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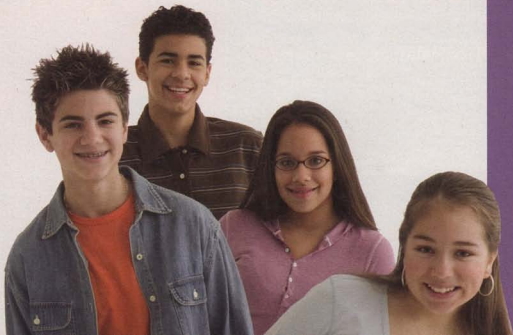


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Jesus, Our Hope



JESUS WAS HERE

✦ Visiting historic locations can be fascinating, especially when we pause to realize that a great person was once present where we are now standing. As we look back throughout Church history, we can see where and how Jesus was present to his people. Since Jesus is always present to his Church, we can see how his presence left his mark on men and women of every generation who sought to follow him. Here is a brief summary of how the Church has come to know and to speak about the presence of Jesus over the past 2,000 years.

THE APOSTOLIC AGE AND THE EARLY CHURCH

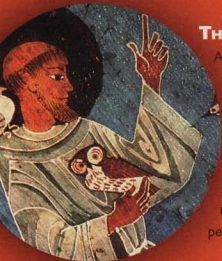
The risen Jesus had a profound impact on the life of a Jewish man named Saul in the first century. In the Acts of the Apostles 8:1–3, we learn that Saul, a Pharisee, was on a mission to rid the Jewish faith of anyone who claimed to be a follower of Jesus of Nazareth. Saul encountered the risen Jesus on the road to Damascus, and his life was never the same. Going by his Roman name, Paul, he courageously and enthusiastically traveled thousands of miles to proclaim the Good News of salvation in Jesus Christ to the ends of the earth.





THE EARLY MIDDLE AGES

As people continued to encounter Jesus through the early Middle Ages, they struggled to find the right words to speak about him. In order to find the right words to talk about Jesus, the Church had a series of councils between 325 and 681. The Council of Nicaea in 325 taught that Jesus was truly God and truly man. The Second Council of Constantinople in 381 taught that Jesus, while retaining his divinity, became a full human. The Council of Ephesus in 431 declared that Mary is the Mother of God. The Council of Chalcedon in 451 proclaimed that Jesus had a divine and human nature. Thanks to these Church councils, we have the words we need to describe our understanding of Jesus.



THE MIDDLE AGES

After the Roman empire collapsed, people endured great hardship. Saint Francis of Assisi taught people to once again look to the example of Jesus, especially his death on the cross, in order to understand the role of suffering in our lives. He established a religious community that focused on life not in a monastery, but in the cities and villages, where people were struggling with everyday life.

THE AGE OF ENLIGHTENMENT

With the discovery of the “New World,” the Church dedicated great amounts of energy and resources to spreading the Good News. Between the 16th and 18th centuries, new religious orders were established with a commitment to missionary activity. Among these orders was the Society of Jesus—the Jesuits—founded by Saint Ignatius of Loyola.

MODERN TIMES

At the Second Vatican Council (1963–65), the Church issued decrees calling for greater attention to evangelization—bringing the Good News to all people. In 1976, Pope Paul VI issued a document called *On Evangelization in the Modern World* in which he taught that the Church exists in order to evangelize. In his 1990 letter *Mission of the Redeemer*, Pope John Paul II called for a “new evangelization” so that the message of Jesus Christ might be proclaimed again to all cultures.

JESUS NEVER CHANGES



As we grow older, our understanding of our parents changes. During our infancy, we look to parents as people who respond to and fulfill all of our needs. During our childhood, we may see our parents as establishing and enforcing rules. When we become adults, we may see our parents as close friends. In a similar way, the Church’s understanding of Jesus, who is with us always, has grown. From the experiences of men and women throughout the ages who have encountered the risen Christ, we too can come to know and understand Jesus, who is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

Know You

Making friends is not always easy. Friendships take work. One of the ways we get to know people is by learning about them. What would you like to find out about someone you're trying to get to know better?

**10**

things you might want to know about a person

1. hobbies
2. sense of humor
3. talents
4. taste in music
5. favorite TV shows
6. clubs and activities
7. dreams for the future
8. favorite foods
9. friends
10. family members



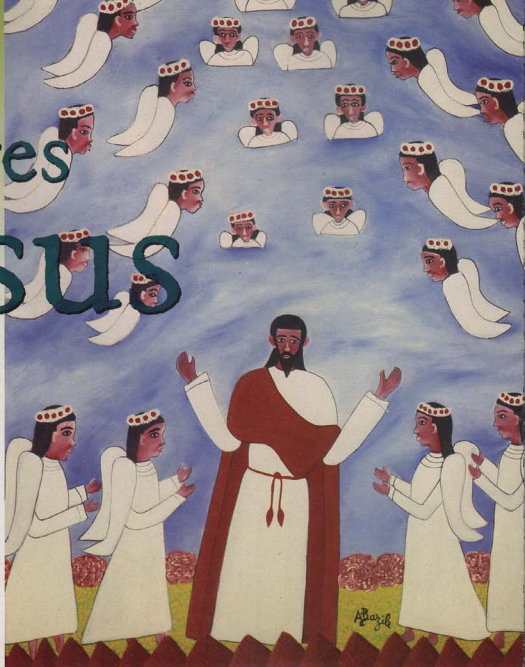
Pictures of Jesus

Mr. Harrison gave

his students a choice. They had spent weeks getting to know Jesus by reading and discussing the New Testament. Now Mr. Harrison said each student could either take a test or draw a picture.

"But beware," he said with a knowing look, "if you choose to draw it will require a visit to your heart. Reflect for a while on what you know about Jesus. Then draw a picture that reveals something about Jesus that helps you want to know him better."

Suddenly the class was still. The students found themselves reflecting on their own reasons for wanting to know Jesus better. Eddie got up and reached for a test. But in mid-reach he was captured by the thought of talking to Jesus and sat back down. Soon all were engrossed in looking through books and drawing their pictures. The time flew by. It wasn't long before they were sharing what they had drawn.



I wanted to show Jesus as the center of our faith and our lives.

TAMIKA

"I drew Jesus as an ordinary Middle Eastern man—a person who had the same problems as everyone else living then. He is dressed in the clothes of the time. In the background are several scenes: Bethlehem, where he was born; Nazareth, where he grew up; and Galilee, where he taught. He is holding a hammer in one hand because in his youth he was a carpenter, and he is holding a book in the other hand because he was a student of Scripture and later became a teacher."

Saul Is Called by the Risen Jesus

EMMA

"My picture is very different because I wanted to focus on Jesus as Lord and Son of God. I put stars and galaxies in the background to show that Jesus is the Word through whom all things were created. I put the cross behind him. But he is not nailed to the cross because he has already risen from the dead. I included next to him the images of the Father and the Holy Spirit, the other two Persons of the Trinity."

JORGE

"My drawing shows the major events at the end of Jesus' life. It is really four pictures in one. The first shows Jesus on the cross being crucified between two criminals. The second is of the risen Christ with the empty tomb in the distance. I drew this because I think about how early disciples experienced the Resurrection of Jesus. Jesus' Resurrection means the promise of resurrection for all believers. The third shows Jesus beginning to ascend into heaven, with the disciples looking up at him. In the last, the disciples are receiving the Holy Spirit from Jesus at Pentecost. These four pictures reveal a lot about why I want to get closer to Jesus."

JACOB

"Jesus is a teacher in my drawing. He is sitting on a mound. His disciples are at his feet listening. The scenes in the background show Jesus teaching his disciples by example during his ministry. This picture shows when John the Baptist baptizes Jesus how the Holy Spirit descends to show that Jesus is the Son of God. And here I show Jesus led by the Spirit into the wilderness."

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411

Saint Paul embarked on three missionary journeys that totaled more than 4,000 miles of travel. Including his shorter trips and his journey to Rome after his arrest, he traveled more than 6,000 miles in his lifetime. Imagine doing that in an age without cars or airplanes!

Many have found their

lives changed after accepting Jesus as Lord. One of the earliest stories of such a change is found in the Acts of the Apostles 9:1-19—the story of Saul, who became Paul the Apostle. Saul was a faithful Jew and a brilliant scholar. As a scholar his desire was to protect the purity of the Jewish faith. In Jerusalem, during the years after Pentecost, Saul searched for and imprisoned any Jew who believed in Jesus.

One day Saul was on his way to Damascus hunting such Jews when a brilliant light knocked him to the ground. He heard a voice asking him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?" Saul asked who was speaking. He heard the voice answer, "I am Jesus whom you are persecuting." Jesus told him to continue to Damascus and wait. Saul had been blinded by the light; his physical blindness showed that he was blind to the true identity of Jesus. So the man traveling with Saul led him to Damascus. Saul waited there for three days before a Christian by the name of Ananias came to him and laid his hands on Saul. Saul regained his sight, was filled with the Holy Spirit, and was baptized.

The experience changed Saul's life. He discovered that Jesus is alive and is present in the Church and that when Christians suffer, Jesus suffers also. Saul, who became known as Paul, discovered that he was called by the Holy Spirit to a mission. Wherever he went he proclaimed Jesus' message. The same living Jesus calls us to recognize his presence in others.

God the Father and Jesus send the Holy Spirit to call us to help others see how much they are loved by God.

Body and Soul



You know what it means to have a body. Having a body can mean feeling the pounding of a headache or the constant itching irritation of poison ivy. But it also can mean feeling a calming, cool breeze on a fall evening. Having a body means being able to enjoy a cold drink on a hot summer afternoon . . . and then a little while later . . . being thirsty all over again. Having a body means being able to see a beautiful sunset, to hear the birds, to smell a flower, or to taste a strawberry.

God the Son experienced all these things because he became man. We use the word Incarnation to say that God became man—that Jesus is God and man. Incarnation also means that Jesus, because he is a human being, has a human soul. Jesus is the Son of God, and he has a human body and soul—that is what the Incarnation means.

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JOSEFINA


"I wanted to show Jesus as the center of our faith and our lives. Around him are the sun and the moon and the earth, which show that he is the Lord. Everyone is looking at him: people from the past—Shakespeare and Cleopatra—and people from the present—my brother and Mr. Harrison. My drawing has a frame showing symbols of our Catholic faith—water, oil, a dove, bread, and a cross. Everything we believe and practice as Catholics is centered on Jesus."

RICHARD

"You can tell what my drawing shows. I wrote it in large letters across the top: *Jesus is Lord*. There are people from all over the world—Europeans, Asians, Latin Americans. There are people of different races. There are people of different ages, different sizes, people who are rich, and people who are poor. All of them are on bended knee before Jesus the Lord. Every person's face is lit up with the light that comes from Jesus."

MR. HARRISON

Mr. Harrison's face was lit up too.

"I'm impressed," he said. "You've revealed so many heartfelt reasons to get to know Jesus better. Let's take a few minutes to look at our drawings and remember that Jesus is truly God and truly man. As man Jesus had to learn how to talk and read and write. Jesus was led by the Holy Spirit in his life and his ministry. He was a teacher who taught not only with his words but also with the way he lived. He suffered, died, rose from the dead, and ascended into heaven. Jesus is the Lord of all." 

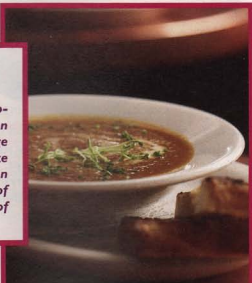
WANT TO SEE different examples of how Jesus has been pictured throughout history? visit www.FindingGod.org/teens.

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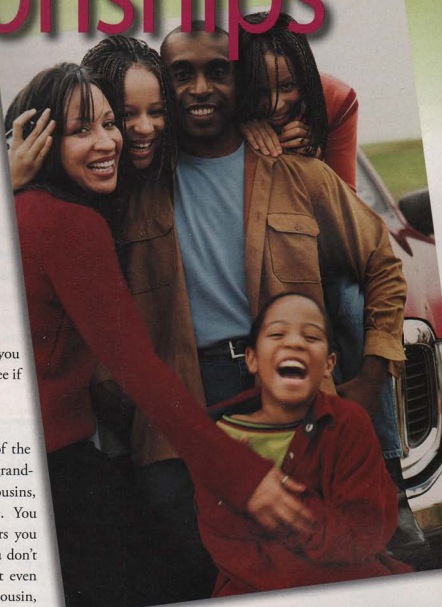
Belief in the Incarnation makes a big difference in the lives of Catholics. Because the Son of God became flesh, we believe that our human bodies have honor and dignity. Our bodies are a reflection of the image of God. He loved us enough to send his only Son, Jesus, who became like us in all things but sin. Our belief in the Incarnation is the foundation of our concern for the physical needs of others. The Corporal Works of Mercy, such as feeding the sick and clothing the naked, are examples of the many ways that we can care for the physical needs of others.

IT'S LIKE THIS

Getting to know someone takes time. Getting to know someone really well takes even more time and some effort as well. Getting to know Jesus works the same way. Reading the story of Jesus in the Gospels is the first step in getting to know him. But to really know Jesus, we have to spend time with him, talk with him, and listen to him.



Relationships



How many relationships do you think you have? How many people are a part of your life? See if you can name all of them.

RELATIVES

Start with your relatives. You could have any of the following relatives: parents, brothers, sisters, grandparents, great-grandparents, uncles, aunts, cousins, brothers-in-law, sisters-in-law, nieces, nephews. You might know some relatives very well and others you might hardly ever see. There might be some you don't know at all. You probably have some you don't even know exist. They are all your relatives—once a cousin, always a cousin. Count them all, at least all of the ones you know about.

FRIENDS

After relatives, you have friends. Maybe your friendships are limited. Maybe you have lots of friends. You might be closer to some friends than you are to others. Maybe most of your friends are really more like pals that you do things with. Any way you look at it, all of them help to form the world that you live in.

Your family and friends are your closest relationships. They are the people through whom you get to know God better. It's easier to see the image of God in them because you care so much about them.

IM

This I command you: love one another.
(John 15:17)

ACQUAINTANCES

And what about acquaintances? You know, those people that you talk to, see regularly, but don't really know. You probably have acquaintances at school, in your neighborhood, and in your parish. And don't forget the people you recognize because you see them all the time, even though you might not know much more than their names. You feel connected to them

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because you share something in common—the place where you see them. Sometimes with a little conversation, the connection grows. Then acquaintances become friends.

They are the people through whom you get to know God better.



You're also connected with the people in your city, state, and country. You don't know most of them, but you have things in common. You care about some of the same things. If you've ever been far from home and met someone from your hometown, you might have felt this connection.

THE WORLD

You guessed it! The world is filled with more people with whom you are connected. Through television and the Internet we are part of the lives of people all over the world. They are all our brothers and sisters because we are all children of the one Father. Everyone reflects the image of God. We need to stay connected to all of them, especially people who are in some kind of need.

Love One Another

Jesus told his disciples that they are his friends when they love one another. What did Jesus mean? Jesus meant loving the people we live with—parents, siblings, aunts, uncles, and cousins. We don't have to always like what they do or how they act. But we have to care about them always. Jesus also meant loving all people in our lives—friends, classmates, and neighbors. Sometimes people irritate us, but we are called to reach out to them too.

There are also all the billions of people whom we see on TV or read about in newspapers. The call to love all these people can seem a big, scary responsibility. But Jesus tells us in John 15:12–17 that it's possible for us to love all these people because he loved us first. Jesus called us “friends.” He has chosen us to care about people in the same way that he cares about people. Jesus doesn't give us a job without giving us the help we need. We can start by praying for one another.




So it's a fact—you are connected to everyone. And any relationship worth its salt is based on love, respect that goes both ways, and concern for the rights of everyone, just as Jesus taught us. It's no secret that when we serve others, especially people who are poor, homeless, sick, or dying, our relationships become stronger and deeper. By serving others, we serve God's kingdom.

God

We're not quite finished yet. The most important relationship we all have is our relationship with God. Because our God is a personal God, our relationship with him needs to be personal. When we have a personal relationship with God, we see his image reflected in everyone, including ourselves. God knew it might be hard for us to think of him as a personal friend. So to help us get to know him, God the Father sent his only Son to live as one of us. Jesus makes it easy to talk about feelings or about anything else in our lives. Think about it. When you talk with him about your feelings, you know that he will understand because he has experienced the same feelings. Jesus makes it easier for us to have a personal relationship with God.

Jesus

Would you like to have better relationships with people? Try this—work on your relationship with Jesus. Meet up with him in your heart. Talk to him about your problems. He will help you figure out what to do with all of your relationships—with your family and friends and with all people who are your brothers and sisters. Get to know about his life, listen to his words, and let him talk to you. Spend some time with him and watch your relationships improve. You'll even see improvement in the relationship that you have with yourself. 



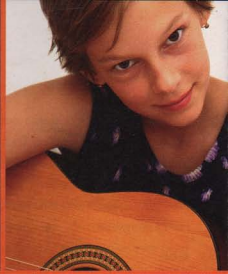
How do you love someone you just don't like? The key is to remember that love is not a feeling—it is a commitment to the well being of another. You don't have to be filled with warm, fuzzy feelings to love someone. Think of someone you really can't stand. Then try looking at the person through God's eyes. Pray for that person. Remember that God loves him or her the same way that God loves you.



WISE GUYS

"Love ought to show itself in deeds more than in words."
(Saint Ignatius of Loyola)

Having Christ's Attitude



CHRISTIAN HYMNS

Christian praise of God in song goes back to our Jewish roots and the singing of the Psalms in the Temple. The early Christians also composed their own songs of praise. In the letters of Paul, the first writings of the New Testament, we find words from Christian hymns. The words Paul uses in Philippians 2:6–11 to express the mystery of the Incarnation are probably taken from an early Christian hymn. Christian hymns, like the Psalms, have always been forms of both instruction and prayer. In Colossians 3:16 Paul writes, “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, as in all wisdom you teach and admonish one another, singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.”

Jesus, true God, became true man.

Our call to be followers of Christ means that through our words and deeds, we proclaim our belief in him. Saint Paul, in his letter to the Philippians, describes what it means to have the same attitude as Christ.

Have among yourselves the same attitude that is also yours in Christ Jesus,

**Who, though he was in the form of God,
did not regard equality with God
something to be grasped.**

**Rather, he emptied himself,
taking the form of a slave,
coming in human likeness;
and found human in appearance,
he humbled himself,
becoming obedient to death,
even death on a cross.**

(Philippians 2:5–8)

Picture yourself in a favorite quiet place. As you look around, Jesus comes to join you. The two of you sit quietly together. You may want to talk with him about what you just heard from Saint Paul's letter. What are some of the words in the letter that described Jesus' attitude?

Spend a few moments reflecting with Jesus about your own attitude. What are some things you notice about your attitude toward your family? your friends? yourself?

If you need help knowing how to make your attitude more like his, ask Jesus to help you.

Rest quietly with Jesus and simply enjoy being together.

Thank Jesus for coming to join you.

End with the Sign of the Cross.



What's WHAT?

■ Main points from this chapter are started below. Complete each sentence. Refer to the articles and side bars for help.

- Everything we believe and practice as Catholics _____
- We use the word *Incarnation* to say that _____
- Saul regained his sight, was filled with the Holy Spirit, and _____
- When we have a personal relationship with God, we see his image _____
- Jesus told his disciples that they are his friends when _____

So WHAT?

■ Being in touch with God can help you understand yourself better. *Think about it. Pray about it.*

Say WHAT?

Incarnation • Lord

Now WHAT?

■ Jesus is at the heart of our lives as Catholics. What will you do this week to express your growing relationship with Jesus?

Here's WHAT the Catholic Church Teaches

Pope John Paul II, in his encyclical letter *On Social Concern*, writes about the connection between charity and solidarity—the understanding that all people are united by common rights and responsibilities. This connection is a distinguishing mark of Christ's disciples. He reminds us that through solidarity and charity we recognize Christ in our neighbor. “In the light of faith, solidarity seeks to go beyond itself, to take on the specifically Christian dimension of total gratuity, forgiveness and reconciliation. One's neighbor is then not only a human being with his or her own rights . . . but becomes the living image of God the Father, redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ and placed under the permanent action of the Holy Spirit. One's neighbor must therefore be loved, even if an enemy, with the same love with which the Lord loves him or her; and for that person's sake one must be ready for sacrifice, even . . . to lay down one's life for the brethren.”

[*On Social Concern*]

Paired Interview



Your name _____

Your partner's name _____

Title of article read by your partner _____

Q&A

Ask your partner the following questions about the article he or she read and record his or her answers in the space provided.

1. Explain what your article was about in a few sentences.

2. What is one quote (sentence) from your article that you would put on a poster to inspire the group? Why?

3. What are some specific things your article helped you to learn or realize about the Catholic faith?

4. Based on your article, name some specific things we, as Catholics, need to know, do, or believe in order to live as followers of Jesus.