

Jesus Christ: True God and True Man

Core Activity

Who Is Jesus?

1. Before the activity, write the following statements on the board, on newsprint, or on an overhead, highlighting the words in bold:

- **Yes**, I imagine Jesus this way.
- **No**, I do not usually think of Jesus this way.
- I haven't thought about Jesus in this way, but **this intrigues me**.
- I really **don't know** what this image or name means.

Also recruit one student to act as an observer, and review steps 3 and 4 with that person.

2. Introduce this activity by reading Luke 9:18–21. Explain that in this exercise, the students are to think about what they would say if Jesus asked them, "Who do you say that I am?"

3. Select and say one of the following titles, images, or descriptions of Jesus. Then read each of the four statements you have written on the board, and ask the students to raise their hands when they hear the statement that best describes their reaction to the title, image, or description of Jesus. Ask the observer to keep track of how many people raise their hands for each statement. After reading the statements, ask the students to discuss with one other person the reason they chose a particular response. Limit the discussions to 2 minutes. Repeat this process as time allows, trying to cover at least five titles, images, or descriptions.

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| • the Son of the living God | • a faithful Jewish man |
| • a good shepherd | • true God and true man |
| • the Messiah | • the Christ |
| • the light of the world | • the infant son of Mary and Joseph |
| • the bread of life | • the Savior |
| • the way, the truth, and the life | • a wise teacher |
| • a vine, with us as branches | • a friend |
| • the Lord | • the Word made flesh |

4. Ask the observer to share some general comments. For example, the observer could identify which images had the most youth responding, "Yes, I imagine Jesus this way," or, "I haven't thought about Jesus in this way, but this intrigues me." If the students demonstrate a preference for or a greater understanding of the more human images or the more divine images of Jesus, be sure to note that. If some images stand out because a lot of students chose "I really don't know what this image or name means," try to address those images.

5. Brainstorm with the young people a list of human attributes, such as having feelings, being born, aging, dying, eating and drinking, learning and growing over time, experiencing frustration, expressing anger, questioning the meaning of life, and loving. Limit the brainstorming to 2 minutes.

On the board, on newsprint, or on an overhead, generate a list of divine attributes, such as perfect goodness, having love for all, always existing, never dying, and being powerful. Again, limit the brainstorming to 2 minutes.

6. Lead a discussion of questions like these:
- What happens if we overemphasize Jesus' humanity?
 - What happens if we overemphasize Jesus' divinity?

(This activity is adapted from the *TC: Creed* manual.)

Core Activity Extension

Jesus' Names and Titles

1. As homework or class work, assign one of the following of Jesus' names or titles to each student or a group of students: Jesus, Christ, Son of God, and Lord.

2. Instruct the students to read two things:

- the description of their assigned name or title on pages 88–89 of *The Catholic Faith Handbook for Youth, Third Edition (CFH)*
- the following scriptural passage that uses their assigned title:
 - Jesus (Luke 1:26–31)
 - Christ (Mark 8:27–29)
 - Son of God (Mark 1:9–11)
 - Lord (John 20:24–29)

3. Invite the students to reflect on the meaning of their name or title as revealed in the *CFH* material and the scriptural passage. Have the students report back to the class or write a one-page reflection paper on what they learn.

(This activity is adapted from the *TC: Creed* manual.)

Additional Activities

We Call Him

1. Assign this exercise as homework or class work. Each student will need a *CFH* and a Bible. Tell everyone to divide a sheet of paper into three equal columns, each headed by one of the following sentence starters:

- Others call him . . .
- He calls himself . . .
- I call him . . .

Explain the task as follows:

- Under the heading “Others call him . . .,” list the titles and names for Jesus found in the section “Titles of Jesus in the Bible,” on pages 88–89 of the *CFH*.
- Under the heading “He calls himself . . .,” list all the “I am . . .” titles that Jesus gives himself in John’s Gospel, chapters 6–15. An example is “I am the bread of life” (6:35).
- Under the heading “I call him . . .,” list other names and titles for Jesus that say who Jesus is for you. Some examples are “Holy Friend” and “Brother of the Poor.”

2. Have the students report their findings to the class and share their own titles for Jesus.

(This activity is adapted from the *TC: Creed* manual.)

God Is Love

Lead the students in prayer by reading the Live It! article “One Solitary Life,” on page 107 of the *CFH*. Have one student read 1 John 4:7–12, and invite the class to offer Prayers of the Faithful, using “God is light and in him there is no darkness” (1 John 1:5) as a response. Conclude by praying a simple prayer in your own words or using the following words:

- Good and gracious God, we thank you for the gifts of life and love. Help us to live in your love and to share it with others in all we do. Amen.

(This activity is adapted from the *TC: Creed* manual.)

Living Advent

Instruct the students to read the accounts of the events surrounding Jesus’ birth in Matt., chaps. 1–2, and Luke, chaps. 1–2. Have them discuss the following questions in class or write a brief paper on them:

- What is the same in both Gospels? What is different?
- What elements of Jesus’ birth are found only in the Gospel of Luke? What elements are found only in the Gospel of Matthew?
- What elements in each of the Gospels emphasize Jesus’ humanity?
- What elements in each of the Gospels emphasize Jesus’ divinity?

(This activity is adapted from the *TC: Creed* manual.)

The Incarnation in Art

Display images of Jesus' Incarnation in painting and sculpture. Encourage the students to discuss the significance of the images, using questions such as these:

- Are the divinity and humanity of Jesus both represented?
- Is greater emphasis placed on Jesus' divinity or on his humanity?

Ask each student to write a brief essay or journal entry on one of the depictions of Jesus, reflecting on who the artist says Jesus is and on the significance the image has for the student. (This activity is adapted from the *TC: Creed* manual.)

(The material labeled *TC: Creed* is adapted from *Total Catechesis: Catechetical Sessions on the Creed*, by Maura Thompson Hagarty, Michael J. Hagarty, Marilyn Kielbasa, and Barbara Murray, in the Total Catechesis series [Winona, MN: Saint Mary's Press, 2004]. Copyright © 2004 by Saint Mary's Press. All rights reserved.

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