

WEEK 5: THE PERSON OF JESUS

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

Big Picture

This is where we're going... the big ideas you want people to understand more deeply during this session.

- Identity as a learner and servant
- Born of a virgin (Human)
- Baptized (Identified with Sinful Humanity)
- Led by the Spirit (Spirit-empowered)
- Tempted (Victorious over temptation/sinless life)
- Perfect Man (He did what Adam didn't do by overcoming the tempter and living a life of faith—perfect submission and obedience to the Father)

Set the Training Tone

You will not need to repeat this list every week, but be aware of these and reestablish the right tone as necessary.

- We are here to learn and change (not just a social time, but we also desire to grow closer and build community)
- Have fun, keep things moving and participatory.
- Welcome a challenge from me or others in the group (let's give each other permission to challenge us—probe, ask questions etc.).
- Strive to be honest and vulnerable and we should honor that by keeping what is shared in confidence.
- We are going to try and answer questions as much as possible from within the Story found in the Bible. Everything we need to learn about God and humans can be found right here in his Story!

Review Last Week's Story

- 📖 **Last Week...** We saw God lead his chosen people, Israel, out of horrible slavery in Egypt. He gave them instructions (Laws) on how to live close to him, in freedom, in a covenant relationship. He summed up these Laws in 10 commands, with the first being all-encompassing: **Put me (God) above everything else. Do not worship other things.**
- The people of God continued to rebel against him calling these Laws a new kind of slavery. But he loved his people and **God gave them a system of sacrifice** where they could substitute the life and blood of an innocent animal in place of their own life—the payment required for rebellion against God. God accepted this, but only as a symbol of what was to come...
- The people would come to God and worship him when they needed help, but when things were going well, they returned to worshipping other things. This was a time where everyone did what was right in their own eyes. **God foretold through Prophets of a coming savior**, a messiah who would save the people once and for all...
- **What are one or two big take-aways for you from last week?**

THE STORY & DIALOGUE

Scene 1 ~ The Birth of Jesus

Story from... Matthew 1–2 Luke 1–2

400 years passed since God had spoken to his people. The Israelites, called Jews, had been under the control of other nations for hundred of years. They were now ruled by Rome, the most powerful empire that the world had ever known. The Jews were still waiting and hoping for a king who would come to save them and lead them into victory.

Finally, God sent an angel to a young woman named Mary in the town of Nazareth. She was engaged to marry a man named Joseph who was a descendant of King David—a direct descendant of Abraham’s.

The angel told Mary that she would become pregnant and give birth to God’s Son—even though she was still a virgin! The angel revealed that this child in her was from the Holy Spirit and would become a king whose kingdom would never end!

Sure enough, the next year Mary gave birth to a son, whom they named Jesus, which means, “the Lord is salvation.” Not only did God reveal to Mary and Joseph that this boy was the long awaited Messiah king, but he revealed it to others, too. Angels shouted the news to shepherds who then ran into town to find the baby Jesus and tell everyone the amazing news! A star guided wise men from distant lands to come and worship and bring gifts to this newborn king. This birth was truly a miracle!

Jesus grew up in both height and wisdom, and was loved by God and everyone who knew him.

Scene 1 Dialogue ~ The Birth of Jesus

Remember this is a dialog, not a quiz. The “answers” below each question are there to help you as a leader guide the discussion toward some key ideas.

1. What was unique about Jesus’ birth?

2. Who was Jesus a descendant of? How might this be significant?

You may need to guide the discussion toward:

- King David / Abraham
- The Covenant being fulfilled
- Prophecy fulfilled.

3. What else did you hear in this story that reminds you of what the prophets said about the messiah?

- Born of a virgin in Bethlehem / Nazareth

4. Why might these things be important?

You may need to guide the discussion toward:

- His human, virgin birth shows that he is a human. It was predicted by the prophets that this would be true of the Messiah.

5. What does Jesus name mean? – The Lord is Salvation

Guide the conversation toward defining...

- *Lord. Lord of who...what?*
- *What is salvation? For who, from what? To what?*

Scene 2 ~ Jesus' Baptism

Story from... Matthew 3; Mark 1; Luke 3; John 1

God sent a messenger named John to tell people to get ready because the Messiah was coming. John was a distant cousin of Jesus, born just six months before him. He was a rugged man who lived in the wilderness, ate locusts and wild honey, and wore clothes made out of camel hair. John boldly challenged the Jews, *"Don't just say that you love God—prove it with your life. Turn from your sins and turn to God!"*

He became known as John the Baptizer as he dunked those who had confessed their sins in the Jordan River. Baptism was a symbol of being washed clean from your sins and choosing a new way of living. When Jewish leaders asked John if he was the Messiah, he responded, *"No! But someone is coming soon who is far greater than me—I'm not worthy to untie his sandals or even to be his slave. You see... I baptize with water, but he will baptize with God's Spirit!"*

Soon after that Jesus came to be baptized. When John saw him he said, *"I'm the one who needs to be baptized by you."* But Jesus insisted, so John baptized him in front of the crowds. When Jesus came out of the water, God's Spirit came down from the sky—it looked like a dove floating down and resting on him. Then a voice from heaven said, *"You are my son who I love—you bring me great joy!"*

Scene 2 Dialogue ~ Jesus' Baptism

6. What do we learn about John from this scene?

7. What was John's message?

8. Why were people coming to be baptized by John?

What did the Story say...?

9. What do you think is significant about God saying to Jesus, "This is my son who I love..."?

- *Declaring Jesus is his son! Son of God!!!*

10. What is God affirming for everyone publicly?

You may need to guide the discussion toward:

- *Jesus' identity!*

Scene 3 ~ Jesus' Temptation

Story from... Matthew 4; Luke 4

Immediately after being baptized, Jesus was led by God's Spirit to go into the wilderness. There, Satan tempted him for forty days and forty nights. During that entire time Jesus didn't eat anything and became very hungry. Satan tried to deceive Jesus saying, *"If you're God's Son, why don't you turn these rocks into loaves of bread to eat?"*

Jesus answered him, *"No! When God spoke to Moses he said, 'People need more than bread to live—they must find their life in the words of God.'"*

Then Satan took Jesus to the top of the tallest building in Jerusalem and said, *"If you are God's Son, jump off! Your sacred writings say, 'God will send his angels to catch you and you won't even hit the ground!'"*

Jesus replied, *"Moses also wrote, 'Do not even try to test God.'"*

Next, Satan took Jesus to the peak of a huge mountain. He showed him all of the nations of the world in their brilliance. He said, *"I will give you all of this—anything you want—if you'll kneel down and worship me."*

Jesus responded, *"Get away from me, Satan! It's commanded, 'Put God above everything else and only worship him!'"*

Then Satan went away and angels came and took care of Jesus. At this time he was about thirty years old. Throughout Jesus' life he never sinned or rebelled against God. He always chose to do what was good and right and perfect.

Scene 3 Dialogue ~ Jesus' Temptation

11. In your own words, what was Satan tempting Jesus with?

There are clues to this answer in how Jesus responds to each of Satan's temptations...

- *To trust in his own provision for himself—but God is the true provider
God is good—so we don't have to look elsewhere*
- *To test his faith/relationship with God—but God alone is trustworthy
God is great—so we don't have to be in control*
- *To gain Jesus' worship, away from God – but God alone is worthy to be worshipped
(where in the Story have we seen Satan try and do this before?)
God is glorious—so we don't have to fear others*

12. In your own words, what was Satan tempting Jesus with?

There are clues to this answer in how Jesus responds to each of Satan's temptations...

13. How did Jesus respond in this scene to Satan's temptations?

How is it different from Adam?

You may need to guide the discussion toward:

- *Resisted, and quoted God's words to Satan*

14. What is Satan challenging when he asks Jesus... "If you're the son of God...do this"?

You may need to guide the discussion toward:

- *His Identity!*

15. Where have we seen Satan challenge a person and tempt them before?

Did he challenge Eve's identity too?

You may need to guide the discussion toward:

- *"God just knows that you will be like him if you eat..." They were created in God's image! To be like him!*
- *Satan's scheme is always the same here—twist God's original words around and challenge our identity in God.*

16. What are your thoughts about the part of the Story where it said:

"Jesus never sinned or rebelled against God. He always chose to do what was good and right and perfect?"

17. From what we have seen and learned about humans so far, have we ever seen this before?

18. Have humans done well at managing good and evil, right and wrong?

But Jesus is a human...how could this be possible!? Only God does what is good, right and perfect. Only God has the ability to manage good and evil perfectly. Jesus would have to be God. He is God's son—both God and man.

Share this... And yet, even though he was sinless, Jesus was baptized to identify with sinful humanity.

19. [Icon] How well do you do at always choosing what is good and right and perfect?

20. [Icon] What do you think enabled Jesus to do this—live this way perfectly?

[Icon] [Resting Slide]

Scene 4 ~ Disciples

Story from... Matthew 4; Mark 1; Luke 5

Not long after that, John saw Jesus coming toward him and yelled out, *“Look! There is God’s Passover Lamb—he’ll take away the sins of the world! God showed me he’s the Messiah we’ve been waiting for—God’s own son!”*

As Jesus walked along the sea he told some of John’s followers, *“Come and follow me!”*

From then on Jesus surrounded himself with a few close followers, called disciples, showing them how to live in the ways of God. Then Jesus traveled throughout the area meeting in market places, homes and Jewish synagogues, teaching people God’s ways. He brought a new message to them saying, *“The Kingdom of God has come—now turn from your sins and turn to God!”*

Full of the Spirit’s power, Jesus healed people with every kind of sickness and disease. News spread quickly about him and huge crowds began following him wherever he went. People traveled from miles away to be near him and see the amazing miracles he performed.

Scene 4 Dialogue ~ Disciples

21. Why did John say, “Look! There is God’s Passover Lamb”?

22. What do you think the people thought of when he said this?

What are the implications of this claim about who Jesus is?

What details do you remember about the first Passover lamb from our previous stories?

23. Where in the Story today did we see God’s Spirit (the Holy Spirit) mentioned?

You may need to guide the discussion toward:

- *Mary becomes pregnant through the work of the Spirit*
- *At Jesus’ baptism*
- *The HS led Jesus out into the wilderness to be tempted*
- *Jesus did his miracle by the power of the Holy Spirit.*

24. Where do you think Jesus got his power to do miracles?

You may need to guide the discussion toward:

- *The Spirit of God that had descended on him—The Holy Spirit.*

25. What do we learn about the Holy Spirit from all of this?

You may need to guide the discussion toward:

- *The Father sent the Spirit.*
- *The Spirit has power and leads Jesus*

26. What do we learn about Jesus from this story (all four scenes)?

You may need to guide the discussion toward:

- *Jesus humbled himself.*
- *He is God and man.*
- *God called him his son who he loves.*
- *He never rebelled against God, living a sinless life.*
- *He has amazing powers.*
- *People wanted to be near him.*
- *He taught in new ways*

EXTENDING THE DIALOGUE

Using Media

Use of songs or artwork for further discussion...

Celebrate Immanuel's Name


Let's look at a really old and famous hymn written by Charles Wesley...

27. Immanuel was another name given to Jesus at his birth, does anyone know what that name means? God with us. ~ "God with us"

28. What do the two names Jesus: The Lord is salvation, and Immanuel: God with us, tell us about Jesus? His mission in life? How does this make you feel?

29. What other truths about Jesus do this song highlight? What jumps out at you?

Further Application

30.  If what we learned today about Jesus is true, how does/should it affect your life?

31.  How would it affect us as a community?

32.  How would it affect others... our neighborhood, our city?

WALKING IT OUT

The Walking It Out handout is tool to help us engage the Story individually and with others during the week. This session alone is not nearly enough for someone to be saturated in the Story and begin living out the implications of the Story in everyday life with a community.

As you distribute them...

point out a few key things from the handouts you as a leader have already found meaningful.