



If you ask any famous historian or theologian they will say that Jesus' life on earth was unique. Books that are not even in our Bible talk about the influence of him as a sacred teacher during his time. What most people don't know is that he entered into this world as a human for our good and was far more than an exceptional religious teacher. Many events surrounding his life can point to him not only being a man, but also the incarnation of God, or God-in-flesh. In other words, we can say that Jesus not only showed us what it means to be fully human, but also became for us the most complete revelation and real image of who God is and what God is up to in and for the world (Colossians 1:15-20; 2 Corinthians 4:4).

And Jesus' name declares what God was up to through him; the name Jesus actually means- *God saves!*

Before you begin this lesson talk to your family, maybe over dinner, about whom they believe Jesus is and why he is so significant to the Christian faith. Write down any questions or key insights your family members bring up. [note: image above is "Christ the Servant," a statue by Jimilu Mason outside Christ's House, a ministry that provides healthcare to homeless in Washington, D.C.]

JESUS' BIRTH

The birth of Jesus was, well, *unique*. Jesus came into this world just like the rest of us, as a baby. That's right, the Savior of the World was a screaming, eating, pooping, burping, giggling, grinning baby.

But Jesus also came into this world unlike any other. Christians have believed and proclaimed throughout history that his mother, Mary, was a virgin and became pregnant not through sex but through the power and presence of the Holy Spirit. Actually, Mary was not even married when she found out she was going to give birth to the world's Messiah, which means "God's anointed."

Read these stories about Jesus' birth and beginnings. Luke 1-2:21 and John 1:1-18

Q1: Why do you think Jesus came into this world as a baby? How does this help you understand who God is and what God is up to?

Q2: Why do you think Jesus came into the world through a young, virgin woman like Mary? What about this part of the story do you find encouraging? What about this part of the birth story do you find perplexing? Consider the same when you think about lowly shepherds being the first to greet Jesus.

Q3: What do you notice about the songs of Mary (Luke 1:46-56) and Zechariah (Luke 1:67-80)? How do these lyrics illustrate the significance of Jesus?

Q4: CREDO CHALLENGE If you could write a 6-line poem or song about Jesus, what would you write? Bring with you to small group.

Q5: How does the Gospel of John describe Jesus's origin story? What are some of the words that John uses and why do you think John describes Jesus this way?

JESUS' LIFE

Christians too frequently jump right from Jesus' birth to his death and resurrection. We sometimes skip over the best part of the story: *Jesus lived*. And how Jesus lived and loved, spoke and served gives us a glimpse into how we are supposed to live, love, speak, and serve.

It is not possible to capture all that Jesus did while on earth in one paragraph. The Gospel of John says that if everything that Jesus did was to be written down, "I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written" (John 21:25). Jesus healed the sick, reached out to the poor and oppressed, hung out with the educated folks, taught about God and the kingdom, and even raised Lazarus from the dead. Here we get a small piece of what his ministry was like on earth. And Jesus' ministry on earth announced to all, and echoes even to this day, that God's dreams for a world made new, right, and whole again are breaking open. That is, if we have the eyes to see and the ears to hear.

Read ONE story from each of the FOUR gospel stories from Jesus' life:

- Matthew 5:1-16
- Matthew 14:22-33
- Mark 2:1-12
- Mark 3:1-12
- Mark 5:21-43
- Luke 6:27-36
- Luke 7:36-50
- John 4:1-42
- John 6:1-15
- John 7:53-8:11

Q 6: How do these stories describe Jesus' life? What do they illustrate about the kingdom of God and God's dreams for the world?

Q 7: What do the stories teach us about how we are to live in this world God made?

Q 8: What about these stories bring you hope? What about these stories do you find to be difficult?

JESUS' DISCIPLES

The twelve disciples were the men who lived and served alongside Jesus, his followers, when he walked the earth. But don't worry, Jesus had plenty of women who followed him, too. In fact, women were some of the more faithful contributors to Jesus' mission and also were the first to run, *versus hide like the men*, to the empty tomb. But we will get to that later. A disciple is someone who follows the ways and rhythms of a teacher. A disciple is called by this teacher to put into practice all they say and do, and to invite others to follow them. Jesus said it this way, *make disciples*. What's even better, the mark of a faithful disciple was when they had good questions. That's right, a good disciple had the best curiosities not the most polished answers. Just read about some of them and you may find some encouragement in your life as a disciple of Jesus.

Read Luke 9:1-6: The Mission of the Twelve

Q9: What did Jesus invite the disciples to do when he called them?

Q10: As you think about the life of Jesus and the mission of Jesus' disciples, what gifts, talents, passions, and concerns for others do you have that Jesus' may call you to use as you follow him?



Lesson 1.4: Jesus: What's with the Virgin Mother, Lullabies, and Miracles? Student Response Sheet

Before you begin this lesson talk to your family, maybe over dinner, about whom they believe Jesus is and why he is so significant the Christian faith. Include some the comments below:

Q1: Why do you think Jesus came into this world as a baby? How does this help you understand who God is and what God is up to?

Q2: Why do you think Jesus came into the world through a young, virgin woman like Mary? What about this part of the story do you find encouraging? What about this part of the birth story do you find perplexing? Consider the same when you think about lowly shepherds being the first to greet Jesus.

Q3: What do you notice about the songs of Mary (Luke 1:46-56) and Zechariah (Luke 1:67-80)? How do these lyrics illustrate the significance of Jesus?

Q4: CREDO CHALLENGE: Write a song or poem about who you think Jesus is and why Jesus is significant. Bring with you to small group.

Q5: How does the Gospel of John describe Jesus's origin story? What are some of the words that John uses and why do you think John describes Jesus this way?

Q 6: How do these stories describe Jesus' life? What do they illustrate about the kingdom of God and God's dreams for the world?



Q 7: What do the stories teach us about how we are to live in this world God made?

Q 8: What about these stories bring you hope? What about these stories do you find to be difficult?

Q9: What did Jesus invite the disciples to do when he called them?

Q10: As you think about the life of Jesus and the mission of Jesus' disciples, what gifts, talents, passions, and concerns for others do you have that Jesus' may call you to use as you follow him?



The Apostle's Creed was adopted by the early church in efforts to convey what they believed about God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, the church, and other elements of the faith. It is a *creed*, or confession of faith, which we still recite today. Throughout the year we will work on understanding this beautiful tradition within the community of Christian faith.

Read begin to memorize the first and second portions of the Apostles Creeds which describes what the church believes about Jesus.

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
Maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Ghost,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, dead, and buried;
He descended into hell.
On the third day he rose again from the dead;
He ascended into heaven,
And sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty,
From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting.
Amen.