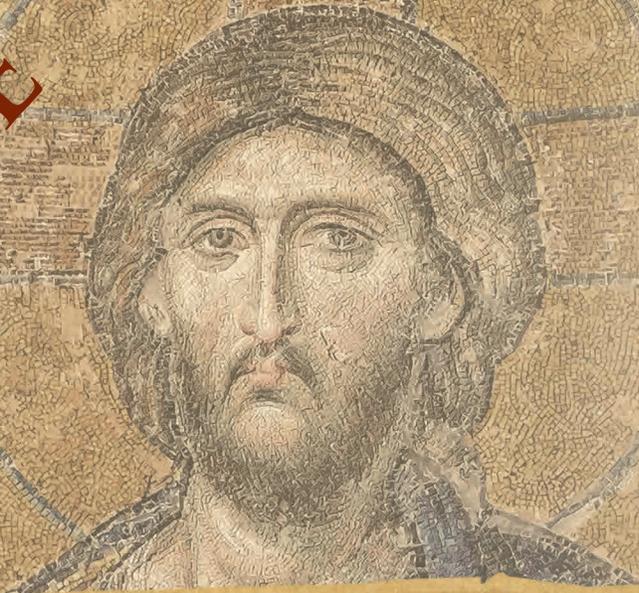




# SYMBOLON™

THE CATHOLIC FAITH EXPLAINED

SAMPLE

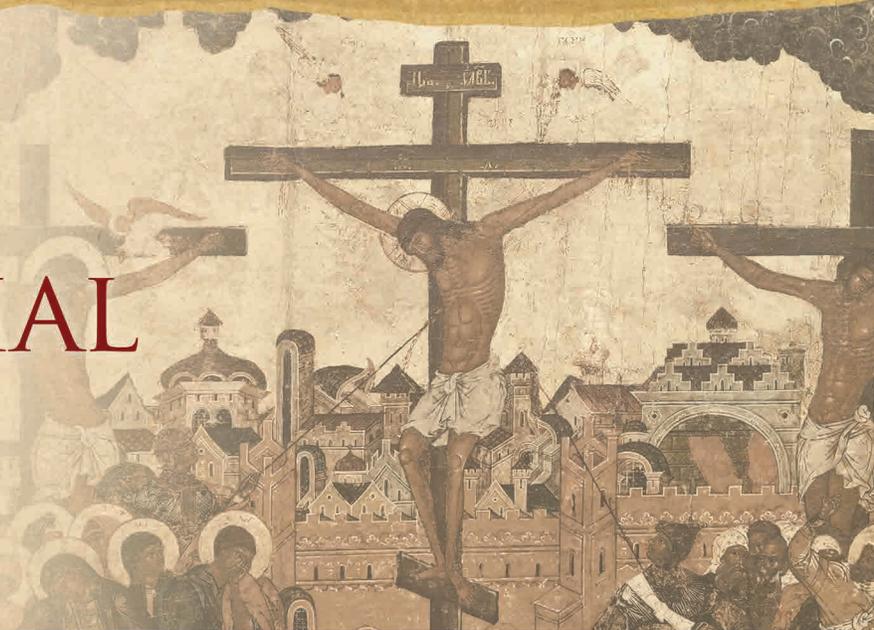


SESSION 5

## WHO IS JESUS?

SESSION 6

## THE PASCHAL MYSTERY



### LEADER'S GUIDE



AUGUSTINE INSTITUTE™





# SYMBOLON™

THE CATHOLIC FAITH EXPLAINED

LEADER'S GUIDE

---

SESSIONS 5 & 6

**Edward Sri**  
*General Editor*

Nihil obstat: Ben Akers, S.T.L.  
Imprimatur: Most Reverend Samuel J. Aquila, S.T.L., Archbishop of Denver  
August 1, 2013

Copyright © 2014 Augustine Institute. All rights reserved.  
With the exception of short excerpts used in articles and critical reviews, no part of this work may be reproduced, transmitted, or stored in any form whatsoever, printed or electronic, without the prior permission of the publisher.

Excerpts from the *Lectionary for Mass for Use in the Dioceses of the United States of America, second typical edition* © 2001, 1998, 1997, 1986, 1970 Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, Inc., Washington, D.C. Used with permission. All rights reserved. No portion of this text may be reproduced by any means without permission in writing from the copyright owner.

Some Scripture verses contained herein are from the Catholic Edition of the Revised Standard Version of the Bible, copyright ©1965, 1966 by the Division of Christian Educators of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

English translation of the Catechism of the Catholic Church for the United States of America, copyright ©1994, United States Catholic Conference, Inc.—Libreria Editrice Vaticana. English translation of the Catechism of the Catholic Church: Modification from the Editio Typica copyright ©1997, United States Catholic Conference, Inc.—Libreria Editrice Vaticana.

Writers: Woodeene Koenig-Bricker, Lucas Pollice, Edward Sri

Media/Print Production: Brenda Kraft, Justin Leddick, Kevin Mallory, John Schmidt

Graphic Design: Stacy Innerst, Nicole Skorka, Jeffrey Wright

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

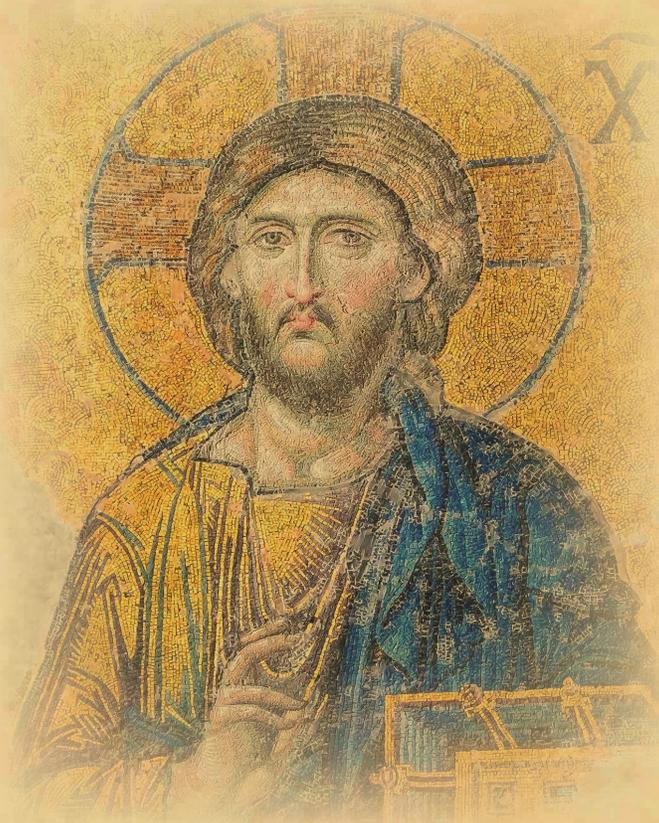
We would like to acknowledge with heartfelt gratitude the many catechists, teachers, and diocesan leaders from across the country that have given invaluable advice and guidance in the development of Symbolon:

Michael Andrews, Keith Borchers, Steve Bozza, Dr. Chris Burgwald, James Cavanagh, Chris Chapman, Fr. Dennis Gill, Jim Gontis, Dr. Tim Gray, Lisa Gulino, Mary Hanbury, Deacon Ray Helgeson, Dr. Sean Innerst, Ann Lankford, Deacon Kurt Lucas, Sean Martin, Martha Tonn, Kyle Neilson, Michelle Nilsson, Ken Ogorek, Dr. Claude Sasso, Scott Sollom, Deacon Jim Tighe, Mary Ann Weisinger, and Gloria Zapiain.

**Augustine Institute**  
6160 South Syracuse Way  
Greenwood Village, CO 80111  
Information: 303-937-4420  
SymbolonCatholic.org  
AugustineInstitute.org

Printed in the United States of America  
ISBN 978-0-9847868-6-2

# Session 5



WHO  
IS JESUS?



**SYMBOLON**  
THE CATHOLIC FAITH EXPLAINED

# WHO IS JESUS?

## Just a Good Man or Lord of Our Lives?



### LEADER PREPARATION OVERVIEW

**Who is Jesus?** Today most people agree that Jesus was a historical figure, a first-century Jew who was crucified by the Romans in the city of Jerusalem. Many would even agree that he offered some good moral teachings such as “love your neighbor,” “turn the other cheek,” and “don’t judge.” However, the idea that Jesus is not just a moral or spiritual teacher, but God himself, is as controversial now as it was in Jesus’ own time. It’s much easier to put Jesus into the same category as Buddha, or Mohammed, or Confucius—a spiritual messenger, a prophet, a philosopher, but certainly not divine.

However, that is exactly what Christians profess in the Creed—“I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages.” Jesus is not just someone sent from God; he himself is “God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father.”

This is not just something the early Christians invented. Jesus himself made the claim to divinity. If Jesus is not God, then, as C.S. Lewis famously noted, he is either a liar or a madman. But the fact that he did say that he was God, the I AM of the Old Testament, means that each of us is challenged to make a decision about what we believe. The question Jesus asked the apostles, “But who do you say that I am?” (Mark 8:29) is the same question he asks each of us throughout the centuries. How we answer his question makes all the difference for our lives. It is the fundamental decision each one of us must make—a decision that will last throughout eternity.

### THIS SESSION WILL COVER:

- **How, in the fullness of time, God has spoken to us through his Son, Jesus**
- **How Jesus, the second person of the Trinity, took on human nature without losing his divine nature**
- **That Jesus is the one and only mediator between God and man**
- **That Jesus is one divine person who possesses two natures**
- **Why Jesus became man so that we can be reconciled to God and to know God’s love**

# STEP # 1

## OPENING PRAYER



**SAY:** Welcome to our session on “Who is Jesus?” This week we are going to talk about Jesus. No one who has ever lived has had a greater impact on the world than Jesus of Nazareth, and the question of Jesus’ identity is central to our faith. Before we look more deeply into that question, let us begin by saying together the prayer of St. John Gabriel Perboyre, a French priest who died as a martyr in China on September 11, 1840.



O my Divine Savior,  
Transform me into yourself.  
May my hands be the hands of Jesus.  
Grant that every faculty of my body  
May serve only to glorify you.  
Above all,  
Transform my soul and all its powers  
So that my memory, will and affection  
May be the memory, will and affections  
Of Jesus.  
I pray you  
To destroy in me  
All that is not of you.  
Grant that I may live  
But in you, by you and for you,  
So that I may truly say,  
With St. Paul,  
‘I live—now not I—  
But Christ lives in me.’  
Amen.

## CELEBRATION OF THE WORD OF GOD

*(Optional)*

**Suggested Scripture readings for a  
Celebration of the Word of God**

*(see Introduction to Symbolon at  
[www.SymbolonCatholic.org](http://www.SymbolonCatholic.org))*

**John 14:10**

**John 17:5**

**Philippians 2:6**

**Luke 5:22-24**

## STEP #2

### INTRODUCTION



**SAY:** Many people today view Jesus as just one of the many great moral and religious teachers the world has offered. But Jesus himself claimed to be much more than that. He claimed to be God. As Christians, we profess that each time we say the Creed. But what does it really mean to say that Jesus is true God and true man?

**This week we are going to explore that question, as well as:**

- **What Jesus really taught about himself: who he was and where he came from**
- **Why it doesn't make sense to view Jesus as just a good moral or religious teacher**
- **Why it is fitting that God would become man**
- **And finally, the all-important decision Jesus challenges us to make about him**

**We will start by watching a short video.**

## STEP #3

### VIDEO PART I: WHO IS JESUS?



*Play DVD Part I, which will play for approximately 12 minutes.*



#### DIGGING DEEPER

##### Jesus Christ

We use the word “Christ” after the name of Jesus so often some people may think that was his last name, like Smith or Jones. But “Christ” isn’t a name; it’s a title, meaning “anointed one.” It comes from the Greek word *Christos*, which is a translation of the Hebrew word for Messiah. So, when we say Jesus Christ, we are really saying “Jesus, the Messiah”—the one anointed by God to accomplish his plan of salvation. It is a mini-statement of faith, an acknowledgement that Jesus is truly the Son of God.

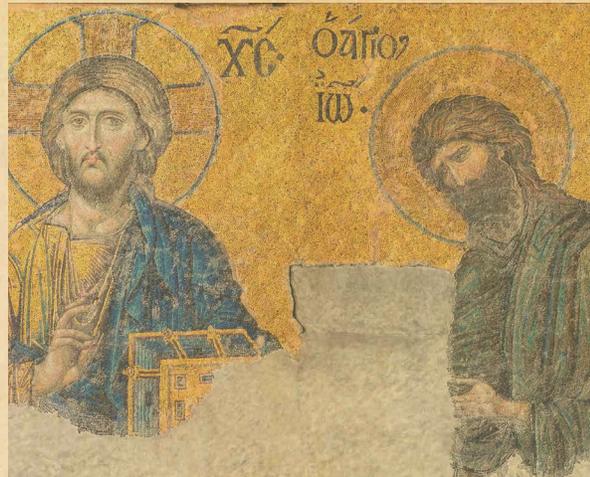
## STEP #4 PROCLAMATION

*After the video has stopped,*



**SAY:** We just heard how viewing Jesus merely as a good man or a great moral teacher isn't a logical option. As the presenter pointed out, Jesus claimed to be God. And that means we have to make a decision about him. Either Jesus is who he said he was—God, or he was knowingly trying to deceive people about his identity, in which case he is a liar. Or he was crazy and confused about his identity, and hence a lunatic. But simply saying Jesus was merely a good man or just a good teacher does not make much sense.

Jesus Christ, the second person of the Trinity, the divine Son of God, became incarnate, meaning he took on human flesh. In doing so, he assumed human nature without losing his divine nature. This means that Jesus is truly God and truly man. Because of this, he is the only mediator between God and humanity. The Son of God became man in Jesus Christ so that through his life, death, and resurrection we might be reconciled with God, know God's love, have the perfect model for holiness, and share in God's life. This mystery of Christ, the God-man, lies at the very heart of our Christian faith.



### DIGGING DEEPER

#### The God Who Is One of Us

Although today more people might deny Christ's divinity rather than his humanity, the opposite was true in the early years of the Church. Several early heresies (false teachings) claimed that Jesus only seemed to be human. Because belief in Jesus being both God and man is the cornerstone of our faith, the first Church fathers knew they had to clearly state the incredible mystery that Jesus is truly, fully human; that he is the God who is one of us in all things but sin.

## STEP # 5

### VIDEO PART II: JESUS—BOTH GOD AND MAN

 **SAY:** In our second video segment, we will hear what it means when we say that Jesus is both God and man and what that means in our lives today.

 *Play DVD Part II, which will play for approximately 19 minutes.*

## STEP # 6

### BREAK

*After stopping the video,*

 **SAY:** Now let's take a short break. When we come back, we will discuss some of the things we learned in this last video segment.

*Break should be about 10 minutes.*

## STEP # 7

### DISCUSSION

*Have participants refer to their Guides to find these questions.*

 **SAY:** Welcome back to our lesson on Jesus. Let's talk a bit about what we learned in the last video segment.

### DISCUSSION QUESTION #1

**According to the video, what are the three things Jesus did during his public ministry that point to his being truly God?**

#### LEADER'S TIPS:

*We can know that Jesus is truly God because:*

- **He does what only God can do, such as rebuke and calm the storm (Mark 4:39). Most importantly, Jesus was raised from the dead.**
- **He knows what only God can know. He reads people's hearts and minds and recounts their life stories (John 4:17-19).**
- **He tells us he is God by using the phrase "I AM" (John 8:58; see also: John 6:51, John 11:25, and John 14:6), which, in the original biblical language, is God's own name (Exodus 3:14).**

## DISCUSSION QUESTION #2

**What do you think it means for Jesus, the divine Son of God, to be truly and fully human? Can you imagine Jesus being tired, hungry, or angry? How does seeing Jesus as having all the same feelings and experiences you have (except for sin) change the way you tell him your needs and desires in prayer?**

### LEADER'S TIPS:

- **It is sometimes easier to think of Jesus in his divine nature, and not his human. It can be hard to imagine the divine Son of God being tired (even though he took a nap—Matthew 8:24), or hungry (even though he looked for ripe figs—Mark 11:12), or angry (even though he tossed the money changers out of the Temple—Matthew 21:12–13). Realizing that Jesus had similar feelings and experiences as the rest of us should give us the courage and confidence to approach him in prayer, knowing that he really will understand what we are going through.**
- **You may want to share Philippians 2:5–11, which describes how Jesus, though he was equal with God the Father, “emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men” and “humbled himself” to experience “even death on a cross.”**

## STEP # 8 (OPTIONAL) SUMMARY & EXHORTATION

*At this point, the facilitator, small group leader, or catechist has the option to give a summary of the main points that have been presented in the video segments. Here are some key points you may want to cover.*

- God spoke to his people through the prophets during the Old Testament times, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son (Hebrews 1:1-2; CCC 65).
- In the fullness of time, the divine Son of God became incarnate, meaning that he took on human flesh. In doing so, he assumed human nature without losing his divine nature (CCC 479).
- Jesus Christ is not part God, part man. He is truly God and truly man, in the unity of his divine person (CCC 464).
- Because Jesus is both God and man, he is the one and only mediator between God and man (CCC 480).
- The Son of God became man in order to save us by reconciling us with God, so that we might know God's love, to be our model of holiness, and to make us partakers of the divine nature (CCC 457-460).
- Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is one divine person who possesses two natures. He has a divine nature and a human nature, which are united in the one divine person. This mystery of Christ is the profound union of the divine and human natures in the one person of the Son (CCC 483).
- "After the Council of Chalcedon [451 AD], some made of Christ's human nature a kind of personal subject. Against them, the fifth ecumenical council, at Constantinople in 553 confessed that 'there is but one hypostasis [or person], which is our Lord Jesus Christ, one of the Trinity.' Thus everything in Christ's human nature is to be attributed to his divine person as its proper subject, not only his miracles but also his sufferings and even his death: 'He who was crucified in the flesh, our Lord Jesus Christ, is true God, Lord of glory, and one of the Holy Trinity'" (CCC 468).

## STEP #9

## CALL TO CONVERSION



**SAY:** Jesus asks each of us, “Who do you say that I am?” Let’s take a few minutes to consider how we can more fully welcome Jesus and his Lordship in our lives. Use your Guide to write down your thoughts and reflections on the following questions:

1. Prayerfully read the following quote from C.S. Lewis’ *Mere Christianity*, which was mentioned in the video and is found in your Guide.

*“I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: I’m ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don’t accept his claim to be God. That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic—on the level with the man who says he is a poached egg—or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse. You can shut him up for a fool, you can spit at him and kill him as a demon or you can fall at his feet and call him Lord and God, but let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about his being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to.”* (C.S. Lewis was an Oxford professor and a famous 20th century defender of the Christian faith. He is also the author of *The Chronicles of Narnia*.)

Now, prayerfully imagine Jesus standing before you and asking you the question he asked his Apostles: “Who do you say that I am?” How would you answer him?

2. Jesus tells us to “seek first his kingdom and his righteousness” (Matthew 6:33). What do you seek first in your life? Do you truly put Jesus first in your life? Or do you seek other things to fulfill you, and have God as just a part of your life?
3. Allowing Jesus to reign over our lives as Lord requires submitting our will to his. It means following his teachings, living the way he wants us to live, and trusting that he knows and desires what is best for us. Write down one or two areas in your life where the way you are living now could be more in line with Jesus’ teachings. What can you do this week to begin living more with Jesus as Lord of your life?

## STEP # 10

### CLOSING PRAYER



**SAY:** I hope you take time this week to reflect on who Jesus is and what he means in your life.



Let's close our time together today by praying a prayer of self-dedication written by St. Ignatius of Loyola, founder of the Jesuits.

Take, O Lord, and receive my entire liberty,  
my memory, my understanding and my whole will.  
All that I am and all that I possess you have given me:  
I surrender it all to you to be disposed of according to your will.  
Give me only your love and your grace;  
with these I will be rich enough, and will desire nothing more.  
Amen.



#### FOR FURTHER READING

For more in-depth reading about Jesus, see the following Catechism passages:

**Jesus Christ: "Mediator and fullness of all revelation": CCC 65-67**

**True God and true man: CCC 464-469, 479-483**

**Jesus reconciles us with God: CCC 457-460**

**The two natures of Jesus: CCC 470-478**

#### Other Resources:

*United States Catholic Catechism for Adults*, Chapter 7

*Jesus of Nazareth* (three volumes) by Pope Benedict XVI

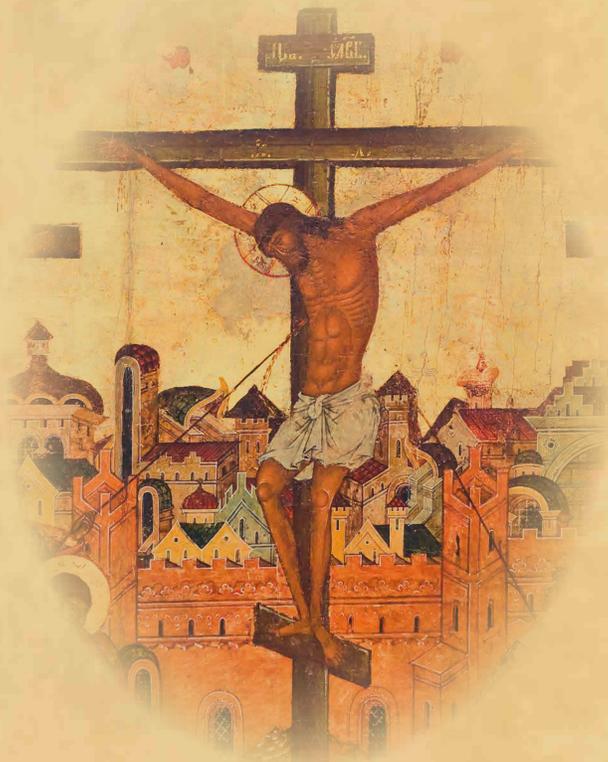
*Mere Christianity* by C.S. Lewis

*The Life of Christ* by Venerable Fulton Sheen

*To Know Jesus Christ* by Frank Sheed

*Made for More* by Curtis Martin

# Session 6



## THE PASCHAL MYSTERY



**SYMBOLON**  
THE CATHOLIC FAITH EXPLAINED

# THE PASCHAL MYSTERY: The Mystery of Jesus' Death and Resurrection



## LEADER PREPARATION OVERVIEW

**Perhaps the cross of Jesus** has become almost too familiar. Some of us might see images of crosses and crucifixes so often, we may not realize that in the ancient world, the cross was a horrifying image—a little like an electric chair is today. Yet, the cross is the primary symbol of our faith, through which Jesus has given us the gift of salvation and eternal life. An ancient Roman wearing a cross around his neck like jewelry would be like us wearing a little electric chair around our necks. It would not only be bizarre; it would be shocking and appalling to the people around us. Yet the cross is the primary symbol of our faith. It is through Jesus' death on that instrument of torture that he gave us the gift of salvation and eternal life.

We call Jesus' work of redemption, accomplished principally through his passion, death, Resurrection and Ascension into heaven, the Paschal Mystery. The word *Paschal* refers to Jesus' offering of his life as the new Passover (or Paschal) lamb for our salvation. We express this in the Mass when we say, "We proclaim your Death, O Lord, and profess your Resurrection until you come again." Underlying the Paschal mystery is one fundamental reality: Jesus gives himself completely in love to the Father on our behalf to restore our relationship with God. And Jesus, through his death on the cross, also reveals to us that we are all called to the sacrificial love that leads to true happiness here on earth and eternal joy in the next life.

## THIS SESSION WILL COVER:

- **How the Cross "works"—how it brings about our salvation**
- **How Christ, being fully human and fully divine, was able to heal our relationship with God through his sacrificial death**
- **The meaning of Jesus going to the realm of the dead and opening heaven's gates**
- **That by his death, Jesus liberates us from sin**
- **That by his Resurrection, he opens us to new life**
- **How Jesus invites us to unite our entire lives with his self-giving love on the cross**

# STEP # 1

## OPENING PRAYER



**SAY:** Welcome to our session on the Paschal Mystery.

This week as we learn more about the death and Resurrection of Our Lord, let us open our hearts and minds to the Mystery of Jesus' death and Resurrection in prayer:



Hail, sweet Jesus!

Praise, honor, and glory be to you,  
O Christ, who of your own accord  
did embrace death,

and, recommending yourself  
to your heavenly Father,  
bowing down your venerable head,  
did yield up your spirit.

Truly thus giving up your life for your  
sheep, You have shown yourself  
to be a good shepherd.

You did die, O only-begotten Son of God.

You did die, O my beloved Savior,  
that I might live forever.

O how great hope,  
how great confidence have I reposed in  
your death and your Blood!

I glorify and praise your Holy Name,  
acknowledging my infinite obligations to you.

O good Jesus,  
by your bitter death and Passion,  
give me grace and pardon.

Give unto the faithful departed rest and life everlasting.

Amen. —Dom Augustine Baker, 1575–1641

### CELEBRATION OF THE WORD OF GOD

*(Optional)*

**Suggested Scripture readings for a  
Celebration of the Word of God**

*(see Introduction to Symbolon at  
[www.SymbolonCatholic.org](http://www.SymbolonCatholic.org))*

**Philippians 2:6-11**

**Ephesians 2:1-8**

**1 Corinthians 1:18-25**

**Romans 5:9-17**

## STEP #2

### INTRODUCTION

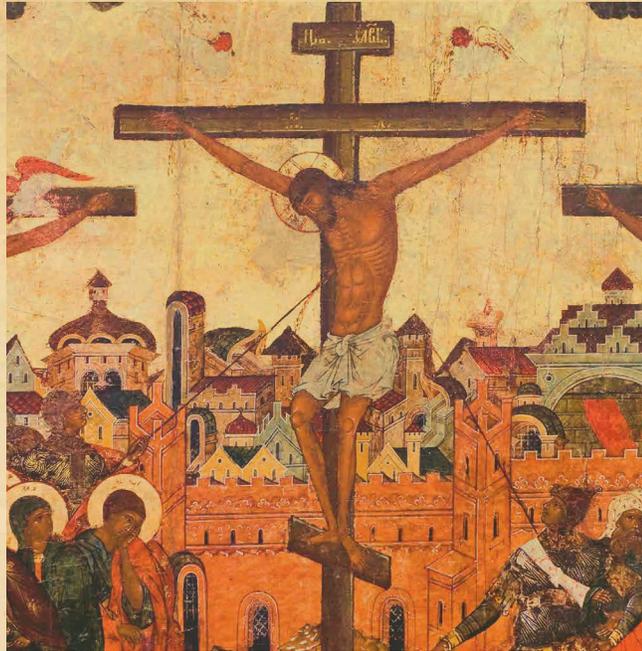


**SAY:** Have you ever seen people wearing a cross or a crucifix? Have you ever stopped to consider just how shocking and appalling it would have been in ancient times to wear the symbol of capital punishment around one's neck? And yet, it is through that cross that we are saved. It has become a sign, not of death, but of eternal life.

**This week we are going to explore some of the central mysteries of our faith:**

- **Christians say Jesus died for our sins. But why did he have to die for the sins we committed?**
- **Why saying in the Creed that Jesus “descended into hell” doesn’t mean he was visiting the devil**
- **How we can be sure Jesus really rose from the dead and it wasn’t all just a giant hoax**

**We will start by watching a short video.**



### DIGGING DEEPER

#### Crucifixion

Because crucifixion is so far removed from our experience, it may seem that Jesus was the only person to be crucified. Nothing could be further from the truth. Thousands were killed in this manner, because crucifixion was the standard means of executing criminals from about the 6th century BC until 337 AD when the Emperor Constantine I forbade its use in the Roman Empire. In 1968, the bones of a crucified man were discovered in Jerusalem, in a stone box used to preserve bones. Archaeologists were able to determine the man had been crucified because his heel bone still had a nail driven through its side. In addition, his legs were broken to hasten death, just as John 19:31-35 describes happening to the people crucified next to Jesus.

## STEP #3

### VIDEO PART I: THE MYSTERY OF THE CROSS



Play DVD Part I, which will play for approximately 10 minutes.

## STEP #4

### PROCLAMATION

*After the video has stopped,*



**SAY:** We just heard how the Gospel message of Jesus' crucifixion would have been appalling and shocking to citizens of the Roman world. We also learned that Jesus' last words, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" were not a cry of despair, but a prayer of hope that God's will for all of humanity was being accomplished. And finally, we explored some of the reasons Jesus had to die in order for us to be saved.

No human being, even the holiest, could take on the sins of all humanity and become a sacrifice for all. Only Jesus, the divine Son of God who became man, could offer his life as a redemptive sacrifice that liberates the human family from sin. Jesus is able to do this because he is both fully human, and thus able to offer an act of love on our behalf, and fully divine, making his act on the cross a perfect, infinite gift of love that restores our relationship to God. By his Resurrection, he opens the way for us to become sons and daughters of God. By his Ascension, Jesus precedes us into his Father's kingdom.



#### DIGGING DEEPER

##### Sheol, the Place of the Dead

Scripture calls the abode of the dead, to which the dead Christ went down, "hell"—Sheol in Hebrew or Hades in Greek—because those who are there are deprived of the vision of God. Such is the case for all the dead, whether evil or righteous, while they await the Redeemer...Jesus did not descend into hell to deliver the damned, nor to destroy the hell of damnation, but to free the just who had gone before him....The descent into hell brings the Gospel message of salvation to complete fulfillment. This is the last phase of Jesus' messianic mission, a phase that is condensed in time but vast in its real significance: the spread of Christ's redemptive work to all men of all times and all places, for all who are saved have been made sharers in the redemption (CCC 633-634).

## STEP # 5

### VIDEO PART II: GOD'S SACRIFICIAL LOVE



**SAY:** In our second video, we are going to look at what Jesus' death and Resurrection mean in our lives today.



*Play DVD Part II, which will play for approximately 23 minutes.*

## STEP # 6

### BREAK

*After stopping the video,*



**SAY:** Now let's take a short break. When we come back, we are going to discuss some of the things we learned in this last video segment.

*Break should be about 10 minutes.*

## STEP # 7

### DISCUSSION

*Have participants refer to the handout to find these questions.*



**SAY:** Welcome back to our session on the Paschal Mystery. Let's talk a bit about what we learned in the last video segment.

### DISCUSSION QUESTION #1

**Scripture tells us that the Son of God humbled himself to become man, and was obedient to the Father even to his death on the cross (Philippians 2:5-11). What does God's willingness to enter our world, embrace our humanity, and die for our sins tell us about God's love for us? How can Jesus' self-sacrificial love be an example for our lives?**

#### LEADER'S TIPS:

- **Because the importance of Jesus' self-sacrifice and death are so essential to building a foundation of faith, allow time for participants to consider these questions in some depth.**
- **Some points that you may want to bring out include: God's love is so profound, he would do anything—even die—so that we might be with him. Jesus shows us that dying to our own selfish desires is the key to true love. When we love as God loves, we are willing to accept whatever cross God desires to give us, trusting that it is all part of his plan for our salvation.**

## DISCUSSION QUESTION #2

**According to the video, what does it mean when we say in the Creed that Jesus descended into hell?**

### LEADER'S TIP:

- **When we proclaim that Jesus descended into hell, we don't mean he visited the place of eternal damnation. Rather we mean that he came to the place of the dead, the place where souls of those who died before Jesus came to earth were waiting. He proclaimed the Good News to them, thus offering salvation to all who have lived, regardless of their time in history.**

## STEP # 8 (OPTIONAL) SUMMARY & EXHORTATION

*At this point, the facilitator, small group leader, or catechist has the option to give a summary of the main points that have been presented in the video segments. Here are some key points you may want to cover.*

- No mere human being, even the holiest, would ever be able to take on the sins of all humanity and offer himself as a sacrifice for all (CCC 616).
- Jesus Christ is both God and man (CCC 240-242, 455).
- Fully human, Jesus can represent the human family and offer a gift of love on behalf of all humanity. Since he is also fully divine, his gift of love takes on infinite value—offering the perfect, redemptive sacrifice for all (CCC 616).
- When we say Jesus “descended into hell” in the Creed, this does not refer to the place of damnation, but the realm of the dead...Jesus in his human soul united to his divine person went to the realm of the dead and opened heaven's gates for the just who had gone before him (CCC 637).
- Jesus truly rose from the dead (CCC 693).
- By his death, Jesus liberates us from sin. By his Resurrection, he opens for us the way to new life in him that we may become sons and daughters of God and have eternal life (CCC 654).
- By his Ascension into heaven, Jesus precedes us into his Father's glorious kingdom in heaven (CCC 666).
- Jesus invites us to participate in the mystery of his death and Resurrection by uniting our entire lives—our daily works, joys, and sufferings—with the cross of Christ (CCC 618).

## STEP #9 CALL TO CONVERSION



**SAY:** Spend a few moments reflecting on what the death and Resurrection of Jesus means to you. Use your Guide to write down your thoughts and reflections on the following questions:

1. Have you ever considered what it means that Jesus died for you and paid the price for your sins? Take a few minutes now to thank him for the great gift that he gave you. You may want to silently pray the following prayer called the Act of Contrition, which expresses heartfelt sorrow for our sins:

*My God, I am sorry for my sins with all my heart. In choosing to do wrong and failing to do good, I have sinned against you whom I should love above all things. I firmly intend, with your help, to do penance, to sin no more, and to avoid whatever leads me to sin. Our Savior Jesus Christ suffered and died for us. In His name, my God, have mercy. Amen.*

2. In the video, we heard that because we live in a broken world, we should never ask, “Will I suffer?” but rather “What will I do when I suffer?” As Peter says, “Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you” (2 Peter 4:12). In fact, Jesus himself entered our humanity and has shared in our suffering. And he wants to be with us to help us in the midst of our trials. What do you do when you encounter suffering in your life? Do you turn to God or do you turn away from God? Make a commitment now to turn to God for help the next time suffering enters your life.
3. Reflect on the following quote:

*“Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me.” —Luke 9:23*

Consider some ways you can imitate Christ’s sacrificial love more in your life. For example, how can you be more generous in your relationship with God? What are some ways you can deny yourself—your time, comfort, or desires—and make sacrifices to serve better the people God has placed in your life?

## STEP # 10

### CLOSING PRAYER



**SAY:** I hope you take time this week to reflect on the great mysteries of our faith—the death and Resurrection of the Lord.



Let's close our time together today by joining our suffering with that of Jesus.

O Jesus, you have called me to suffer  
because you on your part suffered for me,  
leaving me an example that I might follow.  
When you were insulted,  
you did not return the insult.  
When you were mistreated,  
you did not counter with threats  
but entrusted yourself to the One who judges justly.  
By your wounds we are healed.  
Help me to imitate you in suffering.  
Let me break with sin by means of my sufferings,  
so that I may no longer live  
according to the lusts of sinners  
but according to the will of the Father.  
Since you yourself have suffered and been tempted,  
I know that you are able to bring aid  
to all who suffer and are tempted.  
I entrust myself to you and to the Father, my Creator,  
knowing that you will never fail me. Amen.

—Prayer to Imitate the Suffering Christ  
<http://www.2heartsnetwork.org/wounds.htm>.



### FOR FURTHER READING

For more in-depth reading about Jesus, see the following Catechism passages:

**The Trinity:** CCC 238-248, 452-455

**Value of Christ's sacrifice:** CCC 616-617

**The descent into hell:** CCC 632-635

**The meaning of the Resurrection:** CCC 651-655

**Jesus precedes us into heaven:** CCC 665-667

**Our participation in Christ's sacrifice:** CCC 618

#### Other Resources:

*United States Catholic Catechism for Adults*, Chapter 8

*Jesus of Nazareth: Holy Week* by Pope Benedict XVI

*Making Sense Out of Suffering* by Peter Kreeft





