



SESSION 9 MORE

GOAL

The goal of this session is to introduce Jesus as teacher, healer, and exorcist, which leads to the conclusion that Jesus must also be Savior. The teens will also be challenged to personally answer the question, “Who do you say I am?”

KEY CONCEPTS

Jesus’ mission was to bring about the Kingdom of God. He did so by teaching, working miracles, and, most importantly, forgiving sins.

Jesus came for the meek: those questioning the existence of God, the sinners, the broken-hearted, the enslaved, the overlooked.

Jesus asks us, “Who do you say I am?” We must offer a response; our response determines our relationship with Him.

KEY TERMS

Kingdom of God: The reign or rule of God. The Kingdom of God draws near with the coming of the Incarnate Word; it is announced in the Gospel; it is the messianic Kingdom, present in the person of Jesus, the Messiah; it remains in our midst in the Eucharist.

Savior: Jesus (which means “God saves” in Hebrew). The Son of God became man to achieve our salvation; He is the unique savior of humanity.

SCRIPTURE: Luke 5:17-26, Luke 17:11-19, Matthew 4:17-23, Matthew 5:1-12, Matthew 8:28-32, Matthew 16:13-20

CATECHISM: 541, 547-549

ABOUT THIS CONFIRMATION SESSION

The Engage is a modified *Summit* session followed by a celebrity-focused game of 20 questions. The Reflect discusses the revelation of Jesus as Savior and how we must respond to this revelation. The Respond gives the teens an opportunity to share the good qualities they see in each other, followed by a period of silent prayer and reflection on the Beatitudes and the question from the Gospel of Matthew, “Who do you say I am?” The session ends with the Come, Holy Spirit prayer.

ENVIRONMENT

Gather in a comfortable environment where you all are able to sit in a circle facing one another. Consider meeting somewhere at the parish or at a local coffee shop, but always consult and follow your diocesan safe environment rules.

MEDIA SUGGESTIONS

Purpose Video: “Who Do You Say I Am?” (resources.lifeteen.com)

ENGAGE

Welcome and Opening Prayer (5 min)

Welcome the teens to the session, and begin in prayer.

Summit (20 min)

Use the modified *Summit* session to lead the teens through a lectio divina based reflection on the Sunday readings.

Who Is It? (15 min)

Invite a core member to begin the game of 20 questions by choosing a celebrity they know well and challenging the teens to guess who it is. The teens can only ask a total of 20 yes or no before they guess the name of the person. Continue playing for as long as time allows, inviting the teens to take turns choosing a celebrity.

REFLECT

“*More*” Teaching (20 min)

Use the following as a guide for a time of reflection:

Reputation

Has someone ever said something about you that was not true? Have you ever been accused of doing something you did not do? Have your actions ever been misinterpreted?

Some people looked at Jesus on the cross and saw a criminal. Others saw a zealous revolutionary. Still others saw the one who loved them. If a man was put to death in a gruesome manner, do you think he would want his final action to be misinterpreted?

Before Jesus died on the cross, He lived.

Jesus Was a Preacher

Jesus’ public life began with His proclamation of the Kingdom of God. His first teaching was to “repent for the Kingdom of God is at hand” (Matthew 4:17). He wanted us to return to God, to return to His love and plan for our lives.

CCC 541

Jesus’ proclamations were followed by teachings. He taught in synagogues and public places. He taught us to pray — to ask, seek, and knock — and to trust the Father with our needs. He taught us not to judge or retaliate and to love our neighbors as ourselves. He also taught us to love our enemies. He spoke with authority, and those who listened were amazed. He developed a reputation, and crowds began to follow Him.

Matthew 4:23, 7

- What are some things you do that define a part of who you are?
- If you were to look at your life from the outside, what would people say about who you are?

- What is the first thing that comes to mind when you think of the things Jesus did or who He was?

One day, upon seeing the crowds, Jesus gave His most well-known teaching on the Kingdom He came to establish.

Read Matthew 5:1-11.

The Beatitudes communicate Jesus' vision of the Kingdom of God, an extraordinarily upside-down Kingdom. The Kingdom of God does not favor those in power — religious, political, and civil leaders — but, rather, favors:

- The Poor in Spirit: Those who “just do not get the whole God thing,” those who leave Adoration wondering what it was that happened that everyone else got to experience but they were left out of, and those who have yet to consider the existence of a God who loves them.
- Those who Mourn: Those who come from a troubled family, those who are going through a break-up, those who have lost loved ones, and those who are suffering from illness.
- The Meek: Those who go unnoticed, whose power is not found in conventional strength but in their reliance wholly on God.

If you are questioning the existence of God, if you are broken-hearted or feel overlooked, God sees you. He meets you in your poverty and makes you whole. The Kingdom of God favors you. You belong in the Kingdom.

When God works miracles in our poverty, mess, and ache, our view of others who are in the middle of their messy and hurting lives changes, as well. We begin to judge less and see ourselves in others who are struggling. We extend compassion and lead them to the same grace we received when we were in need. We become more merciful and pure in heart because we seek to lead others to the same refuge amidst the storms that we have come to know. Soon, a new community is formed, a community with God as its center and king: the Kingdom of God.

- Who do you know that is a good example of someone who shows God's love, even in a messy situation? Explain.
- Is it easy for you to believe that, even if you are hurting, broken, or struggling, you are a part of the Kingdom of God? Why?

Jesus Was a Healer

Jesus not only taught about the Kingdom of God; He also made it manifest through His miracles. Scripture is full of accounts of Jesus healing lepers and paralytics as well as the woman with the hemorrhage, the man with a withered hand, the crippled woman, the man with dropsy, the man at the pool of Bethzatha, and so many more.

CCC 547-548; Luke 17:11-19; Matthew 8:1-4, 9:1-8, 9:20-22, 12:9-3, 20:29-34

Read Matthew 9:27-30.

Two blind men followed Jesus as He passed by. It was a crowded, public street that was likely very loud. Yet, they followed Jesus and were healed.

Jesus' words not only speak of peace; they are also accompanied by actions that bring about peace. What was once broken is made whole. What was once tragic is rejoiced over. Panic and discord are brought to peace and restoration.

- If you could have witnessed Jesus working a miracle, which miracle would you have wanted to see?
- Do you believe Jesus can work miracles? Why?
- When Jesus worked miracles, what was His end goal for the person? Was it just a physical healing or something more?

Jesus Was an Exorcist

Jesus' miracles were not limited to the physical world, as He also cured those who were suffering from spiritual ailments. One day while preaching in a synagogue, an unclean spirit cried out of a man, "What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us?" (Mark 1:24). Jesus rebuked the demon and set the man free. Later, Jesus delivered a boy who suffered from a demon that was trying to throw him in the fire. Jesus even cast out several demons from the demoniacs and threw them into a herd of swine.

CCC 549; Mark 1:21-28; Matthew 8:28-32, 17:14-20

Read Matthew 8:28-32.

Jesus not only has the power of the natural world, but He also has the power of the supernatural world. This is seen most clearly in the Gospel of Luke when the friends of a paralytic fight to bring him to Jesus and ask for His healing. Jesus then claims and demonstrates the power to forgive sins.

CCC 547-549

Read Luke 5:17-26.

Only God can forgive sins, so is Jesus God?

- What do we learn about Jesus' power in the way He casts out demons and forgives sins? Why is this important?
- How do we experience the power of Jesus to forgive sins in our lives?

Jesus Is the Christ

As news of Jesus' preaching, healings, deliverances, and forgiveness of sins spread, His reputation grew and more and more people began to look for Him and follow Him. However, not everyone was pleased by His actions. People started questioning where He got His power. Did He deliver demons by the power of Beelzebul, the prince of demons? The Roman authorities thought He was causing unrest and threatening the status quo, thus He needed to be destroyed. The religious leaders were threatened by Jesus because He put their authority and security at risk, so they plotted to stop Him, as well. There was likely another extreme, too: people tuning Him out altogether.

Luke 11:14, Mark 3:6

In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus wonders if the crowds are understanding His teaching on the Kingdom of God. He asks His disciples who people say He is. His disciples inform Him that some think He is a prophet, teacher, or miracle worker. None of these answers are fully correct. Then He asks, “Who do you say I am?” Peter declares, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God” (Matthew 16:16). Peter is right. Jesus is the Savior: the one who teaches, heals, delivers, and saves us from the greatest evil of all, sin.

Matthew 16:13-20

Who Do You Say Jesus Is?

Jesus asks for a response from each of us to the revelation of His identity as our Savior. Who do you say Jesus is? How would you respond to this question?

Have you tuned Jesus out? Have you heard so many inconsequential facts about Him that you simply pass by the idea that He might be everything you are searching for? That He might be the one you desire to see you, notice you, and make you whole?

Does the idea of Jesus threaten your status quo, security, comfort, and preferences? If Jesus is God, does that mean you will have to change?

Have you been so deeply hurt or ostracized that you do not believe there could be a God who favors you?

If we acknowledge that Jesus is God, our lives have to change. We have to deny ourselves, pick up our crosses daily, and follow Him. However, it is not all suffering and sadness. There is also tremendous peace, wholeness, and beauty to be found.

Luke 9:23

- If someone were to ask you right now who Jesus is, what would you say?

No Room for Misinterpretation

Jesus’ final and definitive action was to die a gruesome death on the cross and save humanity from the bondage of sin. His life leaves no room for misinterpretation of His identity and definitive action: Jesus is God, a God who saves.

2 Corinthians 5:21, Romans 6:23

A man died on the cross and said He did it so we might live. Should we not at least consider who He is? What would you want if your reputation was on the line?

- Are teens in your generation open to learning more about Jesus? Why?
- Are you open to considering who Jesus really is? Explain.
- What difference does it make that Jesus is more than just a teacher or a good guy, that He is God?

RESPOND

Who Do You Say I Am? Activity (15 min)

Give each teen a stack of sticky notes and a pen. Use the following questions as prompts, and have the teens add a word to complete the prompts for each teen in the group.

- The best quality I see in you is _____.
- My favorite part of talking to you is _____.

Have the teens post the sticky notes on the back of the person they wrote about. Give the teens a few minutes to get the sticky notes off their back and read all of the nice things the other teens wrote about them.

Who Do You Say I Am? (15 min)

Transition into a time of prayer by asking the teens to clear their space, sit up straight, and take a few deep breaths. Use the following to transition into the time of prayer:

We can learn a lot about ourselves through the honest and loving perspective of people who really know who we are, but we can learn even more about ourselves when we take time to reflect on who we are and how God is working in our lives. It is important that we learn to take an honest and loving look at ourselves and where we most need God in our lives.

Give each teen a Bible, a pen, and a copy of the *Who Do You Say I Am?* handout. Invite the teens to prayerfully work through the handout. If time allows, have the teens share their reflections with a partner or the rest of the group.

Closing Prayer (5 min)

Pray the Come, Holy Spirit prayer together, and give any final comments or instructions for upcoming meetings.

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love. Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created. And you shall renew the face of the Earth. O, God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit, did instruct the hearts of the faithful, grant that by the same Holy Spirit we may be truly wise and ever enjoy His consolations, through Christ, our Lord. Amen.