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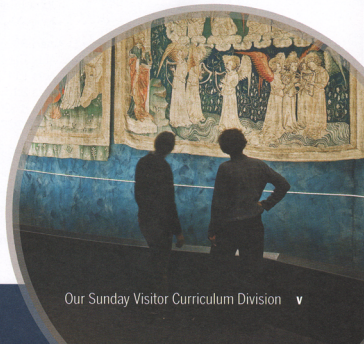
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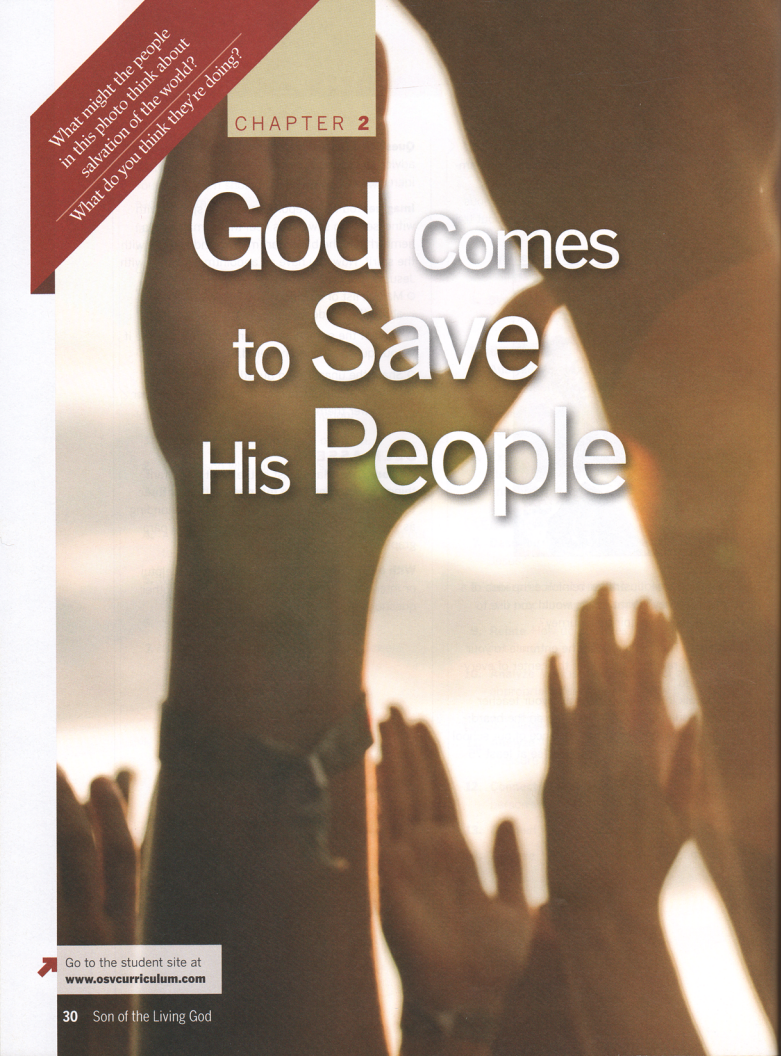
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What might the people in this photo think about salvation of the world? What do you think they're doing?

CHAPTER 2

God Comes to Save His People

Go to the student site at **www.osvcurriculum.com**



DO

- View the "big picture" of God's plan for the salvation of the world.
- Zoom in on examples of God's faithfulness and mercy.
- Make distinctions between the Persons of the Trinity.
- Stretch your imagination concerning the Second Person of the Trinity.
- Describe how the Holy Spirit builds up the Church and makes her holy.
- Experience contemplative prayer.
- Explain the Incarnation.
- Name ways that Jesus teaches us how to live.

DEFINE

logos
Son of God
original justice
salvation history
messiah
convocation
Son of Man
Christ
Trinity
communion
Incarnation
solidarity
Triune God

Catholic high school students were recently asked these questions. Their answers follow:

Which of the three Persons of the Trinity do you find yourself talking to the most: Father, Son, or Holy Spirit?





From a senior: I usually find myself talking to the Father. For a while, I was struggling with my Catholicism and simply believed in "some sort of deity." It was easiest to just address whomever I was talking to as "God." Eventually, my faith strengthened, but I still talk predominantly to the Father. Most of the time I pray for comfort, acceptance, and guidance, so it just seems to make more sense to talk to a father figure.

From a freshman: I find myself talking to the Holy Spirit. Because when I talk to the Holy Spirit, it makes me feel like he's actually with me right now. He answers all my questions and prayers. Sometimes I feel like the Spirit is in my body. When I pray about the sick, he heals them. When I talk to the Holy Spirit, he makes me feel better about myself and also helps me with my problems.

From a senior: Personally, I really find myself praying to either God or Jesus, and sometimes maybe the Holy Spirit. But lately I haven't really prayed to any because I don't feel that any of them care because I've been going through a lot and God has not been on my side. So I don't know if I should pray to any of them anymore. I'm still debating.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

How True for You?				
Choose the response that best reflects where you are right now.				
I know why God sent his Son.	☐ Quite a bit	☐ Somewhat	☐ A little	☐ Not at all
I understand what *salvation history* is.	☐ Quite a bit	☐ Somewhat	☐ A little	☐ Not at all
I understand our belief in the Trinity.	☐ Quite a bit	☐ Somewhat	☐ A little	☐ Not at all
How much does religion shape your decisions?	☐ Quite a bit	☐ Somewhat	☐ A little	☐ Not at all
When I pray, I relate to God the Father.	☐ Quite a bit	☐ Somewhat	☐ A little	☐ Not at all
When I pray, I relate to God the Son.	☐ Quite a bit	☐ Somewhat	☐ A little	☐ Not at all
When I pray, I relate to God the Holy Spirit.	☐ Quite a bit	☐ Somewhat	☐ A little	☐ Not at all

The Turning Point

How is Jesus different from the holy people of other religions?

How can we understand God who by definition is beyond our comprehension?

What does the Incarnation mean for us?

What does Revelation in Jesus teach us about whom God is?

How does the truth about Jesus actually change things here on Earth?

Lyrics from an African-American spiritual contain the words: "You may have all this world, give me Jesus." Many religions have great teachers, prophets, and holy people. We know that Jesus is the most important among these for Christians, but how does our faith explain the difference?

The Church has always had a story to tell—a true story. It was witnessed firsthand, written in Scripture, and passed on by Tradition. It has been told in many different ways, sometimes very simply and sometimes with great elaboration and detail. Sacred art conveys it. Music, song, theater, and dance have been used through the centuries to give it expression. The story of Jesus has been told and retold by people around the globe, in every walk of life. We often call it "The Story." And we describe it as Good News.

The story of Jesus doesn't begin with his birth or even his conception. No, the story begins with the eternal God, before Creation. In the words of the prologue of The Gospel according to John:

"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" (John 1:1-3a).

Storytelling

Think of one of your favorite fictional characters from a popular television program, movie, or series of novels and tell that person's story to a partner in exactly one minute.

- Where did that character's story begin? Where did it end?
- What did you discover by putting the story in a nutshell?

That Word of God—in Greek, ***logos***—became incarnate (became flesh) and was born through the Virgin Mary. Jesus, the only **Son of God**, is the Word made flesh. He is God himself, but the title Son of God shows his unique relationship with God the Father.

This chapter focuses on why the Son of God became man. We will also introduce the mystery of the Trinity. The next chapter, Chapter 3, will turn to our specific understanding of each divine Person of the Trinity—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—and the Trinity's response to action in the world.

logos a Greek term meaning "word;" in Christian theology, it refers to the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity

Son of God In the Gospel, the term signifies the unique relationship of Jesus to the Father

salvation history the scriptural account of how God over many centuries prepared to heal the separation between God and

original justice the harmony inside the human person, between a man and woman and between the first humans and all creation

messiah a Hebrew word meaning "anointed"

In the beginning of the Bible, the Book of Genesis tells how God created the whole world, in all its goodness, beauty, and order. God created our first parents in a state of **original justice** and original holiness. Original justice is described as the harmony that existed inside each human, among each other, and between our first parents and the rest of the world (see *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 379). Their friendship with God came from the goodness of paradise.

In the Genesis accounts, when the first humans, Adam and Eve, sinned by disobeying God's commands, they separated themselves from God. In doing so, they lost the harmony that existed through original justice and holiness. That loss is known as Original Sin. Sin—"a deliberate thought, word, deed, or omission contrary to the eternal Law of God" (CCC, Glossary)—entered the world, and with sin, death. This transition of the first couple and their descendants from a state of friendship with God to a fallen state is called "the Fall."

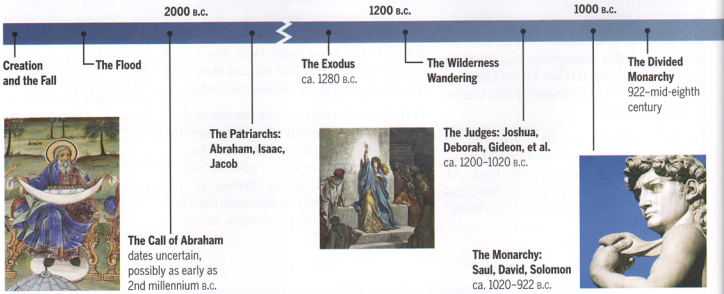
Sin is an offense against God. It is disobedience against God that goes against Jesus' own obedience. Because of sin, the world needed a divine intervention to restore humanity to friendship with God. **Salvation history** is the scriptural account of how God, over many centuries, prepared to heal the separation between God and his People. He entered into separate covenants with Noah and Abraham, and revealed to Moses how to live in the covenant relationship. God reached out to the world again and again. God was actively involved with the Chosen People, through charismatic leaders and kings and the preaching of the prophets. God revealed himself to be faithful and merciful. Through the prophets, he also promised to send the **Messiah**, the Anointed One, who would bring about God's reign. Other courses fully treat the richness of salvation history, from Original Sin through the covenants, and the coming of the Messiah.

Eventually God did this by sending his Son to save humans from their sins. This is how it goes: Salvation history begins with creation, is clarified in the Old Testament, reaches its fulfillment in Jesus, and continues in and through the Church.

Salvation History Up to the Coming of Christ

Using the timeline of salvation history below, choose one episode and find out more about it from a biblical reference book, such as a dictionary of the Bible or an encyclopedia.

- What does this episode show us about God?



God did all this to prepare the way for the **convocation** of all people in Christ, and through the Church, continues gathering people every day. The word "church" itself means convocation. Today, Jesus is present in our Eucharist, the teachings of the Church, and the way we, as members of the Church, try to serve the world.

Identify When does the story of Jesus begin according to the Gospel according to John?

Explain What is salvation history?

Something More

All the episodes of salvation history prepared the way for the coming of the **Son of Man**, Jesus **Christ**. The term Son of Man is used in visions of the prophet Daniel, where it refers to a mysterious person who will appear at the end of time, coming in the clouds with great glory (Mark 13:26). The community of disciples who followed Jesus gradually came to understand that although he taught and preached and led, he could never be reduced to just one of these roles—or even all of them. He was something far more.

The Gospel according to Matthew shows how Jesus fulfills the promises of God and the hopes of his People. You are likely familiar with the very first chapter of that Gospel that tells how an angel visits Joseph, Mary's husband-to-be, in a dream. The angel announces that Mary will bear a Son, to be named Jesus. The Gospel writer goes on to say that "All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: 'Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him **Emmanuel**,' which means, 'God with us'"

convocation an assembly of people that has been called together from various places

Son of Man a title recorded in Scripture that Jesus uses to describe himself

Christ from the Greek translation of the Hebrew "messiah," which means "the anointed one;" name proper to Jesus, who is priest, prophet, and king

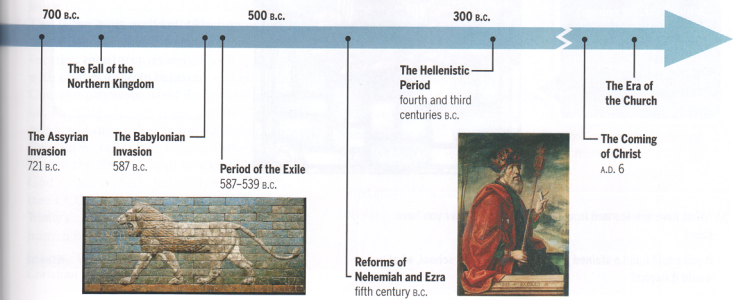
Emmanuel a name given to Jesus by the angel, which means "God with us"

GO TO THE SOURCE

The writer of the Gospel according to Matthew and his community knew the Old Testament Scriptures well. When Matthew tells the story of Joseph, the husband of Mary, Jewish readers would have been reminded of *another* Joseph—the son of the patriarch Jacob.

Read Genesis 37.

- What skill did the Old Testament Joseph have?
- How did his brothers react? Why?
- What do you think of the way Joseph's brothers acted?
- What attitudes toward Jesus might this story foreshadow?



Stained Glass

In the Middle Ages, when most Christians could not read or write and there were few books even available, the Catholic Church used stained glass windows to teach the faith and to help Christians understand Bible stories.

Using colored material as part of window openings can be traced back to 306 B.C. when artisans in the Far East made windows by arranging small gem-like pieces of pot-metal (metal that has a low melting point and can be easily cast) in wooden or stone panels. As early as the twelfth century, the monk Theophilius described the process of making stained glass for decoration.

Subjects for the windows included creation, the Trinity, angels, the Ten Commandments, the Apostles, and the life and death of Jesus (baptism, crucifixion, Resurrection, and Ascension; the Marriage Feast of Cana; the Transfiguration; raising of Lazarus from the dead).

The use of stained glass windows in many Catholic churches continues today. For example, the church of Saint Vincent de Paul Parish in Seward, Nebraska, has eight large windows depicting the Beatitudes, while stained glass windows in the chapel at Saint John's Seminary in Plymouth, Michigan, offer designs depicting duty and inspiration for the young men preparing for the priesthood.



Stained glass windows became very popular during the Renaissance period (A.D. 1400–1600) when Gothic architecture provided churches with large window openings.

A filling strong enough to protect the interior of the church from the weather, yet transparent enough to admit light was needed.

Lead strips held these pieces of glass together.

They either pieced together glass of various sizes and colors or painted the glass pieces.

At that time, glass was only available in small pieces, so artisans created mosaics to fill these openings.

>> What have you learned from stained glass windows you have seen?

If you could build a stained glass window for your school, what would it depict?

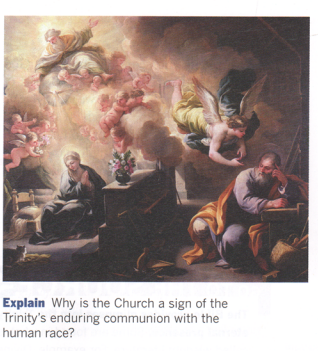
(Matthew 1:22-23). The name is a pledge of God's help. It reflects that Jesus is the Messiah.

The Church continues to affirm that Jesus is God with us. Recall that the word *Christ* is the Greek translation of the Hebrew term *messiah*, which means "anointed." Jesus willingly and faithfully carried out his mission to bring us new life, dying for us on the cross. That mission grew out of the Father's love for us and his willingness to send his Son to make amends for our sins. The heart of Jesus' mission was to bring about salvation for all who believe. He reconciled humankind to God by freely offering himself. The cross is the turning point of the Christian story. It stands at the center of God's plan for the world. It is the symbol of the Good News.

The total self-giving of Jesus on the cross proved that God's love for us is without limit. It was truly the Son of God made man who died and was buried. The Resurrection of Jesus shows that God's love has indeed triumphed over evil and is stronger than anything that threatens us.

You know the rest of the story: Jesus ascended to Heaven after his Resurrection. Whenever God sends his Son, he always sends the Holy Spirit, who descended on the disciples at Pentecost. The coming of the Holy Spirit was part of Christ's mission. Our understanding of Jesus would be incomplete without knowing that he sent the Holy Spirit to finish his work on Earth and establish the Church. The Holy Spirit makes a collection of individual disciples into something more: a convocation of people reconciled with God and with one another. In short, he makes us the Church and inspires, builds up, and guides us. The Church then is not an afterthought or an add-on to the plan of salvation. The *Catechism* calls her the Sacrament that unites the Trinity and mankind because God's grace comes to us through the Church. (see CCC, 747). She is the sign of the Holy **Trinity's** continuing **communion** with the human race.

Identify What is the turning point for the Christian story?



Sketch for an Annunciation (oil), Luca Giordano (1634–1705)

Explain Why is the Church a sign of the Trinity's enduring communion with the human race?

Until Christ Comes Again

The Church, through the sending of the Holy Spirit, is assured of God's continual, sustaining presence, until Christ comes again in glory at the end of time. The very last words of the Gospel according to Matthew attest to the presence of God with us in Jesus Christ: "Remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:20).

The Church's mission is the same as the mission of Jesus and the Holy Spirit. The Church

Trinity the mystery of one God in three divine Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; this is the central mystery of the Christian faith and life

communion our calling to share in the life of the Trinity, the inseparable divine Persons who each does what is proper to him (see CCC, 265, 267)

Contemplate

Throughout history, people called mystics have practiced contemplative prayer in order to experience real communion with God. Saint Teresa of Ávila once said, "Contemplative prayer, in my opinion, is nothing else than a close sharing between friends; it means taking time frequently to be alone with him who we know loves us" (CCC, 2709).

Here's how it works:

- Begin by putting aside all distractions. Get into a comfortable position. Quiet down. Recall that you are in the presence of God and the Holy Spirit dwells in you. Focus your mind and heart on Christ, the Son of God.
- Whisper an aspiration such as, "Be with Me, Lord" several times, or sing to yourself a familiar verse from your favorite Church hymn.
- Close your eyes or, if you prefer, focus your gaze on a candle flame or sacred image. Allow five minutes of silence.
- Afterward, record your insights, emotions, or experience in a journal.

draws people into communion with God and one another. This is why the period of salvation history in which we now live is called "the time of the Church" (CCC, 732), a time when the Kingdom of God is present but not yet complete. By Kingdom of God we mean the rule of God, which is present in Jesus and remains among us through the Eucharist. Through the work of the Holy Spirit we build God's Church, which is the beginning of the Kingdom of God on Earth.

To sum it up, Jesus has always existed and will always be with us. He is truly "the Alpha and the Omega" (Revelation 1:8)—the beginning and the end—of the great story of God's love, unfolding through history.

Locate Where does the term Son of Man, used by Jesus to describe himself, appear in the Old Testament to refer to a Person coming in the clouds in glory?

Develop Why do we say we are living in "the time of the Church?"

GO TO THE SOURCE

The Bible provides glimpses into the Trinity's eternal presence. Some are found in what is called wisdom literature. For example, Divine Wisdom is personified in several poetic texts of the Old Testament. Wisdom—often used with a feminine pronoun—refers to the third Person of the Trinity: the Holy Spirit.

Read Proverbs 8:22-31.

- What is Wisdom's role in creation?
- What is Wisdom's relationship with the human race?
- How does this expand your understanding of the transcendent mystery of the Holy Spirit, who existed from all eternity?

SECTION 1 REVIEW

QUICK REVIEW

1a. Recall When does the story of Jesus begin?

b. Recall What term describes the relationship between God and his People before original sin?

c. List Give three examples of titles that refer to Jesus.

2a. Explain Why did the world need divine intervention soon after creation?

b. Demonstrate Give examples of how God reached out to the world.

c. Recall What was the approximate length of the exile after the Babylonian Invasion?

3a. Interpret Why is *Emmanuel* the correct name for Jesus after the Incarnation?

b. Recall Which Person of the Holy Trinity completed Jesus' work on Earth and established the Church?

Listen and Discuss With a partner, discuss the following.

In this chapter, we said that whenever God sends his Son, he always sends the Holy Spirit.

- Search through the Gospels to find a passage where all three members of the Trinity are mentioned.
- Make a list of the role of each member of the Trinity in the event you chose.
- Why is Jesus the only human who could bring about the Kingdom of God?

Pray Compose a short prayer or write down the lyrics of a song that asks for a closer relationship with Jesus.

SELF-ASSESS

Which statement best reflects where you are now?

- ☐ I'm confident enough about the material in this section to be able to explain it to someone else.
- ☐ I have a good grasp of the material in this section, but I could use more review.
- ☐ I'm lost. I need help catching up before moving on.

Mystery of the Incarnation

When the Church celebrates Christmas, we recall the coming of Christ for the first time as a baby born of the Virgin Mary. This mystery of the union of the divine and human natures is called the **Incarnation**. The stories of Mary and Joseph and their journey to Bethlehem, the birth of Jesus in a stable, the appearance of shepherds, angels, and Magi—all these narratives are very familiar to us. They are beautiful and comforting. What they are trying to express, however, is a startling fact, when you think about it: God actually became man (see CCC, 479).

The Word made flesh is Son of God and Son of Mary. Salvation is wholly from above, the gift of heaven, yet it truly springs from our human soil.

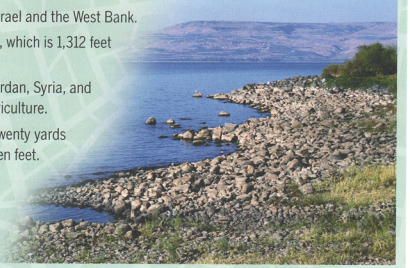
—Maria Boulding, spiritual writer

It's not that God became "like" a man or put on a human disguise. In the myths of the ancient Greeks and Romans, for example, gods could appear as any sort of creature, animal or human. Eventually, however, these humans and animals would whip off the disguise and return to their godly status. If Christians had believed something like this, it would not have been remarkable.

Incarnation the fact that the Son of God assumed human nature and became man in order to accomplish our salvation in that same human nature (see CCC, 461)

Scriptures tell us that John the Baptist baptized his cousin Jesus in the Jordan River.

- The Jordan lies at the lowest elevation of any river in the world.
- Christian pilgrims today often visit the traditional site of Jesus' baptism near where the river flows south from the freshwater Sea of Galilee.
- The Jordan River forms the border between Israel and the West Bank.
- The 223-mile river ends at the salty Dead Sea, which is 1,312 feet below sea level.
- The river is a major water source for Israel, Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon, not just for drinking, but also for agriculture.
- At its widest points, the Jordan spans about twenty yards and the deepest parts are only about seventeen feet.



Faith & Culture

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What the Gospel tells us about the Incarnation, however, is something very different. God did not take on a costume of human flesh in order to make a theatrical appearance on Earth. God actually became one of us. Another title sometimes used for Jesus is "the Son of Mary," which emphasizes his very real humanity.

Jesus knew what it meant to live a human life, with all its joys and sufferings. He experienced physical hunger, enthusiasm and disappointment, joy and sorrow, energy and fatigue. He had family and friends. He shared in the Jewish religion and followed its observances. He prayed. When Jesus suffered his Passion, the pain and suffering were real. He truly died on the cross.

Jesus took on human nature, but he did so without losing his divine nature (CCC, 479). Why? If Jesus had only been a man, his life wouldn't have resulted in the Redemption of the world. No human being, no matter how gifted, could save the human race from sin. But because Jesus was also God, he could do what no other human being could do. Christ shared our human nature, so that we could share the divine nature. He made it possible for us to share in God's own life. The *Catechism* states this concisely: "The Word became flesh to *make us partakers of the divine nature.*"

We know we were created in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:26-27), but the Incarnation takes the understanding of human dignity to a whole new level. The Incarnation gives us a sure knowledge of God's **solidarity**, or union, with us, and a new vision of how to be human. And it also helps us understand the value, importance, and potential of the human person in a whole new way: "The Word became flesh *to be our model of holiness*" (CCC, 459). The more we study and meditate on all the events of Christ's life, the more we see reflected in them the good and holy people we ourselves are called to be.

solidarity union of interests, sympathies, and responsibilities

To share in the divine nature of Christ means to imitate Jesus in the way we respond to the challenges we face:

- to forgive when we would rather seek revenge
- to pray for our enemies when we would rather curse their existence
- to seek the betterment of those in need as well as our own interests
- to stop our peers from belittling one another when we would rather join in or ignore it
- to take a risk for the greater good when we would rather play it safe
- to apologize for mistakes instead of justifying ourselves
- to seek purity of mind and heart in a "hook-up, get-loaded" culture, and
- to gather with the community of disciples in gratitude at Mass when it is easier to think our absence doesn't matter

Process of Discovery

When we watch any Christmas special on television that depicts the Incarnation, the Holy Family often is pictured with halos, a chorus of angels are singing "Glory to God," and a star shines brightly above the manger, which is all-aglow with God's presence. The magnificence of this scene could prompt a twenty-first century believer to wonder how anyone could doubt that Jesus is the Christ. In reality, this truth—that Jesus is the Messiah—became evident only gradually to those around him.

In Chapter 1, we discussed a threefold definition of faith: conviction, spiritual trust, and discipleship. Coming to a deep-in-your-heart realization of who Jesus is remains a lifelong passage of discovery for everyone. All along the way, each of us ask questions of Jesus such as, "What do you think is the right thing to do here?" We find out in new ways, for ourselves, who Jesus is by asking ourselves this question.

Recall What is the Incarnation?

Compare How is Jesus different from the classical Greek or Roman gods?

PRIMARY SOURCES

The beginning of article 22 of *Gaudium et Spes* is provided here. The rest of the document is provided at www.osvcurriculum.com

The Second Vatican Council issued a statement that addresses the relationship of the Church to the struggles, turmoil, and possibilities of the world around us. It is called "The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World." Its title in Latin is, *Gaudium et Spes*, which means "Joy and Hope."

22. In reality it is only in the mystery of the Word made flesh that the mystery of humanity truly becomes clear. For Adam, the first man, was a type of him who was to come,(20)Christ the Lord. Christ the new Adam, in the very revelation of the mystery of the Father and of his love, fully reveals humanity to itself and brings to light its very high calling. It is no wonder, then, that all the truths mentioned so far should find in him their source and their most perfect embodiment.

He who is the "image of the invisible God" (Col. 1:15),(21) is himself the perfect man who has restored in the children of Adam that likeness to God which has been disfigured ever since the first sin. Human nature, by the very fact that it was assumed, not absorbed, in him, has been raised in us also to a dignity beyond compare.(22) For, by his incarnation, he, the Son of God, has in a certain way united himself with each individual. He worked with human hands, he thought with a human mind. He acted with a human will, (23) and with a human heart he loved. Born of the Virgin Mary, he has truly been made one of us, like to us in all things except sin.(24)



According to the text, what has the Incarnation done?

Is the Incarnation only for believers, or for everyone? Why?

What are we expected to do in response?

How would you summarize the main message?

GO TO THE SOURCE

The disciples, one by one, discover who Jesus is by following him. They learn the identity of Jesus gradually, and sometimes amid confusion. Even at the Last Supper, Jesus finds that the disciples still did not completely "get it." Take a look at some of the times when the Apostles are called to follow Jesus and when they didn't quite understand what he was telling them.

Read the following: Matthew 4:18-22; Matthew 16:21-23; Mark 14:66-72; Luke 5:1-11; John 14:8-14.

- Why did the Apostles accept Jesus' invitation so readily and then later have such a hard time understanding things he said to them?
- What does it mean to you that the Apostles didn't always understand what Jesus told them?
- How and when do you have difficulty understanding Christ's calling and his teachings?



When Jesus went into the region of Caesarea Philippi he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that I am?"

They said in reply, "Some say you are John the Baptist, some say you are Elijah, and others say you are Jeremiah or one of the prophets."

He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?"

Simon Peter said in reply, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God."

Jesus said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah. For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my heavenly Father."
—Matthew 16:13–17

Take some time answering as honestly as you can. Begin the same way the disciples did by using this outline; only take it a step one step further.

- Some say you are . . .
- Others say you are . . .
- I say you are . . .
- And so I . . .

This is a good way to sort out some of the different views people have while also naming your own. The purpose of the last statement is to help you describe how your view of Jesus affects you. Don't be surprised if your answer is longer than you expected.

Remember that you may choose to share some of this as part of the report you give at the end of this course.

How do you answer Jesus' question? "Who do you say that I am?"

Go to the student site at **www.osvcurriculum.com**

Discipleship . . . within the Body of Christ . . . for the glory of God and the good of the world

QUICK REVIEW

1a. Contrast How is the story of the Incarnation and Jesus' birth different from ancient myths?

b. Compare What types of experiences does Jesus have in common with us?

c. Interpret What does the *Catechism* mean by the statement, "The Word became flesh to make us partakers of the divine nature?"

2a. Summarize What two things does the Incarnation teach us?

b. Describe Trace the gradual Revelation of Jesus' nature to mankind.

c. Synthesize How is the Revelation of Jesus both for everyone and for the individual?

Listen and Discuss With a small group, discuss Jesus' comment to Philip: "Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me?"

- Why might Philip have had difficulty knowing that the Father was in Jesus?
- Do we face the same difficulty? Why or why not?
- What can we do to help ourselves or others understand Jesus' nature?

SELF-ASSESS

Which statement best reflects where you are now?

- ☐ I'm confident enough about the material in this section to be able to explain it to someone else.
- ☐ I have a good grasp of the material in this section, but I could use more review.
- ☐ I'm lost. I need help catching up before moving on.

Jesus Shows Us the Way

All the episodes of Jesus' life are worth meditating on. They contain spiritual wisdom that can help guide us along the path of life.

Consider these two episodes in the life of Jesus from the Gospel according to Matthew.

The Call of Matthew Matthew was a tax collector before he became an Apostle of Jesus. Tax collectors among the Jewish population were responsible for getting the people to pay money to the Roman authorities. They had a reputation for being greedy, corrupt, and were more or less despised by the common people. So when Jesus called Matthew, the other Apostles couldn't make sense out of it. Jesus' explanation reveals something important.

REFLECT

Think about the episode from the Gospel according to Matthew about who is the greatest. Remember that Jesus calls us to be childlike, not childish.

» **What are the positive qualities of a child that would make him or her great in the Kingdom of God?**

What do childlike qualities teach us about humility?

According to Jesus' like-a-child analogy, how is the Kingdom of Heaven different from the "kingdoms" of the world?

Find a song that has this same message, or write a prayer about having the faith of a child.

GO TO THE SOURCE

The disciples want to know from Jesus who is the greatest in God's Kingdom.

Read Matthew 18:14.

- Why do you think the disciples wanted to know the answer to this question?
- What is the spiritual wisdom here and how can that help you?

Who Is the Greatest? The disciples came to Jesus with a question: "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" Rank was important to them, as it is in most societies. Again, Jesus' surprising answer reveals something important for the spiritual journey.

Infer Who did Jesus come to call?

Conclude Why do you think Matthew immediately began to follow Jesus?

Identify

- Who is a person you know that takes Jesus seriously?
- What qualities do they have that show their relationship with Jesus?
- What actions do they take that let you know they believe in Jesus?
- When have you noticed one of Jesus' traits in somebody else recently? Was it something that person did or was it something that person said? Explain.

GO TO THE SOURCE

Taxes are never popular, but when paying taxes to a foreign power occupying one's country, as the Jews did during the Roman Empire, people felt particularly bitter.

Read Matthew 9:9-13.

- What do you think Jesus means in verses 12 and 13? What is his mission?
- What is the spiritual wisdom here and how can that be of help to you?

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.

—Matthew 28:19-20

Children and the Poor

The Kingdom of God proclaimed by Jesus was not just for the first disciples. In fact, all of us are called to enter the Kingdom. To enter it, one must first accept Jesus' word and believe in him (CCC, 543). Jesus gave this on-going challenge to those first disciples, the same people who wondered who was the greatest.

So who does the Kingdom belong to? God's Kingdom belongs to the poor and most vulnerable among us; those who accept the Kingdom with humble hearts. Jesus shows us the way to the Kingdom because he relates to the poor. During his lifetime, Jesus experienced poverty, homelessness, hunger, and thirst (see CCC, 544).

His mission to bring his message to the poor echoes the words of the Messiah from the Book of Isaiah: "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners" (Isaiah 61:1). In the Beatitudes of Matthew and Luke, Jesus declares the Kingdom of God is for the lowly and the persecuted. They are blessed (see Matthew 5:3-11; Luke 6:20-23).

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES

Followers of Jesus wanted to know who ranked highest in Heaven. Jesus answered that the greatest were the least among them. Today, some countries remain among the poorest as they try to pay enormous debts to other nations or global banks. The foreign debt burden on many countries has caused severe problems such as deep cuts in education, more widespread famine, and armed conflicts. The poor often have little or no voice in borrowing the money in the first place. Once a nation's debt is built up, the country has to pay it back. So money that could produce jobs, improve health care, build housing, and purify water resources instead goes out of the country to pay the debt.

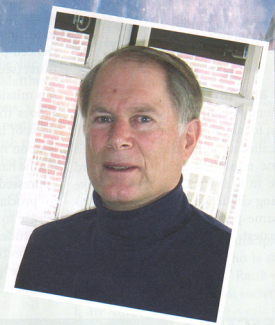
Some measures have helped the situation such as the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative in the late 1990s that reduced some debts. Then in 2005, the leaders of the industrialized nations, including the United States and Russia, proposed canceling all the debt owed by qualifying countries.

- What do you think is the wisest or best way to handle the national debt owed by Third World countries?
- What might be a wrong way to address this issue?
- Which solution(s) would reflect the values of Christ?
- How can the poor have a voice among those who decide how much money to borrow?

SOURCE: Catholic Campaign Against Global Poverty

Go to the student site at **www.osvcurriculum.com**

James McGinnis



James McGinnis was a person who took Jesus seriously. In the spring of 1970, he saw the turmoil in the United States and the world and started on the road of peace and justice.

McGinnis was a graduate assistant who taught ethics at St. Louis University. He saw a flyer advertising a talk on peace studies. The discussion sparked a passion for McGinnis. Within eight weeks, he and other professors created an undergraduate curriculum in Peace Studies, with McGinnis as the director of the program.

To complete his doctorate, he and his wife, Kathy, traveled to India to interview many of Mahatma Gandhi's co-workers and delve more deeply into nonviolence as a way of life. McGinnis said the trip had a profound effect on his own call from God to live and teach peace and social justice through nonviolence. He realized that call had been implanted in the late 1960s when he was a member of the Tennessee National Guard in Memphis. In 1968, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was killed. "I sensed that God was calling me to step up to the plate and do what I could to end the war in Vietnam and promote racial and economic justice."

McGinnis and his wife founded the Institute for Peace and Justice in St. Louis in 1975. The Institute promotes peace and justice through education, social action, and prayer. The couple had written books on how to prevent violence and empower people with prayer and peace.

McGinnis didn't live in a bubble of his own lofty theories. He understood that presentations and curriculums needed to evolve when faced with challenges such as the realities of being financially sound, the pervasive power of materialism, and covert and overt racism. This in addition to fostering a justice and peace movement that continually needs younger voices alongside its aging contingent.

McGinnis found ways to grow and change. He found an outlet in portraying a clown. "I was looking for a way of converting myself, of stretching the limits, of becoming a more compassionate person," McGinnis said in 1988. "I also wanted to become a more courageous person, wanted to become a bolder person in public." The playful side of McGinnis—as an actor, singer and dancer—allowed him to portray peace and justice in another light.



But changes later came in more somber ways. On the night the United States began bombing Iraq in 1991, McGinnis left a gathering of peace activists and walked alone to talk with Jesus. He asked, "What do you want of me in the face of this new violence?" Within in a few moments, McGinnis said he knew the answer: "In the face of escalating violence, escalate love." It is a quotation that continued to inspire him for the rest of his life. He also carried a "pebble of love" symbolizing tiny acts of kindness and love in everyday life to offset the impact of the "boulders of violence" in the world.

After the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, McGinnis said he spent more than a year revising his materials—taking into account the feelings of so many people who no longer felt secure. McGinnis said while there is "no simple answer" to the fear and insecurity people now experience, people can, and should, experience peace in their own daily lives as best they can to make a difference. He applauded students who pray for soldiers and write letters to them, but he also asked educators to encourage students to pray for children involved in conflict regions. Perhaps they could write letters to legislators that speak about how important it is to work toward peace. McGinnis died in 2009 at the age of 66. Many people who knew him and many he never met left testimonials about how they were inspired by McGinnis' words and actions.

> *"Jim's fidelity over his lifetime in being a light, a bridge, a part of a rainbow people has enriched the vision and brightened the flame for many of us. I am counting on his intercession, as he joins the cloud of witnesses, especially when I live through days when my heart is heavy and wants to close up and hide."*
>
> — Mary Ann Holtz, St. Petersburg, Fla.
> http://www.facebook.com

Think About It **In the face of national turmoil, how difficult is it to seek peace and justice? What "pebbles of love" could you do to offset the impact of the "boulders of violence" in your life or the lives of others? What events cause you to turn to Jesus and ask for help, answers, or inspiration?**

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The Kingdom also belongs to the children. "At that time Jesus said, 'I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will'" (Matthew 11:25-26). Anyone who wants to be first in the Kingdom must be last in the world. That person must serve all others.

Children were chosen examples of the Kingdom of God for the same reason that the poor were blessed in the Beatitudes. No one was more vulnerable and in need of loving care than a child at the time of Jesus.

In her book, *Welcoming Children: A Practical Theology of Childhood,* author Joyce Ann Mercer describes children in ancient Palestine as those with the lowest status. "They were in effect, not-yet-people. The language that 'the kingdom of God' belongs to children sharpens the agenda of the whole Gospel story that the kingdom of God is present for the people, the peasant villagers, as opposed to the people of standing, wealth, and power."

By using a child and the poor as examples Jesus shows that "belonging to/receiving/entering the kingdom of God comes from solidarity with—and not separation from—those who are the lowliest and the least, the most vulnerable to the hardships" of life.

The consequences of this teaching for the disciples and church is to follow the example of Jesus and the prophets to care for the widow and orphan and to speak against all forces that continue to oppress and hurt children and the poor, even at the cost of risking one's life. Following this teaching of Jesus not only brings a person into new life in this world now, but into the new life brought about by the Resurrection of Jesus.

GO TO THE SOURCE

The following passages describe Jesus blessing children and offering them as examples of the Kingdom of God.

Read Mark 10:13-16; Matthew 19:13-15; Luke 18:15-17.

○ What insights do you get from Jesus and children from these accounts about the Kingdom of God?



QUICK REVIEW

1a. Recall Why was the disciple Matthew's occupation significant in the Gospel story?

b. Analyze Tell what Jesus meant when he said, "For I have come to call, not the righteous, but sinners."

c. Interpret Why was it surprising that Jesus said people would have to become like children to be great in Heaven?

2a. Recall Jim and Kathy McGinnis founded the Institute for Peace and Justice in St. Louis in what year?

b. Summarize What led Jim and Kathy McGinnis to found the Institute for Peace and Justice?

c. Explain What significant revisions did Jim McGinnis make in his materials following September 11, 2001?

ACT

Do research on the Internet to find other programs that serve those who are disadvantaged and neglected.

○ Prepare to give a report on what you find. As part of your report, create a poster or another visual aid that highlights the work of this program and helps others understand.

Pray Write a short prayer about those who are sick and suffering around you, or about your awareness of their suffering.

SELF-ASSESS

Which statement best reflects where you are now?

☐ I'm confident enough about the material in this section to be able to explain it to someone else.

☐ I have a good grasp of the material in this section, but I could use more review.

☐ I'm lost. I need help catching up before moving on.

The Trinity Is Revealed

People have always wanted to know who God is and to be able to put the truth about God into words. But God is beyond definition. God is greater than our human powers of comprehension. Words fall short. Yet there have been many attempts to describe God. It is a natural human desire to want to know who God is, what God is like, and to name the truth about God.

You want to know Me? You want to see My face?

I do not age with time; I do not fit into a space

I transcend the capacity of your eye, so who am I?

It is the question of the moment;

It is the question for all time.

—Danielle Rose ("God Is"), youth songwriter

As Catholics, we believe that God has revealed himself. Specifically, God is a Trinity of divine Persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This is the central mystery of our faith.

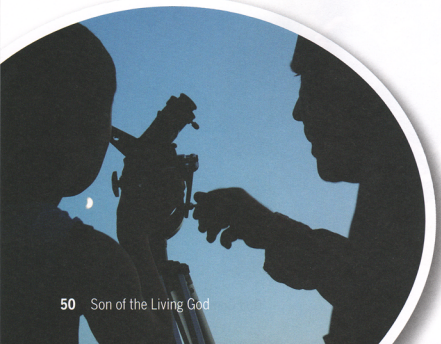
As the *Catechism* explains: "The Trinity is a mystery in the strict sense" (CCC, 237), because it is about the inner life of God. We could never have known it unless God revealed it to us. We do not know it by means of our human reason; we could never deduce it from things we observe in nature. And although there are clues to this mystery in the Old Testament, it was not revealed until the coming of Christ.

It is because of what Jesus has shown us that we come to know God as Trinity. Many passages in the Bible affirm that Jesus is truly God, but different than God the Father.

We also see in the New Testament that the Holy Spirit is promised by Jesus and sent by him. The way in which Jesus speaks shows us that the Holy Spirit is a Divine Person distinct from the Father and the Son. Yet all three Persons of the Trinity work together for our salvation. They act as one because they are one God. This is indeed a mystery.

Name What was it that Jesus revealed about the nature of God that we could not have deduced on our own?

Elaborate Why is God impossible to define?



For Our Salvation

An example of the Trinity at work for our salvation can be found in the account of the Annunciation (see Luke 1:26-35). The angel Gabriel appeared to the Virgin Mary and announced that she had found favor with God. He went on to say, "The Holy Spirit will come down upon you, and the power of the Most High (Father) will overshadow you. Therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called the Son of God" (Luke 1:35). All the Persons of the Trinity are involved, each in a distinct way.

It is clear from Gospel accounts that God alone reveals himself as the Holy Trinity. God the Father comes to us as a voice from Heaven and is described as the Father several times. He is also called the Most High. Jesus is recognized as God's Son. Out of a bright cloud, which is the Holy Spirit, the voice of God says at the Transfiguration: "This is my son, my Chosen; listen to him!" (Luke 9:35). Jesus himself talks about the Holy Spirit, who is also described as the Paraclete. The Holy Spirit will provide comfort and truth to believers, we are told. Our belief in a Triune God makes us different from many other religions.

Each of the Persons of the Trinity is distinct, but they remain inseparably one God. Many ancient faiths were polytheistic, believing in many gods. The Christian faith is monotheistic. As we affirm in the Creed, "We believe in one God." Our

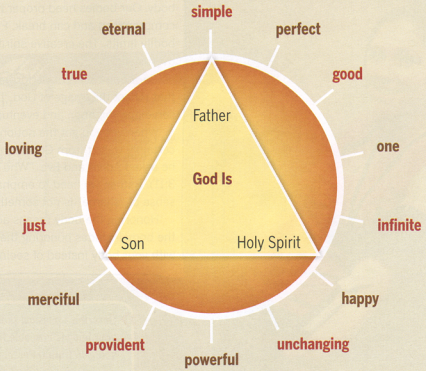


The Transfiguration of Our Lord, Russian icon from the Holy Theotokos Dormition Church on the Volotovo field near Novgorod (tempera on panel)

The Attributes of God

The attributes of God are common to each Person of the Trinity, because each Person is fully divine. Saint Thomas Aquinas discussed the following attributes of God in his first volume of *Summa Theologica.*

- ○ Choose the top two or three attributes of God mentioned in the graphic that best reflect your experience of God.
- ○ What words would you add?



HONORING THE BODY

Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God, and that you are not your own?... Therefore glorify God in your body"
—(1 Corinthians 6:19-20)

Whole Body

THE INCARNATION DEEPENS our understanding of human dignity and reminds us of the goodness of the human body. Our bodies are amazing physical creations. Spend some time meditating on the physical capabilities of our whole body as reflecting the image of God.

So often we take the physical functioning of our bodies for granted. That is, until something goes wrong. We tend not to think about breathing until we have a cold. A person with a broken toe may tell us about its importance in the balance required for walking.

Genuine spiritual wholeness can be found in contemplating the gift of God's life pulsing through our bodies.

Take a moment and intentionally focus attention on breathing. Think about the ways in which our bodies automatically take care of us. Science refers to involuntary reflexes: the lungs breathe, the eyes blink, the heart beats, the blood flows, all without thought or choice. What does that tell us about God and how he created us?

Moreover when our minds work in union with our bodies, our ability to refine our physical skills is awe-inspiring. Athletes, musicians, and artists are keenly aware of the way in which the body can steadily learn to perform with more and more precision through practice. What once may have seemed improbable becomes possible. What does that tell us about God and the need to practice Christian virtues, like patience, temperance, and justice?

Happiness is being rooted in love.
—Pope John Paul II,
Theology of the Body, 16:2



Yet we can also push ourselves too hard, too fast, and too irresponsibly. Putting perfect performance above wellness exploits the gifts of the body. Our bodies need proper rest and nourishment or they become compromised and can break. Physical injury occurs when we disregard bodily limits. The creative spirit within can be crushed by abuse and overuse of the body.

Our bodies are not performance machines; rather they are creations that reflect the image of God. They make it possible for us to thank God, serve our neighbor, and eventually be happy with God forever.

Wherever you got the notion that your body is "unpresentable," it certainly wasn't from God. It's not like God didn't know the answer when he asked Adam and Eve, "Who told you that you were naked?" (Genesis 3:11). Rather, we need to emphatically and thoroughly understand that the sense of "shame" is not something of God. It's a lie. It's manufactured.

Honoring the body means accepting it more than hating it. Honoring the body includes honoring the way it was built. It means becoming friends with your body instead of seeing it as something you are stuck with.

Describe a physical skill that you have developed to the point where your body is now able to perform it instinctively. What insights do you gain from reflecting on this ability?

What does this tell you about the importance of growing spiritually through cultivating the moral virtues, like prudence and temperance and the importance of regular Mass attendance and prayer?

In what ways can meditating on the physical capabilities of the whole body deepen spirituality and your relationship with God?



Triune God is the origin and goal of all human life. This is part of the story that Christians have to tell. Firsthand witnesses passed it on verbally and then in writing. The accounts are passed down to us by the Tradition of the Church. We see it in sacred art and hear it in music. Our senses are filled with the story.

A Fruitful Mystery

The *Catechism* assures us that believing in and loving God wholeheartedly "has enormous consequences for our whole life" (CCC, 222).

- Belief means acknowledging the greatness and majesty of God. This enables us to stand in awe and wonder before God.
- Belief means living in thanksgiving and being grateful for everything God has given us.
- Belief logically leads to affirming the unity and dignity of all people because all are made in God's image and likeness.
- Belief logically leads to trusting God, even when we experience hardship and suffering.
- And, belief means honoring God by making good use of what God has given us: our lives, our bodies, our talents, and our planet.

The Triune God calls all people into communion with himself. In the next chapter we will take a closer look at each of the three Persons of the Trinity as we continue to explore what God has revealed through Jesus Christ.

Identify What is the Annunciation?

Explain How does the Transfiguration show us the Trinity?

Triune God One God in three Persons with God the Father, Jesus the Son, and the Holy Spirit

GO TO THE SOURCE

Two more examples of the Trinity at work in the Bible are the baptism of Jesus and the Transfiguration of Jesus.

Look up the baptism of Jesus in Matthew 3:1-17; Mark 1:1-11; and Luke 3:1-22.

Read about the Transfiguration in Matthew 17:1-13; Mark 9:2-13; and Luke 9:28-36.

- How is the Trinity identified in each account?
- What does God say about Jesus in both instances?

QUICK REVIEW

1a. Assess Why is it impossible for humans to describe God?

b. Recall How do we know about the Trinity?

c. Name Whom did Jesus promise to send?

2a. Summarize Retell one of the following stories, showing how it reveals the presence of the Trinity: the Annunciation, the baptism of Jesus, the Transfiguration.

b. Define Select three qualities from the Attributes of God graphic organizer and define them.

c. List What are five consequences of believing in God?

ACT

Which of the five consequences of believing in God listed in the chapter do you already practice well?

○ Which ones do you want to further develop? Make a few notes and try to specify how and when you can do this.

SELF-ASSESS

Which statement best reflects where you are now?

☐ I'm confident enough about the material in this section to be able to explain it to someone else.

☐ I have a good grasp of the material in this section, but I could use more review.

☐ I'm lost. I need help catching up before moving on.



PRAYER

Gracious God,
I ask you to plant a seed of stillness in my soul.

Everything in my life moves ever more quickly and I am continually expected to fit more things into time that is already brimful with activity. Even when I have moments that require nothing of me, my mind races and I seem unable to locate a switch to turn it off.

Give me, each day, the desire and capacity to breathe in the wonder of air, to envision a still lake on a windless dawn, to drop deep into the well of my own being and find there the peace of your presence.

I ask this in the name of your love.

Amen.

Scripture

Ponder it on your beds, and be silent. (Psalm 4:4)

Now during those days Jesus went out to the mountain to pray; and he spent the night in prayer to God. (Luke 6:12)

Jesus woke up and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "Peace! Be still!" (Mark 4:39)

Be still, and know that I am God. (Psalm 46:10)

I have calmed and quieted my soul, like a weaned child with its mother. (Psalm 131:2)

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness. (Matthew 4:1)

After he dismissed the crowds, he went up the mountain by himself to pray. (Matthew 14:22)

He withdrew from there in a boat to a deserted place by himself. (Matthew 14:13)

Be silent, all people, before the Lord. (Zechariah 2:13)

The Word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

Closing Prayer
Let us go in peace to experience the stillness and nurture what needs to come to life. Thanks be to God.

CHAPTER 2 REVIEW

TERMS

Use each of the following terms in a sentence that shows you know what the term means. You may include more than one term in a sentence.

logos
Son of God
original justice
salvation history
messiah
convocation
Son of Man
Christ
Trinity
communion
Incarnation
solidarity
Triune God

PEOPLE

Identify the person or persons who best fit each description.

1. The couple that brought sin into the world.
2. Patriarchs who had covenants with God.
3. God promised through these teachers that he would send a messiah.
4. The Mother of Jesus.
5. Learned in a dream that Jesus will be born to Mary.
6. Baptized Jesus.
7. A tax collector who followed Jesus.
8. Announced the Incarnation to Mary.
9. Made a list of God's qualities.
10. Witnessed the Transfiguration.

UNDERSTANDING

Answer each question and complete each exercise.

SECTION 1

1. **Recall** Which word was used in the beginning of The Gospel according to John to refer to the Second Person of the Trinity?
2. **Interpret** Why did the prophet Isaiah predict that Jesus' name would be Emmanuel?
3. **Analyze** Why is the cross the turning point of the Christian story?
4. **Interpret** Why is the current period of salvation history called "the time of the Church?"

SECTION 2

5. **Analyze** How do the terms "Son of God" and "Son of Man" reflect Jesus' divine and human natures?
6. **Assess** Why does the Incarnation give us a new vision of humanity?
7. **Interpret** What did Jesus mean when he said, "Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me?"
8. **Evaluate** Why would God reveal Jesus slowly to the world?

SECTION 3

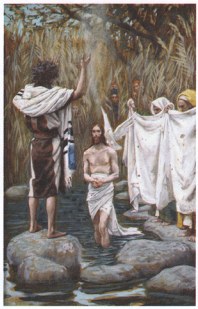
9. **Analyze** Why did Jesus eat with sinners?
10. **Summarize** What did Jesus teach about status in Heaven?

SECTION 4

11. **Identify** How do we know about God?
12. **Recall** Who has taught us about the Trinity?
13. **Analyze** If God is a Trinity, why is the Christian faith considered monotheistic?

CONNECTING

Visual This painting shows the baptism of Jesus. How does this painting interpret this occasion? Point out the major figures and interpret the symbols.



Challenge You are working on questions in this chapter when a friend asks a question:

Friend: Why would Jesus want to live on Earth? Didn't he have it made in Heaven?

You: Maybe he wanted to show us something.

Friend: Like?

- What is your next reply?
- Continue the conversation, including at least two more questions your friend might ask and how you would answer. Use information from the chapter in your answers.

Question After working through this chapter, what advice would you give someone who has trouble understanding how Jesus is true God and true man?

Imagine You are in charge of a movie about Jesus' life. The current scene you are working on depicts the Transfiguration (Mark 9:2-8). As part of your planning process, answer these questions:

- In what ways could you depict Jesus to show his divinity?
- How would you position the three disciples to show their reactions to Jesus' transformation?
- What sort of music would you use to enhance the feelings in the scene?

SELF-ASSESS

On Your Own Make a list of the most important things you learned from this chapter.

Select three things that represent your growth in understanding as you worked through this chapter. Write a paragraph explaining your choices.

With a Partner List what you found most helpful or interesting in this chapter as well as any other questions that have surfaced.