

# 11 — I Am the Way

## **Objectives**

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

- recognize Jesus Christ as the One Who saves us from our sinfulness.
- identify scriptural passages in which Jesus tells us Who He is. These passages begin with "I Am."
- state that through prayer we meet Jesus and grow in our relationship with Him.

## **For the Catechist**

Jesus presents Himself as the only Way to God. "*I am the Way and the Truth, and the Life; no one comes to the Father but through Me*" (Jn 14:6). He promises that those who relate to Him in faith will have life. He claims to conquer the world and promises peace and a share in that victory to those who follow Him. In this lesson the students are asked to read the Scriptures and listen to the claims of Jesus speaking in the Gospels. Remind the youth that we, just as the all people listening to Jesus speak, have to trust God's Word.

The Feast of the Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ and the Feast of Theophany celebrate God becoming one of us and transforming our world by being a part of it. Now, help the students realize that God is asking them to grow in their relationship with Him as they become one with Him.

The title of this book, *We Become God-Like*, announces what God is asking them to become—God-Like! Now they need to make choices that help them live out their calling.

Prayer is an important part of our relationship with Christ. This lesson presents a format for personal reflection. This method of personal interior prayer can be used throughout the year. A feeling for prayer from the heart is the firmest basis for Christian maturity and life.

[*God With Us* publications offers a mini-course on prayer for primary, intermediate, and junior high students. This resource/"Prayer In Our Life—Junior High Level," could be considered as an enhancement for this year.]

## **Materials Needed**

*Opening Prayer:* Christ the Teacher icon (#4—*Come Bless the Lord*),

*Review:* Easel or wall pad and markers

*Introduction:* Chalkboard and chalk and paper and pencils

*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

*Activity B:* newspapers, magazines, brochures, pamphlets, scissors, tape or glue, 9" x 12" construction paper, markers

*Closing Prayer:* Vespers folders

## **1. Opening Prayer**

- Gather around the icon corner.
- Pray "Our Father."

## 2. Review

Review the main points of the previous lesson:

- People are unable to save themselves from sin.
- Humanity needed a Savior to heal its brokenness.
- God sent His Son Jesus Who is the Word of God.
- Through the birth of Christ, the universe was renewed, sanctified, and recreated.
- The Church Fathers tell us that "*For He was made man that we might be made God.*"
- In the Church we come to know and accept God's saving power in Jesus Christ.

## 3. Introduction

- Write on the board "I Am..." Ask the students to write everything they are on a paper by starting with the words " I Am" [some suggestions: brother or sister, son or daughter, student, soccer player, altar server].
- After one minute, tell the students to turn their paper over and write what they think you (the catechist) would have written for yourself.
- Ask the students how they knew what to write for you.
- Encourage a discussion about how we know everything about ourselves, but we only know what we see about other people.
- Tell them today they will learn how Jesus revealed Who He was.

## 4. Guided Reading, Pages 54-55, "Jesus Christ Our Savior"

- Read the section aloud—taking turns. Have all the students read the "I Am" scriptural passages aloud together.
- Tell the students to look at the picture and ask them how the icon screen can help us learn Who Jesus is.

### Guided Reading, Pages 55, "The Presence of Jesus"

- Take turns reading this section aloud.

### Guided Reading, Pages 55, "Prayer"

- Before the reading, ask the students to write a list of prayers that they know. [Give them about 15 seconds.]
- Have the students read their lists.
- Now read this section aloud. Ask the students to share if they discovered other ways to pray.

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## Background Reading (Christ Is the Image of God)

"We are made in the image of God; Christ is the Image of God. He is also the perfect Likeness. Not only does He resemble God in His human nature, as we all do, He is also like Him in all things: 'Whoever has seen me has seen the Father.' (John 14:9) In Christ, we see perfectly who and what God is—but also who and what a human being is supposed to be....

"Christ is the center of all reality: everything is made through Him; everything is revealed through Him; everything finds its fulfillment in Him. This was realized only after His Resurrection and Ascension. We began to see that He came in order that we might have new life, and that we might have the divine likeness restored in us" (LLIII 16-17).

## 5. Prayer: Time with God

Read this prayer sheet together or divide the reading into sections. Divide the students to read the sections. Then come together as a group to teach each other.

**Supplemental Activity:** After the ACTS section is completed, have the students bow their heads in prayer. Guide them by announcing the word (Adoration) and giving them a few seconds to talk to God about their worship of Him. Continue with the remaining sections in the same way. Challenge them to add this approach to their prayer time throughout the week.

## 6. Icon Study

- Have the students read the commentary on this icon of Christ the Vine.
- Ask students to see themselves become part of that icon. Ask how that makes them feel about their relationship to Jesus Christ.

## 7. Vespers

- Have the students read the information about the names *Jesus Christ*
- Distribute the Vespers folder.
- Give each student one copy of "O Joyful Light" (see page 90 in this instructional manual).
- Ask the students to tape or glue this hymn onto a new page in their Vespers folder.

## 8. Activity A: My Personal Journal

Distribute Worksheet A along with pens or pencils. Have the students complete the worksheet in silence (or you can play religious music if available) and place it in their folder. Plan accordingly, but they should need no more than 5 minutes to complete the journal entry.

## 9. Activity B: "I Am" Mural, page 92 in this instructional manual

On a long sheet of paper draw a mural of the "I Ams" of Christ. Another possibility is to draw on smaller sheets and tape them together.

Allow the students to create their presentation on paper and display the final copy in the room.  
[Suggestions: draw pictures or pictures from magazines, handprinted words or calligraphy, their own pictures representing the image]

## 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 corner and pray the Vesper prayer "O Joyful Light."

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### Background Reading (Life in Christ)

"The life which Christ gives is described in the Scriptures in the boldest of terms. It is not a generically blessed life for God's servants: it is the very experience of God (Jn 17:3), it is 'Christ living in me' (Gal 2:20), it is 'Christ in you, the hope for glory' which is 'the glory of this mystery' (Col 1:27). Life in Christ is nothing less than the divine life itself.

"Such life can only come about through a union with the source of life: the continuing connection of the branches with the Vine, to use Christ's own imagery (Jn 15:4-5). This union is called 'the mystery of [God's] will, according to his purpose which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth' (Eph 1:9). It is this union which we experience personally in the holy mysteries" (*Inexhaustible Delights* 8).

## **O Joyful Light**

O Joyful Light! Light and Holy Glory of the Father Immortal,  
The heavenly, Holy, the Blessed One, O Jesus Christ.

Now that we have reached the setting of the sun  
and see the evening light,  
We sing to God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

It is fitting at all times to raise a song of praise  
in measured melody to You,  
O Son of God, the Giver of Life.

Behold, the Universe sings Your glory.

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## *My Personal Journal*

*Name three facts about your best friend. How does knowing these facts about him or her help in your relationship?*

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*Within this past year were there any times that you shared with your friend that made your friendship even stronger? What were they and how did they help?*

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*Have you spent some quiet time with Jesus? How has this time of prayer helped you grow in your relationship with Him? How can you plan to have more time in prayer?*

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*"I am the good shepherd"*

(John 10:11,14)

*"I am the resurrection and the life"*

(John 11:25)

*"I am the way and the truth and the life"*

(John 14:6)

*"I am the true vine"*

(John 15:1)

*"I am the bread of life"*

(John 6:35,48)

*"I am the light of the world"*

(John 8:12)

*"I am the gate for the sheep"*

(John 10:7)