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The Word Became Flesh

INTRODUCTION

Chapter 4 asks the question: ‘Why did God become man in Jesus?’ The young people explore the many different implications of Jesus’ Incarnation. The chapter is developed under five major headings:

- ☉ **ATTEND AND REFLECT:** How was Jesus like us?
- ☉ **HEAR THE STORY:** Mary’s ‘Yes’
- ☉ **EMBRACE THE VISION:** Jesus, the promised Savior and Messiah
- ☉ **THINK IT THROUGH:** Jesus came to set things right
- ☉ **JUDGE AND ACT:** (Activities and exercises that encourage the young people to integrate what they have learned in the chapter into their daily lives)

Theological Background for the Teacher

JESUS—THE FULFILLMENT OF GOD’S PROMISES

The Lord God appeared to Adam and Eve and to the serpent after the Fall, and he said to the serpent:

I will put enmity between you and the woman,
and between your offspring and hers;
he will strike your head,
and you will strike his heel.

—Genesis 3:15

In the fullness of time God fulfilled this promise. “The Annunciation to Mary inaugurates “the fullness of time” (Galatians 4:4), the time of the fulfillment of God’s promises and preparations” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church* [CCC], no. 484). The Annunciation is both God’s invitation to Mary and her consent to become the mother of the Son of God, Jesus. God kept his Word, and Mary responded, in turn, by giving her word. God’s Covenant with Abraham, Noah and Moses is fulfilled in Jesus, the new and everlasting Covenant. Mary becomes an amazing witness to and example of God’s faithful love, God’s *chesed*.

MARY, THE MOTHER OF GOD

The Son of God became incarnate through the power of the Holy Spirit as the angel had declared, ‘The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called the Son of God’ (Luke 1:35). Jesus, the incarnate Son of God, is the Son of Mary.

Mary is, indeed, the Mother of God, *Theotokos*. ‘What the Catholic faith believes about Mary is based on what it believes about Christ, and what it teaches about Mary illumines in turn its faith in Christ’ (CCC, no. 487). The Tradition of the Church teaches that Mary is the ‘New Eve’, and her Son, Jesus, is the ‘New Adam’. In Christ, the anointed One, and the restoration of God’s plan of Creation, of holiness and justice, will take place.

Mary’s Immaculate Conception, her perpetual virginity and her Assumption are unique graces with which God blessed her because of her unique role in the divine plan. Mary was blessed with holiness from the first moment of her conception, and she remained without sin during her entire life. Mary was a virgin before and during the conception of Jesus, during the birth of Jesus and during her whole life after the birth of Jesus. At the end of her life on earth, Mary was taken to heaven, body and soul. As Catholics we believe that Mary continues to play a pivotal and unique role in the work of Salvation.

The Catholic Church has praised and honored Mary in countless ways. She is the Mother of God and the Mother of Jesus. She is the Mother of the Church, the ‘mother of all believers’. We pray the Hail Mary and the *Magnificat*. We celebrate Mary and her life on holy days and feast days; and Catholics throughout the world honor Mary through numerous devotions.

THE INCARNATION OF THE SON OF GOD

The Incarnation is the very essence of the Church’s faith in Christ. John tells us at the beginning of his Gospel that God and the Word have always been one, that both have existed together since before time began, and the Word became flesh in Jesus.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. . . . And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

—John 1:1–5, 14

The Incarnation was foreshadowed in an ancient promise from the Book of Isaiah and repeated in Matthew:

Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel, which means, 'God is with us'.

—Matthew 1:23

When the Word became flesh, divine nature and human nature became united in one Person, the divine Person of Jesus. The Incarnation is therefore the mystery of the wonderful union of the divine and human natures in the one person of the Word (CCC, no. 483). This mystery of the union of the divine nature and human nature in Jesus is called the 'hypostatic union'.

Jesus was fully divine in every sense and fully human in every sense except sin. There is no way that our rational, logical minds can come to understand fully this great Mystery of faith—or even how it is possible. Through this great mysterious Revelation, God became one of us, lived, breathed and walked among us. So God knows us intimately, who we are and how we live.

WHY THE WORD BECAME FLESH

God's promises in the Old Testament are fulfilled in Jesus. The coming of God's Son to earth is an event of such immensity that God willed to prepare for it over centuries. He makes everything converge on Christ: all the rituals and sacrifices, figures and symbols of the "First Covenant" (CCC, no. 522). The Gospels show that Jesus' mission as Messiah and Savior was foreshadowed throughout the Old Testament. Many of the prophets' words are echoed by the Evangelists as well as in Jesus' spoken words.

Throughout the history of Salvation, beginning in the Old Testament, God has revealed his promise to restore order, unity and harmony—the state of original holiness and original justice that existed at Creation. Jesus—the Word made flesh—is the embodiment of that promise.

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* sums up the reasons why the Son of God took on 'flesh' in the Incarnation:

1. To save us by reconciling humanity with God

"The Word became flesh for us in order to save us by reconciling us with God, who "loved us and sent his Son to be the expiation for our sins"; "the Father has sent his Son as the Savior of the world," and "he was revealed to take away sins" [1 John 4:10; 4:14; 3:5] (CCC, no. 457).

2. To show us the depth of God's love

"The Word became flesh so that thus we might know God's love: "In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him" [1 John 4:9]. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life" [John 3:16] (CCC, no. 458).

3. To be our model of holiness

"The Word became flesh to be our model of holiness: "Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me." "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but by me" [Matthew 11:29; John 14:6]. On the mountain of the Transfiguration, the Father commands: "Listen to him!" [Mark 9:7]. Jesus is the model for the Beatitudes and the norm of the new law: "Love one another as I have loved you" [John 15:12]. This love implies an effective offering of oneself, after his example" (CCC, no. 459).

4. To make us partakers in the divine nature

"The Word became flesh to make us "partakers of the divine nature" [2 Peter 1:4]; "For this is why the Word became man, and the Son of God became the Son of man: so that man, by entering into communion with the Word and thus receiving divine sonship, might become a son of God" [St. Irenaeus]. "For the Son of God became man so that we might become God" [St. Athanasius]. "The only-begotten Son of God, wanting to make us sharers in his divinity, assumed our nature, so that he, made man, might make men gods" [St. Thomas Aquinas] (CCC, no. 460).

5. To destroy the power of the devil

"The Son of God was revealed for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil" (1 John 3:8).

ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND READING

Catechism of the Catholic Church, nos. 422–451, 456–478, 484–498, 502–507, 522–528, 963–970; *United States Catholic Catechism for Adults*, 77–82, 141–149; *Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church*, nos. 79–103, 196–199; *National Directory for Catechesis*, Section 25H: ‘The Communication of Profound Meaning for the Human Person’; Section 28A2: ‘Jesus Christ’; and Section 37A: ‘Sacred Time; The Liturgical Year’.

CHAPTER OUTCOMES

See general note on page 19 of this resource.

Learning Outcomes

As a result of studying this chapter and exploring the issues raised, the young people should be able to:

- ⊙ increase their understanding of the Incarnation;
- ⊙ explore the faith and courage behind Mary’s ‘Yes’ to God;
- ⊙ discover that we express our faith when we pray the Hail Mary and the *Magnificat*;
- ⊙ grow in their awareness and understanding of Joseph, the husband of Mary, as a person of great faith and courage;
- ⊙ understand how the Incarnation was foreshadowed in the Old Testament and fulfilled in Jesus;
- ⊙ recognize the significance of the fact that God chose people whom society considered powerless and weak to bring his promise of Salvation to fulfillment;
- ⊙ understand the phrase ‘expiate our sins’;
- ⊙ understand St. Anselm’s theology on the Incarnation;
- ⊙ become familiar with the ‘Jesus Prayer’;
- ⊙ articulate the significance of the titles Christ, Messiah, Lord and Son of God;
- ⊙ recognize opportunities where Christians can take a stand for their faith.

Faith-Formation Outcomes

As a result of studying this chapter and exploring the issues raised, the young people should also:

- ⊙ appreciate and value their own uniqueness;
- ⊙ think about what God becoming man means for their lives and their faith;
- ⊙ identify Annunciation-type experiences in their own lives;
- ⊙ recognize these experiences as opportunities to say ‘Yes’ to God’s invitation to put their faith into action;
- ⊙ see Joseph as a role model for them;
- ⊙ link the teachings of the Catholic Church on the meaning of the Incarnation with their own understanding of this mystery of faith;
- ⊙ be inspired by the example of Saints Perpetua and Felicity.

Teacher Reflection

As you prepare to begin this chapter, take a moment to reflect on this poem about an expectant mother's love for her unborn child. Do you see a connection with your own journey in faith and your ministry as a theology teacher?

Covenant

I feel you move and of its own accord
My hand flies down to cradle you.
Idle thoughts drift to what the future holds
For me and you—a child I love as no one else,
Whose face as yet I do not know.
I move spellbound through my hope for us.
Dreading the tears that loving you might bring,
Fearful too of somehow failing you.
But in the end, my unborn child,
All that I have been and done before,
My life itself, a training ground for this—
My greatest triumph, my saving grace,
Is loving and being loved by you.

—Mary Kennedy



Notes and Guidelines for Student Activities

ATTEND AND REFLECT

How was Jesus like us?

Learning Outcome

That the young people would:

- ⊕ increase their understanding of the Incarnation.

Faith-formation Outcomes

That the young people would also:

- ⊕ appreciate and value their own uniqueness;
- ⊕ think about what God becoming man means for their lives and their faith.

Overview

In the first section of chapter 4 we invite the young people to reflect on and recognize their own uniqueness as human beings. From this reflection we move on to consider what might be the implications of the fact that the Son of God became fully human without losing his divinity and lived among us.

Supplementary Activities for 'Attend and Reflect'

Worksheet 1: 'I Am Unique!' (page 112 of this resource) encourages the young people to reflect on and identify some of the qualities or characteristics that make each of them unique persons. We then invite them to write a prayer of thanksgiving to God for the gift of their uniqueness.

Worksheet 2: 'I Am Valuable!' (page 113 of this resource) provides the young people with a selection of biblical verses. We invite them to add their own name into each of the verses and create a 'personal' reflection on God's Word to them.

HEAR THE STORY

Mary's 'Yes'

Learning Outcomes

That the young people would:

- ⊕ explore the faith and courage behind Mary's 'Yes' to God;
- ⊕ discover that we express our faith when we pray the Hail Mary and the *Magnificat*.

Faith-formation Outcomes

That the young people would also:

- ⊕ identify Annunciation-type experiences in their own lives;
- ⊕ recognize these experiences as opportunities to say 'Yes' to God's invitation to put their faith into action.

Overview

Section two, 'Hear the Story', guides the young people in a reflection on the enormity of the Virgin Mary's positive response to the angel's announcement to her that she, a virgin betrothed to Joseph, would conceive and give birth to a son. We invite the young people to reflect on 'Annunciation-type' experiences in their own lives through which God invites them to stand up for or bear witness to what is right.

Supplementary Activities for 'Hear the Story'

Teacher Tip: Invite the young people to watch the second ten-minute clip from the film *Jesus of Nazareth*. The young people may have watched the opening clip during their study of chapter 10 of book 1 in the *Credo* series, *God's Word Revealed in Sacred Scripture*. If they did not watch the opening clip, preview that first clip yourself and summarize it for the young people before they watch the second clip. This will set the context for them.

Creative Activity

Mary models for all Christians the meaning of totally submitting oneself and one's life to God. Since the days of the early Church, Christians throughout the world have honored the Blessed Virgin Mary, and they continue to do so today. Encourage the young people first to research the ways in which people past and

present, of all cultures, have expressed their devotion to Mary, and then to create their own expressions of devotion to Mary. Suggest that they use a variety of media other than the spoken or written word; for example, creating a collage, sketching or drawing or painting, making a clay sculpture, writing and performing a song or musical score, or choreographing and performing a dance. They could then post or present their creations in the classroom.

Worksheet 3: 'Mary Our Mother' (page 115 of *this resource*) invites the young people to reflect on their own personal devotion to Mary. We offer an adaptation of Blessed Pope John Paul II's 'Prayer to Our Lady of Lourdes', which he delivered at Lourdes, France, on August 15, 2004, as the basis for their reflection. The introduction to this activity refers to Blessed Pope John Paul II's papal coat of arms. You can find an image and explanation of the meaning of the Pope's coat of arms on the Vatican website at www.vatican.va/phome_en.htm.

Worksheet 4: 'Songs of Praise' (page 117 of *this resource*) invites the young people to compare the Canticle of Hannah (1 Samuel 2:1–10) with the Canticle of Mary (Luke 1:46–53), also known as the *Magnificat*. Through the students' comparison of these two biblical canticles, we help them (1) identify the stance of the steadfast loyal believer before God, (2) discover the unity within the story of Salvation, and (3) discover the unity between the Old Testament and the New Testament.

EMBRACE THE VISION

Jesus, the promised Savior and Messiah

Learning Outcomes

That the young people would:

- grow in their awareness and understanding of Joseph, the husband of Mary, as a person of great faith and courage;
- understand how the Incarnation was foreshadowed in the Old Testament and fulfilled in Jesus;
- recognize the significance of the fact that God chose people whom society considered powerless and weak to bring his promise of Salvation to fulfillment.

Faith-formation Outcome

That the young people would also:

- see Joseph as a role model for them.

Overview

Section three, 'Embrace the Vision', explores the importance of deepening our relationship with Jesus as we respond to the call to live as his disciples. We examine Joseph's courage and faith as an example for young people today. Under the guidance of Mary and Joseph, Jesus was brought up in the Jewish faith and would have read and cherished the Scriptures of ancient Israel, in which his role as Messiah was foreshadowed.

Supplementary Activities for 'Embrace the Vision'

Worksheet 5: 'Building a Relationship with God the Holy Trinity' (page 119 of *this resource*) explores the key building blocks that are needed to sustain any loving relationship. First we ask the young people to identify the 'building blocks' on which any healthful human relationship is based. Then, using these same building blocks, we invite the young people to suggest ways in which they can build and sustain a loving relationship with God the Holy Trinity through their relationship with Jesus.

Worksheet 6: 'God's Steadfast Love' (page 121 of *this resource*) asks the young people to reflect on the poem 'Full of Grace', which was written by Carlo Maria Martini, SJ, Archbishop emeritus of Milan, Italy. This worksheet provides the young people with an opportunity to grow in their awareness of the constant presence of God's love in their lives. We then invite the young people to write their own reflections on God's love for them.

Worksheet 7: 'Dreams: Part 1' (page 123 of *this resource*) asks the young people to recall that God spoke to Joseph, the husband of Mary, in a dream, and Joseph listened and responded. We then encourage the young people to reflect on the value of taking the time to stop and listen to their inner thoughts ('dreams') as a possible source of prayer, of their conversation and communication with God. To begin the activity we invite the young people to read and reflect on the poem 'Dreams', which was written by James Mercer Langston Hughes (1902–67). Hughes was an American poet, social activist, novelist,

playwright and columnist who is best known for his work during the Harlem Renaissance.

Worksheet 8: 'Dreams: Part 2' (page 124 of this resource) introduces the activity by telling the story of a dream President Abraham Lincoln had shortly before his assassination. We invite the young people to recall dreams they have read or heard about in the Bible and to explore the meaning of these biblical dreams in the biblical story of Salvation.

Research Activity

The Catholic Church honors and celebrates the life of St. Joseph by telling and retelling his story in many ways. On March 19 each year we celebrate the feast of St. Joseph the Husband of Mary; on May 1 we celebrate the feast of St. Joseph the Worker. One of the traditions associated with the feast of St. Joseph the Husband of Mary is the annual celebration of St. Joseph's Table. Invite the young people to research this tradition, which dates back to the Middle Ages, and then ask them to discuss and identify as a class what values lived by St. Joseph they think this celebration challenges them to live. If their parish community celebrates this tradition, encourage them to inquire as to how they might take part in it. If it is not celebrated in their parish, encourage the young people to speak to the appropriate parish staff and see if they could introduce it into their parish.

THINK IT THROUGH

Jesus came to set things right

Learning Outcomes

That the young people would:

- Ⓞ understand the phrase 'expiate our sins';
- Ⓞ understand St. Anselm's theology on the Incarnation;
- Ⓞ become familiar with the 'Jesus Prayer';
- Ⓞ articulate the significance of the titles Christ, Messiah, Lord and Son of God.

Faith-formation Outcome

That the young people would also:

- Ⓞ link the teachings of the Catholic Church on the meaning of the Incarnation with their own understanding of this mystery of faith.

Overview

In section four, 'Think It Through', we explore in depth the theology of the Church that explains that God became man to expiate our sins—to set things right for us. We recall, in particular, the analogy that St. Anselm of Canterbury used of allegiance to a feudal lord. We examine how Jesus' role as Redeemer and Messiah, or 'Anointed One', fulfills the Old Testament promise of a Savior who, through his suffering death for our sins, would reunite humanity with God. We also explore the meaning and significance of the Christological titles 'Christ', 'Messiah', 'Lord' and 'Son of God'.

Supplementary Activities for 'Think It Through'

Worksheet 9: 'The Mystery of the Incarnation' (page 126 of this resource) invites the young people to read and reflect on the poem 'The Mystery of the Incarnation' by the English-born naturalized American poet Denise Levertov (1923–97). In her poem, Levertov describes God entrusting us with the Word as a response to our broken world and our failure to listen to his message. We invite the young people to conclude their reflections by naming how they could welcome and embrace the meaning of the Incarnation in their day-to-day lives.

Teacher Tip: You might like to use the material on the titles of Jesus from this section of the students' text for a jigsaw-reading exercise. The young people could form into groups of three. Assign each group one of the titles—'Christ/Messiah', 'Lord' and 'Son of God'—and have each group read the relevant text on the title assigned to their group and highlight the key points. The students then form into three new groups, with one member from each of the original groups joining to form the new group. The young people from the 'Christ/Messiah' group must teach the new arrivals the information they have gathered on the topic. This exercise is repeated until all the information on the three sections of text has been shared among all the members of the groups.

JUDGE AND ACT

Learning Outcome

That the young people would:

- Ⓞ recognize opportunities where Christians can take a stand for their faith.

Faith-formation Outcome

That the young people would also:

- be inspired by the example of Saints Perpetua and Felicity.

Overview

Section five, 'Judge and Act', explores how the Incarnation of the Son of God serves as a reminder that human action for justice is both a calling and a challenge for disciples of Jesus Christ.

Supplementary Activities for 'Judge and Act'

Worksheet 10: 'Redeemer Wanted!' (page 127 of this resource) asks the young people to imagine themselves to be Jesus answering an advertisement for the work of 'Redeemer of Humankind'. To complete the activity the young people will need to reflect on their understanding of the details of the life and work and Person of Jesus and then create a résumé, or curriculum vitae (CV), and cover letter on behalf of Jesus.

Additional Prayer Suggestion

Scripture Reflection

(See instructions for the use of doodling in prayer in the 'Student Activity Tool Kit', page 392 of this resource.)

Use the following Gospel verse to engage the young people in prayer.

'Here I am, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.'

—LUKE 1:38

You could introduce this prayer with the following or similar words:

Lord God, we thank you for your steadfast presence with us. Send your Spirit to help us grow in our awareness of your presence and in our love and loyalty to you.

NAME: _____

I Am Unique

People have many similarities and differences. The combination of these similarities and differences makes each one of us a unique person. This worksheet will help you to identify some of the things that make you the unique person God created you to be.

REFLECT AND DECIDE

Under the headings provided, list all the things you can think of that make you the unique person you are.

Physical characteristics

Emotional and psychological characteristics

Talents and skills

Other

JOURNAL EXERCISE

Write a prayer to God thanking him for making you your unique self.

NAME: _____

I Am Valuable!

The Word of God in Sacred Scripture is a living Word that speaks to us today. Listen to God's Word to you. This worksheet invites you to focus on God's Word speaking to you as you read Sacred Scripture.

Read each of these biblical passages. As you read each passage, write your name in the blank spaces. After each passage, pause and ask yourself, 'What is God saying to me, here and now?'

This is the Word of the Lord to

I made you, _____,
in my own image and likeness
and when I made you I saw that you were very good.

—Based on Genesis 1:27, 31

You, _____,
are created in Christ Jesus for good works.

—Based on Ephesians 2:10

I have blessed you, _____,
with all the spiritual blessings of heaven in Christ.

—Based on Ephesians 1:3

You, _____,
are the beloved child of the Most High.

—Based on Psalm 82:6

I have loved you, _____, with an everlasting love.

—Jeremiah 31:3

You, _____, are always in my presence.

—Based on Psalm 73:23

I have gone to prepare a place for you, _____,
and I will return to take you with me, so that where I am, there you
may be also.

—Based on John 14:2–3

And I will show you, _____, the path of life,
the fullness of joy in my presence.

—Based on Psalm 16:11

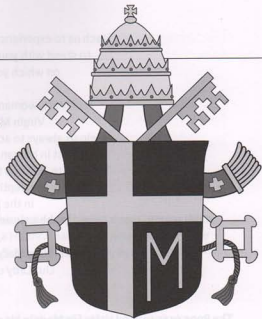
For I am God and this is my Word to you,
_____.

WRITE A PRAYER OF THANKS

Respond to God's Word to you. Write a prayer on the lines provided. Thank God the Creator for the gift of creating you to be the unique person you are.

NAME: _____

Mary, Our Mother



Blessed Pope John Paul II had a great devotion to the Virgin Mary, which he expressed on many occasions and which he gave witness to on his papal coat of arms. The main element of the Pope's coat of arms is a Cross, which represents the mystery of Redemption. But in the lower right-hand section of the coat of arms, the Pope placed a large letter 'M' to recall 'the presence of Mary beneath the Cross and her exceptional participation in the Redemption' (Vatican website). Pope John Paul II also gave witness to Mary in a prayer he prayed during his visit to Lourdes, France, on August 15, 2004.

Read and reflect on this adaptation of Blessed Pope John Paul II's prayer to Mary, Our Lady of Lourdes.

Prayer to Our Lady of Lourdes

Hail Mary, poor and humble woman, blessed by the Most High
 Virgin of hope, dawn of a new era,
 we join in your song of praise,
 to celebrate the Lord's mercy,
 to announce the coming of the Kingdom
 and the freedom of humanity.

Hail Mary, lowly handmaid of the Lord,
 Glorious Mother of Christ!
 Faithful Virgin, holy dwelling-place of the Word,
 teach us to persevere in listening to the Word,
 and to be passive to the voice of the Spirit,
 attentive to his promptings in the depths of our conscience
 and to his presence in the events of history.

Hail Mary, woman of sorrows, mother of the living!
 Virgin spouse beneath the Cross, the new Eve,
 be our guide along the paths of the world.

Teach us to experience and to spread the love of Christ,
to stand with you before the countless crosses
on which your Son is still crucified.

Hail Mary, woman of faith, first of the disciples!
Virgin Mother of the Church,
help us always to account for the hope that is in us,
with trust in human goodness and the Father's love.
Teach us to build up the world beginning from within:
in the depths of silence and prayer,
in the joy of human love,
in the unique fruitfulness of the Cross.

Holy Mary, Mother of believers,
Our Lady of Lourdes, pray for us.
Amen.

The Pope uses several titles for Mary in his prayer; for example, 'Virgin of hope' and 'Holy dwelling-place of the Word'. How many titles can you find? List them here.

Choose your favorite title from this prayer. Write a short paragraph honoring Mary based on the title you selected.

NAME: _____

Songs of Praise

The people of God have always praised God in song for his wonderful saving deeds among them. These biblical songs are often called canticles. Hannah (a Hebrew name that means 'grace'), the mother of the eleventh-century Old Testament prophet Samuel, praised God, as did Mary, the Mother of Jesus.

READ AND COMPARE

Read and compare the Cantic of Hannah (1 Samuel 2:1–10) with the Cantic of Mary (Luke 1:46–53), also known as the *Magnificat*.

Cantic of Hannah

Hannah prayed and said,

'My heart exults in the LORD;
my strength is exalted in my God.
My mouth derides my enemies,
because I rejoice in my victory.

'There is no Holy One like the LORD,
no one besides you;
there is no Rock like our God.
Talk no more so very proudly,
let not arrogance come from your mouth;
for the LORD is a God of knowledge,
and by him actions are weighed.
The bows of the mighty are broken,
but the feeble gird on strength.
Those who were full have hired themselves
out for bread
but those who were hungry are fat with
spoil.
The barren has borne seven,
but she who has many children is
forlorn.

The LORD kills and brings to life;
he brings down to Sheol and raises up.
The LORD makes poor and makes rich;
he brings low, he also exalts.
He raises up the poor from the dust;
he lifts the needy from the ash heap,
to make them sit with princes
and inherit a seat of honor.
For the pillars of the earth are the LORD'S,
and on them he has set the world.

'He will guard the feet of his faithful ones,
but the wicked shall be cut off in
darkness;
for not by might does one prevail.
The LORD! His adversaries shall be
shattered;
the Most High will thunder in heaven.
The LORD will judge the ends of the earth;
he will give strength to his king,
and exalt the power of his anointed.'

—1 Samuel 2:1–10

Canticle of Mary (Magnificat)

And Mary said,

'My soul magnifies the Lord,
and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,
for he has looked with favor on the
lowliness of his servant.
Surely, from now on all generations
will call me blessed;
for the Mighty One has done great things
for me,
and holy is his name.

His mercy is for those who fear him
from generation to generation.
He has shown strength with his arm;
he has scattered the proud in the
thoughts of their hearts.

He has brought down the powerful from
their thrones,
and lifted up the lowly;
he has filled the hungry with good things,
and sent the rich away empty.

He has helped his servant Israel,
in remembrance of his mercy,
according to the promise he made to our
ancestors,
to Abraham and to his descendants
for ever.'

—Luke 1:46–53

DISCUSS WITH A PARTNER

- ⊙ What do the canticles reveal about Hannah and Mary?
- ⊙ What does each canticle proclaim about the steadfast loyal believer before God?
- ⊙ What does each reveal about the unity within the story of Salvation?
- ⊙ What do the canticles reveal about the unity between the Old Testament and the New Testament?

NAME: _____

Building a Relationship with God the Holy Trinity

There is one God who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Jesus clearly taught that he and the Father are one, and he prayed that his disciples would be one with him and the Father. Jesus promised that the Father would send the Holy Spirit to be with his disciples after he returned to the Father, when his work on earth was done. This worksheet will help you to focus on how you can build and sustain a loving relationship with God the Holy Trinity through your relationship with Jesus.

REFLECT AND EVALUATE

- ⊙ Think about someone with whom you have a close relationship.
- ⊙ List four ways in which you nourish this relationship; for example, by spending time together. We will call these the 'building blocks' of your relationship. Write these in the left column of the chart.
- ⊙ Now, with these four 'building blocks' in mind, suggest four ways in which you can build your relationship with God the Holy Trinity through your relationship with the Risen Jesus. Write these into the right column.



Relationship Building Blocks	Nurturing My Relationship with God the Holy Trinity Through My Relationship with Jesus
<p>CLASS WITH A PURPOSE</p> <p>1. How do the members of the Trinity relate to each other?</p> <p>2. How do the members of the Trinity relate to us?</p> <p>3. How do the members of the Trinity relate to the world?</p>	

DECISION TIME

In your journal, write a plan for how you will implement your ideas.

NAME: _____

God's Steadfast Love

We can get a glimpse of God's constant and steadfast love for us in the love we experience from our families and friends and other significant people in our lives. It was Jesus, however, who most clearly revealed God's steadfast love for us. The Son of God became man. He walked, talked and interacted with human beings just like we do. In so doing, Jesus made God's steadfast love visible to us. Use this worksheet to help you grow in your awareness of God's love for you.

READ AND REFLECT

Read this reflection on God's love. The title, 'Full of grace', means 'you have been loved for a very long time'.

Full of Grace

How long have you been loved?
 Give me your age and add nine months.
 That's how long.
 At this very moment—now—
 You are being loved,
 Loved into existence,
 Loved unto death.

We've all heard the common expression:
 'He/she just doesn't get it.'

I'm one of those.
 When will I get it—
 Get the insight that I
 Have been loved for a very long time?
 Get the fact that all of us
 Are full of grace,
 Beloved and cared for?

Maybe tomorrow?