

Jesus treated everyone with love and respect. He accepted all people—Jewish people and Gentiles, children and adults, widows and newbies, soldiers and scribes. Respecting and accepting others are keys to loving one another as Jesus loves us. They are keys to being a living symbol of Christ.



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## Catholic Social Teaching

**Call to Family, Community, and Participation.** The Catholic Church is made up of many races, languages, and ethnic groups. As the new People of God we are concerned about issues affecting human dignity and the ability of all people to grow through equitable, just, and fair participation in community life. One way this is achieved is by respecting and valuing the differences with which we have been created and working to promote the common good of society.

**Tips:** Encourage the young people to think of ways in which they might work with a diversity of people to help build a more peaceful community in which to live.

**Living Symbols of Christ**

Being a living symbol of Christ is not always easy. You, like everyone else, need to work at respecting and accepting all people as Jesus did.

Most people find it easy to like people who seem to be somewhat like themselves. For example, Think of how much you and your friends have in common. You probably share more likes than differences. You may share interests in the same music, sports, and hobbies. You enjoy being together and just seem to get along well, at least most of the time.

Sometimes the differences people have keep them from accepting and respecting one another. For example: Others may speak a language different from yours, or the color of their skin might be different from yours. Others might not be as athletic or smart or popular as you would like them to be. Or you might not like someone because their personality clashes with yours.

Not liking something about a person is okay. What is not okay is ridiculing and making fun of someone because they are different from you. We all need to work at treating people with the respect they deserve. All people are children of God, created by him as unique and special persons.

*How does peer pressure affect your acceptance of others?*

Here are some things you can do to work on accepting others and treating everyone with the respect they deserve.

- ◆ Remember that each person is a child of God.
- ◆ Take the time to get to know the other person.
- ◆ Look for the goodness within each person.
- ◆ Treat others as you want them to treat you.
- ◆ Ask the Holy Spirit to be your helper and guide.



## Faith Decision

- Form a small group. Work together to identify ways that students in your school treat one another with respect. Describe a situation in which students' differences might be used to leave someone out of things.
- Quietly reflect on how you can be a living symbol of Christ in your school.

This week I will work at being a clearer sign of Christ in my school. I will

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**INTEGRATE**

- Have the students work in small groups to identify ways they might respond to the first two parts of the "Faith Decision" activity. First, have them name ways their peers treat one another with respect. Second, ask the members of each group to identify situations when a peer's differences are used as a reason to exclude that person from a group.
- Have each group choose one of the situations in which someone is excluded and share how they might deal with that situation in a way that shows they are living symbols of Christ.

**CHOOSE**

Have everyone prayerfully reflect on their faith in Jesus Christ and the importance for them to witness to that faith by being living symbols of Christ. Then have them write and commit to their "Faith Decision" to be clearer signs of Christ among their peers.



## Background: Doctrine

**The Theological Virtue of Hope.** On February 25, 1978, Pope Paul VI said in an address to youth, "If you wish really to be and remain always young, follow Christ! He alone is the Savior of the world. He alone is the true hope of all mankind." Hope is one of the theological virtues young teens need to be aware of. As they look to their future, they need to desire God above all else. Keeping this focus will help them discover the road to true happiness, the happiness of a life with God here and for eternity.

# PRAY

- Point out that the “Benedictus” is also called the “Canticle of Zechariah.” Zechariah is the father of Saint John the Baptist. The Benedictus is a prayer of blessing and thanksgiving for the gift of his son and John’s role in the divine plan of salvation.
- Gather the class for prayer and divide them into Group 1 and Group 2.
- Have each group first silently pray its part of the Benedictus.
- Then pray the Benedictus together, with each group praying its part aloud.

# REVIEW

- Have the students share their understanding of the meanings of the terms listed under “Faith Vocabulary.” Have them compare their definitions with those in the Glossary.
- Use the “Main Ideas” and the “Critical Thinking” sections to clarify any questions the young people may have.
- Remind the group to discuss with their families how their family is a living symbol of Christ.

## Before Moving On . . .

As you finish today’s lesson, reflect on the following question before moving on to the next chapter.

*What have I done to let the students know that they are helping me grow in faith as I work with them?*

# PRAY and REVIEW

## Benedictus

### Group 1:

Blessed be the Lord,  
the God of Israel;  
he has come to his people  
and set them free.

### Group 2:

He has raised up for us  
a mighty savior,  
born of the house of his  
servant David.

### Group 1:

Through his holy prophets  
he promised of old  
that he would save us from  
our enemies, from the hands  
of all who hate us.

### Group 2:

He promised to show mercy  
to our fathers  
and to remember his  
holy covenant.

### Group 1:

You, my child, shall be called  
the prophet of the Most High;  
for you will go before the Lord  
to prepare his way.

### Group 2:

To give his people knowledge  
of salvation by the  
forgiveness of their sins.

Based on Luke 1:68–72, 73–77

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## FAITH VOCABULARY

Define each of these faith terms:

1. Immaculate Conception p.64
2. Lord p.65
3. YHWH p.65
4. Incarnation p.66

## MAIN IDEAS

Choose either (a) or (b) from each set of items. Write a brief paragraph to answer each of your choices.

1. (a) Describe the unique role God chose for Mary in his plan of salvation. p.64  
(b) Explain what the Catholic Church teaches about the mystery of the Incarnation. p.66
2. (a) Describe what the Infancy Narratives in Matthew’s and Luke’s accounts of the Gospel teach us about the Catholic Church’s faith in Jesus. p.67  
(b) What do we mean by the public life, or public ministry, of Jesus? p.68

## CRITICAL THINKING

Using what you have learned in this chapter, briefly explain this statement:

In order to be a Christian, a person must believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

Responses might include: The willingness and readiness of

**FAMILY DISCUSSION** Christians to make this profession of faith in Jesus Christ is what makes us

How is our family a living symbol of Christ? **Christians.**

For more ideas on ways your family can live your faith, visit the “Faith First for Families” page at [www.FaithFirst.com](http://www.FaithFirst.com). Click on the Teen Center to check out the latest games.



## Evaluate

Take a few moments to evaluate this week’s lesson. I feel (circle one) about this week’s lesson.

- a. very pleased
- b. OK
- c. disappointed

The activity the students enjoyed most was . . .

The concept that was most difficult to teach was . . . because . . .

Something I would like to do differently is . . .



# ENRICHING THE LESSON

## Ichthus—More than Just a Fish

### Purpose

To reinforce that Christians have created and used symbols that help us profess our faith in Jesus Christ (taught on page 69)

### Directions

The outline of a fish was one of the most common signs that the members of the early Church used to identify themselves to other believers. Today, many Christians use the same symbol to identify themselves as Christians.

- Invite the students to draw a fish similar to the one on page 69.
- Encourage everyone to enhance their drawing in a way that expresses their faith in Jesus.
- Invite volunteers to share and discuss their symbolic expressions.

### Materials

construction paper  
scissors, markers or crayons

## The Life of Jesus

### Purpose

To reinforce the public life and ministry of Jesus (taught on page 68)

### Directions

- In small groups have the students choose one of the Gospel stories about the public ministry of Jesus.
- Provide the different groups the option of retelling the story by a silent skit, a role-play, a pantomime, or a *tableaux vivant*. Share with the group that a *tableaux vivant* is a story retold by silently posing in five or six “still pictures.” The pictures might feature close-ups or one character, or focus on postures, gestures, or facial expressions.
- Have each group present the Gospel story they have chosen.

- As an option, each skit, role-play, pantomime, or *tableaux vivant* can be presented and the rest of the class can guess which Gospel story is being retold.

### Materials

Bibles

## Living Symbols of Christ

### Purpose

To reinforce that respecting and accepting all people as Jesus did is one way to be a living symbol of Christ (taught on page 71)

### Directions

- Invite the young people to draw a self-portrait. When they have finished drawing the outlines of their faces, have them think of a symbol that expresses their faith in Jesus Christ and add it to their self-portraits.
- When they are finished, have the young people display their completed self-portraits in your learning space.
- Discuss with the group the diversity expressed in the self-portraits. Remind them of diversity within the Church, the Body of Christ.

### Materials

white drawing paper  
markers, crayons, colored pencils



## Music Connection

- “Praise to You, O Christ Our Savior,” B. Farrell. *Gather Comprehensive* #515.
- “At the Name of Jesus,” E. Bolduc. *Voices as One: Contemporary Hymnal* #5.
- “Canticle of Zechariah,” C. Walker. *Spirit & Song (SS)* #93.
- “Lord of the Dance,” Shaker song, adapted by S. Carter. *SS* #128.