



## Lesson 5

# “Who is Jesus?”

(The Person and Mission of Christ)



## Opening Prayer

“Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name;  
thy kingdom come,  
thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread,  
and forgive us our trespasses  
as we forgive those who trespass against us;  
and lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil. Amen.”

# Dive In:

# Who Do YOU Think Jesus Is?

What do you think of when you hear the name “Jesus”?

- The stained-glass shepherd holding a sheep?
- That huge statue in your church of a man on a cross?
- “Hollywood Jesus”: the skinny guy in the movies who apparently combed his hair for three hours every day before beginning his public ministry?
- The plastic man at the end of your

**ROSARY?**

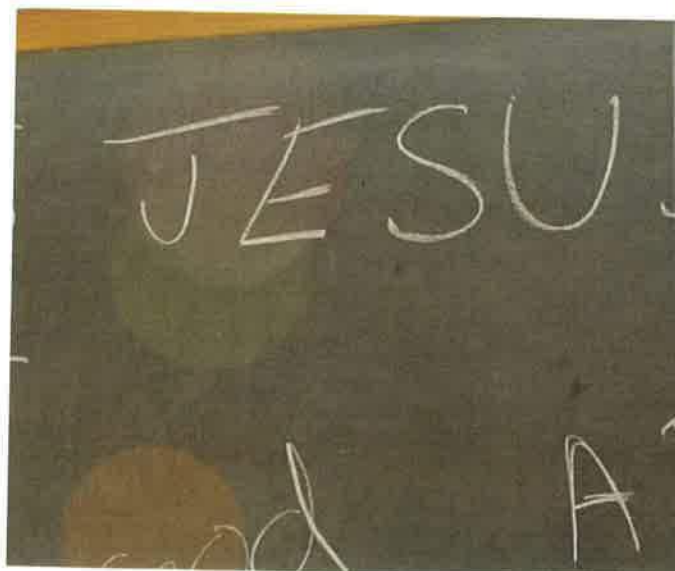
Or do you think of the gentle face on that holy card, with eyes filled with so much power and conviction that, with a look and a word, he could get people to drop everything and follow him?

Whatever image you have of Jesus, there’s no doubt that this man—a man with no worldly wealth or standing—had more of an impact on human history than any other before or since.

But who was Jesus, really? What was he like? And what does he have to do with our lives here and now, nearly 2,000 years after his death? Let’s find out.

*“The sacred heart of Christ is an inexhaustible fountain and its sole desire is to pour itself out into the hearts of the humble so as to free them and prepare them to lead lives according to his good pleasure [his will].”*

— St. Margaret Mary Alacoque





### Segment 1: "Who Do You Say That I Am?"

1. Which apostle said: "You are the Christ, the son of the living God?" \_\_\_\_\_
2. Jesus is either a liar, a lunatic, or \_\_\_\_\_.

### Segment 2: Evidence for Jesus

1. According to St. Paul, at least how many witnesses saw the risen Christ with their own eyes?  
A) 12    B) 50    C) 100    D) 500
2. Who was the only apostle to see the risen Lord who did not die a martyr? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Sarah says that the most compelling evidence that Jesus rose from the dead is in the witness of the \_\_\_\_\_.

### Segment 3: Why Did Jesus Come to Us?

1. Jesus came to pay a \_\_\_\_\_ that we could never pay.  
A) commission    B) debt    C) visit    D) lesson
2. Which of these is **not** one of the reasons Christ came into the world?  
A) to reconcile us to God                      D) to show us how to live  
B) to show us the love of God                E) to give us divine life  
C) to write the Gospels



“... when I did give my whole life to Jesus, I experienced all that I had been missing.”



## TO THE HEART with

When I was in high school, I went to a rock concert where the band de Talk was performing. There was a guy with a T-shirt that said, “Jesus Freak” across the front. At one point in the concert, he stood up and I was able to read the back of his T-shirt, which said,

*“What will people think when they hear that I’m a Jesus Freak?”*

*What will people do when they find that it’s true?*

*I don’t really care if they label me a Jesus Freak.*

*There ain’t no disguising the truth.”*

It may sound strange, but that T-shirt had a major impact on my life. I felt like God asked me a question that night, “Who am I in your life, Sarah?” Until that night, I wouldn’t have been caught dead in a T-shirt that said anything about Jesus on it. But after that guy stood right in front of me

at that concert, I started asking myself some hard questions about what I believed and how I acted, and it changed the way I lived.

My heart was opened to a new lifestyle, a new worldview. I didn’t want God to be just someone I prayed to when things got tough or when I needed something. From that night on, I realized that Jesus Christ was as real to me, here and now, as he was to the apostles who walked with him 2,000 years ago. He was their Savior and Redeemer, but also their friend.

You might say the early disciples and martyrs were “Jesus Freaks.” They went to the ends of the earth and to their deaths proclaiming the truth of Jesus Christ’s love and forgiveness. They wanted everyone to have that intimate relationship with Jesus. The Jesus Freaks of today are doing the same

thing, and I want it to be said of me as well, “I don’t really care if they label me a Jesus Freak ... There ain’t no disguising the truth.”

When Jesus becomes Lord and King of our hearts, it affects every aspect of our lives—what we watch on TV, what music we listen to, who our friends are. When I gave my life to Jesus—wholly and entirely—it was scary; I thought I might lose myself. But

what I found was that he gave me so much more in return. I feared that giving everything to Jesus might make me “miss out” on life; but when I did give my whole life to Jesus, I experienced all that I had been missing. All I can say is the “mch” I gave him is nothing compared to the “mile” he gave me. We just cannot outdo God in generosity.

## Sarah Swafford

### *Find It!*

What does the priest kiss when he begins and ends Mass?

# Hero of the Week



## Born:

March 28, 1515

## Died:

October 4, 1582

## Memorial:

October 15

## Patron Saint of:

- headaches
- people in need of grace
- people ridiculed for piety

# St. Teresa of Avila

Sometimes when we think of the saints, we wonder how we could ever be like them.

We think of them as heroic men and women who suffered terrible martyrdoms or who lived such lives of piety and **HOLINESS** that we could never follow in their footsteps.

Enter St. Teresa of Avila, a mystic and doctor of the Church who lived in the sixteenth century. She had a quick wit and a quicker tongue. Once, when she was rushing to the side of a sick friend, she got halfway across a river and fell off her horse. Shaken and soaking wet, she railed at God, "If this is the way you treat your friends, it's no wonder you have so few!"

Far from being a model of unattainable holiness, Teresa struggled with prayer and in her relationships with other people. Although she loved Jesus beyond measure, she just wasn't attracted to religious life as it was practiced in her day—the convents were full of spoiled young women who didn't want to be tied down by the demands of family life.

As a child, Teresa had looked for a quick way to holiness, running away from home with her little brother to fight the Moors so they could be martyred. Instead,

God called her to a "living martyrdom"—leading the reform of the Carmelite order. She endured great suffering both physically, with illness that struck her throughout her life, and emotionally, with resistance to her reforms from within her own community of sisters.

St. Teresa wrote several books on the spiritual life and about her mystical experiences. She taught her Carmelite sisters how to deepen their prayer lives in order to grow closer to the Savior. Her best-known work is *The Interior Castle*, a study of spirituality and contemplative prayer.

Although she lived a life of sacrifice and suffering, it was not without the joy of beautiful spiritual friendships, notably with another saint and doctor of the Church, St. John of the Cross. She valued friendship as a way for people to build each other up toward heaven and toward the true friendship, which is the friendship with Christ.

*St. Teresa, pray for us. Help us to really know and love Jesus as you did.*

# Challenge of the Week

- Get your family thinking.** Next time your family is together, ask, "Who do you think Jesus was?" Share with them the three possibilities: liar, lunatic (crazy), or Lord. If you're feeling confident, try it with a friend. Write about what happened in the space below.
- What do you think Jesus looked like?** Draw a picture, create an image, or describe in words (in the space below) what you think the Lord looked like. What does this picture say about who Jesus is to you?
- What's your favorite song about Jesus?** It can be online, in a hymnal, or on a Gospel CD. Write your favorite line in the space below.

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## ✠ Closing Prayer

*"I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly."*

—*John 10:10*

O Divine Lord Jesus, we thank you for bringing us together to show us who you really are. You are our God, infinite and almighty, yet you humbly sacrificed yourself to save us from our sins and to teach us the best way to live.

We want to imitate the heroism of the saints, but sometimes we get discouraged by our own failings. Help us to receive the life you offer in abundance through your many gifts, especially through the sacraments of Reconciliation and Holy Communion. Amen.

# Taking It Home

For next week's "Review Game," be sure to read over the following ...

1. **Watch It!** questions (page 37)
2. **Wrap-Up**
3. **"What's That Word?"**
4. **Memory Verse**

Don't forget to do your **Challenge of the Week** (page 41)

## Wrap-Up

*Who was Jesus of Nazareth?* This question has been debated ever since Jesus and his apostles walked the earth. In the Gospel of Mark, Jesus asks his followers, "Who do men say that I am?" (Mark 8:27). Here's how they responded:

"And they told him, 'John the Baptist; and others say, Elijah; and others one of the prophets.' And he asked them, 'But who do you say that I am?' Peter answered him, 'You are the Christ'" (Mark 8:28-29).

How would you have answered Jesus? Some people like to brush Jesus aside, saying he was a great prophet or a wise man. But what would you think if someone came up to you and claimed to

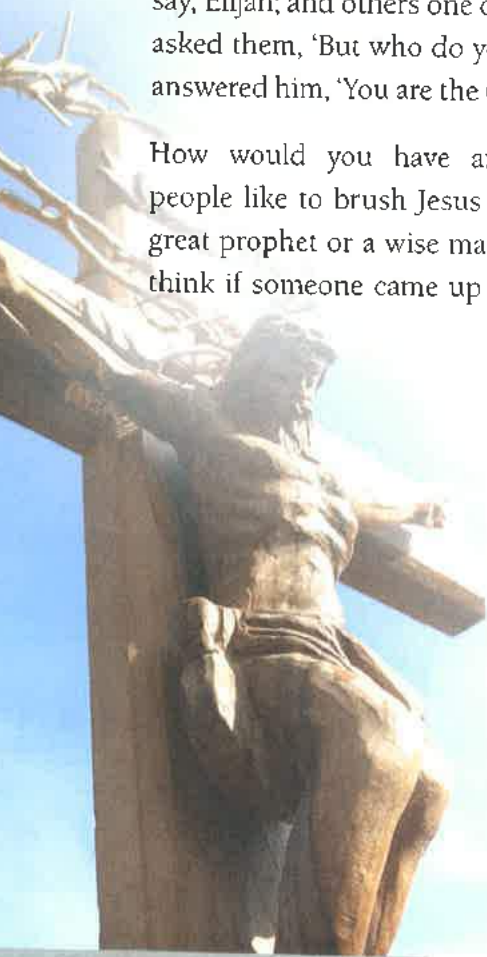
be God? Would you conclude he was the wisest person who ever lived? More likely, you'd think he was either kidding around or was delusional. A liar or a lunatic.

Jesus couldn't have been a liar. Liars lie to get something they want. No one dies a horrible death to perpetuate a falsehood. To teach with the wisdom and clarity that he did, Jesus couldn't have been crazy, either.

Jesus claimed to be God—and rose from the dead to prove it, something no other founder of a world religion has ever done. He was not a liar and not a lunatic ... but Lord.<sup>2</sup>

## Did You Know?

*In the sixth century, many people said, "Good luck to you," if someone sneezed. Pope St. Gregory the Great began the practice of saying, "God bless you," as a protection from the plague ravaging Italy at the time.*





# “What’s That Word?”

## FIAT

Latin for “let it be done,” this term refers to Mary’s acceptance of the **ANGEL** Gabriel’s words informing her that she would be the Mother of the Son of God. It is clear from the biblical account of the Annunciation in Luke 1:26-38 that Mary initially did not understand the angel Gabriel’s words—“How can this be, since I have no husband?”—yet her unshakeable faith in God gave her the strength to say “yes” despite her lack of understanding. Mary’s example of faith presents us with a model to follow in our own lives, showing us that we don’t always need to understand God’s will. We just need to follow it.

## INCARNATION

If you like Mexican food, you’ve heard of *carne asada*. The Spanish word *carne* (“meat”) comes from the Latin *caro/carnis*, meaning “flesh.” So the *Incarnation* refers to God coming in the flesh when the second Person of the Trinity, the Son, took on a human nature (i.e., a human body and a human soul) when he was conceived by the Holy Spirit in the womb of the Blessed Virgin **MARY**. He became truly man, yet remained truly God.<sup>3</sup> He is 100 percent God and 100 percent human, not “part God and part human.”



### Memory Verse:

*“He said to them, ‘But who do you say that I am?’ Simon Peter replied, ‘You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.’”*

*—Matthew 16:15-16*



## JESUS CHRIST

The second Person of the Trinity, Jesus Christ, is God incarnate. The name “Jesus” comes from the Hebrew *Yeshua*, meaning “God saves.” The angel Gabriel told Joseph to give Jesus this name because “he will save his people from their sins” (Matthew 1:21). “Christ” was not Jesus’ last name. It comes from *Christos* in ancient Greek, which means, “anointed one.” (In Hebrew, the word is *Messiah*.)

In Scripture, to be anointed is to be empowered by God for a specific role and task. In Baptism and Confirmation, the Holy Spirit anoints us when our heads are marked with sacred chrism (holy oil). In union with Jesus, we are empowered to live as children who serve our heavenly Father.

## PASCHAL MYSTERY

The **PASCHAL MYSTERY** is Jesus’ Passion (suffering), Death, Resurrection from the dead, and Ascension into heaven. The word *paschal* comes from the Hebrew for Passover.

The Passover commemorates the Exodus, when God, through Moses, commanded the Hebrew people, then slaves of the Egyptians, to sacrifice a lamb and mark their doors with its blood. That night, the firstborn in every home in Egypt died—except those in homes with blood spattered on their doorways. This was the event that pushed Pharaoh to finally free God’s people from slavery.

By the Paschal Mystery, Jesus, who is called the sacrificial “Lamb of God,” is sacrificed for us all. He doesn’t free us from an earthly ruler, but from our slavery to sin and death.

## Any questions?

How do you know he really rose from the dead?

Nothing supports a case like an eyewitness. In the nineteenth century, Harvard law professor Dr. Simon Greenleaf set out to prove that Jesus’ Resurrection would never hold up in a court of law. Instead, he became a Christian! He was convinced by the large number of eyewitnesses to Jesus’ Resurrection (including most of the apostles), who were willing to die rather than recant their testimony.\*

## Why did Jesus come to us?

The *Catechism* lists four reasons:

- 1) To remove sin and reconcile us to God
- 2) To show us just how much God loves us
- 3) To show us how to live
- 4) To fill us with his divine life  
(see also CCC 456–460)

\* While people of various beliefs have died for an *idea*, the apostles staked their lives on the truth of their *eyewitness testimony*.

