

10 — Jesus Is the Word of God

Objectives

By the end of this lesson students will be able to ...

- state that people are unable to save themselves from sin.
- explain why humanity needed a Savior to heal its brokenness.
- state that God sent His Son Jesus Who is the Word of God.
- recognize that through the birth of Christ, the universe was renewed, sanctified, and recreated.
- explain that "*For He was made man that we might be made God*" (St. Athanasius)
- realize that in the Church we come to know and accept God's saving power in Jesus Christ.

For the Catechist

The Christian worldview recognizes God's creation as good but fallen. Everything that He made has been distorted by our sins and ultimately by the power of the Evil One. Even though men and women are made in God's image, they are unable to rise above sin. In our understanding of the world, only Christ can save us from the power of sin and death. As the only begotten Son and Word of God, He actually joins God and man together in the person of Jesus Christ. The birth of Christ bridges the human and the divine. That is the focus of this unit—our re-creation through Jesus Christ.

In His Son Jesus, God gives a relationship greater than the relationship in the Garden. St. Athanasius tells us, "*For He was made man that we might be made God*" In taking on our nature, Christ made it possible for us to take on His divinity and share in His nature by adoption. By becoming part of our world, Christ transforms it and makes it capable of union with Him. This is the nature of our salvation. We are united with the very person of God in Jesus Christ—God Is with Us!

This lesson is the first one for this unit entitled "Re-Creation." Christ's birth heralded a "New Creation," and Christ is recognized as the "New Adam." Throughout this unit help the students recognize and accept the new life Jesus Christ has given them. Help them learn through prayer and the sacramental life to grow in their relationship with Christ.

Materials Needed

Opening Prayer: Nativity of Christ Icon (#39—*Come Bless the Lord*), Vespers folder

Review: Easel or wall pad and markers

Introduction: Chalkboard and chalk or paper and pen

Guided Reading: student text, pens and pencils, paper

Vespers: Folders, prayer sheets, tape or glue, scissors

Activity A: "Journal," and Journal folders and pens or pencils

Closing Prayer: Vespers folders

1. Opening Prayer

- Gather around the Nativity icon.
- Pray the beginning prayers up to Psalm 103 (104) in the Vespers folder.

2. Review

Review the main points of the previous lesson:

- recognize that the Evil One is very much alive roaming the earth, seeing whom he can tempt.
- show that it is difficult to recognize the many guises which he assumes.
- state that God created the invisible world of angels, but some angels were cast out by God because they tried to become greater than God.
- understand that the origin of evil is outside of people; however, people ultimately choose good or evil.

3. Introduction

Ask the following:

- *According to the words of advertisers, what are some things people your age need to be happy?* [Write the list on the board.]
- *Where do you hear the advertisers talking to you?* (Television, pop-ups on the computer, magazines, newspapers)
- *How do they show you that you need these things?* (Lots of colors, happy young people using them, popular people all around)
- *Does God talk to us also? Who and what does He use to talk to us?* [Allow the students to brainstorm ideas. Possibilities: Bible, Jesus Christ, parents, priests, spiritual advisors]

Tell the students that today's lesson is about how Jesus is the Word of God.

4. Guided Reading, Page 49

- Have the students read the first page aloud—taking turns.
- Ask if anyone wants to share any struggles that people their age encounter or ways they try not to notice evil. Encourage discussion.

Guided Reading, Page 50, "God Sends His Son"

- Read this section aloud. Ask everyone to reread the scriptural passages in italics.
- Ask the students to think about these passages for a few seconds. Then ask what they think it means. Help them realize Jesus Christ came to bridge the gap between the divine and the human. Jesus came to make us sharers of the divine.

Guided Reading, Page 50, "The Living Word of God"

- Divide the reading (2 paragraphs) among the students. Tell them to read their paragraph and be prepared to explain the content to the group.

Background Reading (God's Plan)

"... We live in a world of false ideas and delusion. It is as though we wear rose-colored glasses, seeing all in a fantasyland glow. We think that the disorder in which we live is normal, desirable. Yet God can always bring good out of evil, light out of darkness. He takes the initiative. He works to restore the likeness we lost. He helps us to get back in line with the way things are meant to be, so that we can find life. He does it His way, not ours. We would have done it as an angry schoolmaster, or a football coach, yelling and directing from the sidelines. God had a different way: in His love for us and for His creation, He jumped into the midst of the mess, assuming it and healing it from within" (LLIII 14-15).

Guided Reading, Pages 50, "God's Saving Power"

- Read this section aloud.
- Ask what the following means: "In the Church we come to know and experience God's saving power in Jesus Christ." (*Our Church give us the Mysteries, liturgical services, and events that let us encounter Jesus Christ. We need to partake of them by being a faithful member of the Church throughout our lifetime so that we can gain eternal life.*)

5. Ancient Wisdom for Today

Ask for a volunteer to read aloud the information and quotation on this page. Have the students write their answers to the questions and share them with the class.

[Suggestions: No creature has the power; Christ begins a "New Creation" by becoming human and at the same time divine—Christ shows us how to be human and how to grow into our divine image—Christ begins the way for all of us to be re-created, a new creation; people who do not believe in Christ would be angered by the fact that they are being told that they cannot grow close to God on their own—they need Christ.

6. Icon Study

- Have the students read the commentary on this icon of the Nativity of Jesus Christ.
- If possible go into your church to look at Nativity icon there.
- Ask students to see themselves become part of that icon. Let them share how they can become re-created.
- Ask them to brainstorm ways they can give gifts to Jesus to thank Him. (*Buy gifts for those less fortunate; buy products for babies and take them to a shelter; pray to stop abortion; give the gift of themselves to others*)

7. Vespers

- Have the students read the information about Stichera aloud.
- Distribute the Vespers folder.
- Give each student one copy of this Stichera (see page 85 in this instructional manual).
- Ask the students to tape or glue one section of the Stichera onto the same page as the hymn.

9. Summary

Review the lesson. Ask if they are any further comments or questions about today's topics.

10. Closing Prayer

Gather around the icon of the Nativity of Jesus Christ and pray the Hymn from the next page.

Background Reading (Jesus Christ—the Word of God)

"This is what we call the Incarnation, the high point of God's plan for us. In Jesus Christ, the Word of God (through whom, in whom, all things are created and sustained) becomes one of us. He takes on our whole fallen, broken nature and heals it. The Word of God becomes for us the perfect Likeness of the Father. He fulfills what Adam was supposed to do. He becomes the new Adam and begins a new creation to bring us back into line with the original plan, which was destroyed by the first Adam and by us. He becomes the perfect Steward, Prophet and Priest. Human nature is brought back to the Garden again, with a new Adam" (*LLIII 15*).

Hymn (tone 5): Shining angel of God, * who stands before the divine mercy-seat, * drawing humility and true enlightenment from the divine Light: * look on us from heaven, * for we find ourselves buffeted about by furious storms. * We suffer want and we sleep in darkness. * Therefore, come to aid us, O leader of the angels, * and deliver us from the nets of the devil, * the cause of all evil, * for we all flee to you for protection, * O all-praised One.

Now and ever, and forever. Amen

Hymn (tone 8): I weep and lament as I contemplate death, * and behold our beauty fashioned in the image of God * resting in the tombs, * disfigured, deprived of glory and expression. *0, what a wonder! * What is this mystery? * Why have we been delivered to corruption? * Why subjected to death? * Indeed, as it is written, * by the command of God, * for He grants rest to the departed.

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My Personal Journal

Describe a situation in which you felt powerless—totally helpless. What did you do?

Was the situation ever resolved? If so, how? If not, how do you feel about it today?

Have you ever thought of God when situations like the one you described occur? How can God help you during those times?
