



Lesson 15

The Paschal Mystery



Lesson 15 at a Glance



Learning Goals

- During His earthly life, Jesus made the astonishing claim that He is God.
- Both the Gospels and sources outside of Scripture verify Jesus' historical existence, His reputation, His authority as a teacher, and His Crucifixion.
- Jesus proclaimed the Kingdom of God, God's reign over all creation.
- Jesus' revelation of agapē love as the summation of all the Law is also a revelation of the heart and core identity of God.
- Jesus illustrated how God's unconditional love extends to everyone by seeking out the poor, the sick, and sinners.
- The Paschal Mystery is how Christ's Passion, Death, and Resurrection saved us from sin and death for new life as sons and daughters of God.



Lesson Plan Chart

DAY 1	TEACHER'S GUIDE PAGES	STUDENT WORKBOOK PAGES
Warm-Up: Liar, Lunatic, or Lord?	pg. 244	pg. 150
Activity: Jesus' Claim to Be God	pg. 245	pg. 151
Formative Assessment: Scriptural Rosary: The Luminous Mysteries	pg. 245	pg. 156
DAY 2	TEACHER'S GUIDE PAGES	STUDENT WORKBOOK PAGES
Warm-Up: <i>Christ on the Cross</i> by Leon Bonnat	pg. 257	pg. 161
■ You will need: an image of the painting found at SophiaOnline.org/Gr7Unit4Lesson15		
Activity: Jesus' Plan of Redemption	pg. 258	pg. 162
Formative Assessment: The Crucifixion of Jesus	pg. 258	pg. 166
DAY 3	TEACHER'S GUIDE PAGES	STUDENT WORKBOOK PAGES
Warm-Up: Teacher-guided activity	pg. 266	N/A
Activity: Resurrection Appearances	pg. 266	pg. 168
Formative Assessment: Teacher-guided activity	pg. 268	N/A



Connections to the Catechism in This Lesson

CCC 541–542, 604–605, 608–611, 613–618, 639–655, 774



Vocabulary Your Students Will Learn

- The **Kingdom of God** is God's reign, or rule, over all things. The Church, established by Christ, is the seed, or beginning, of the Kingdom here on earth. The Kingdom will be fulfilled in Heaven. Also called "Kingdom of Heaven."
- The **Paschal Mystery** refers to the Passion, Death, Resurrection, and Ascension of Jesus, which saved us from sin and death as the Passover of the New Covenant.
- The **Passion** refers to the great suffering endured by Christ on His way to freely offering His life on the Cross.
- The **Crucifixion** refers to the events surrounding Jesus' Death on the Cross.
- The **Resurrection** is the crowning truth of the Christian Faith that Jesus Christ rose from the dead on the third day after His Death on the Cross.
- The **Ascension** is Jesus' return to Heaven in His glorified body 40 days after His Resurrection. There, He is seated at the right hand of the Father in all His glory.
- **Agapē** is sacrificial, or self-giving, love. It is the highest form of love, the love God has for us and that He calls us to.
- The **Great Commandments** are Jesus' summary of the Law and the prophets: Love God with all your heart, soul, and mind, and love your neighbor as yourself.
- **Abba** is an affectionate word for "father" that some scholars suggest was similar to "daddy" in Aramaic (the language Jesus spoke). Jesus taught us to call God "*Abba*, Father."



Key Scripture Passages

This is the time of fulfillment. The kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel.
— *Mark 1:15*

And if Christ has not been raised, then empty [too] is our preaching; empty, too, your faith. Then we are also false witnesses to God, because we testified against God that he raised Christ, whom he did not raise if in fact the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, neither has Christ been raised, and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is vain; you are still in your sins.

— *1 Corinthians 15:14–17*



Prayer for This Lesson

(Lead your students each day in the following prayer.)

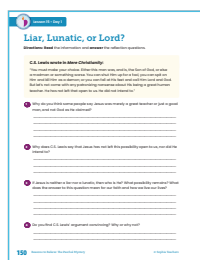
Lord Jesus Christ Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner. (3 times)



Day 1

Warm-up

- A.** Begin by asking for a show of hands if students know anyone who says they acknowledge that Jesus was an especially good, wise, and learned man, but that's all He was—a teacher whom we should all emulate, but not God. Allow a few moments for discussion about why people might think this way.



- B.** Next, ask your students if it is really possible to believe this perspective about Jesus. Could it be true that He was just a good, wise man, but not God? Allow a few more moments for discussion. Then, have your students turn to **Liar, Lunatic, or Lord?** on **pg. 150** in the Student Workbook

- C.** Explain to your students that the famous Christian author and apologist C.S. Lewis (who also wrote *The Chronicles of Narnia* children's book series) reflected on just this situation in his well-known book *Mere Christianity*. His thought experiment has come to be known as the “Liar, Lunatic, or Lord” argument.

- D.** Call on a student to **read aloud**  the quote from C.S. Lewis on the worksheet.

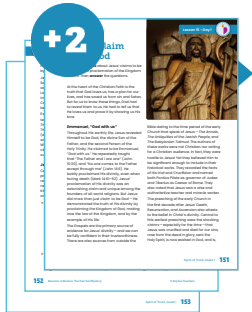
- E.** Then, walk your students through the argument. There are really only two possibilities: either Jesus spoke the truth and is God, who He claimed to be, or He did not speak the truth and is not God, even though He claimed to be. If Jesus did not speak the truth and is not God, like He claimed to be, He would either then be a liar (who knew He was lying) or a lunatic (who believed His lies). Neither option, if true, would make Jesus an especially good person worthy of emulating. If He were a liar, He would in fact, be the worst liar in all of history, because He claimed to have (and be) the Truth and to offer eternal salvation from sin and death, a horrible thing to lie about if it were not true. If He were a liar either deliberately deceiving people or a lunatic who believed His lies, He would not and could not be a good, wise, and learned man and a great teacher. Jesus never claimed to be just a great human being, or a great teacher, He claimed to be the Son of God, our Lord. And His claim leaves us only with these possibilities: either what He claimed is true, or He is a liar, or a lunatic. It is impossible (and patronizing nonsense, as C.S. Lewis points out) to somehow believe that Jesus was a great human teacher, but not God as He claimed.

- F.** Then, have your students respond to the reflection questions.
- G.** When they have finished, call on a few students to share and discuss their responses.



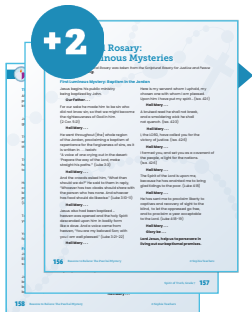
H. Explain that, perhaps astonishingly to some, especially to those who witnessed Jesus' public ministry, Jesus did claim to be God, Emmanuel, "God with us." The Old Testament Jewish prophet, Isaiah prophesied about the coming of Jesus, writing that, "the Lord himself shall give you a sign. Behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel" (Isaiah 7:14, Douay-Rheims American Edition). The name Emmanuel means "God with us." This prophecy was fulfilled centuries later when a virgin named Mary gave birth to a son whom she named Jesus (meaning "God saves"). Though not named Emmanuel, Jesus claimed to literally be "God with us." But Jesus did not just expect us to take Him at His word that He is divine. He gave us various proofs of His divinity, especially by His plan to give away His unconditional love. Over the next few days, we are going to learn about Jesus' claim of divinity, why we should believe Him, and His plan of redemption.

Activity



- A.** Have your students turn to **Jesus' Claim to be God** on **pg. 151** in the Student Workbook and read independently about Jesus' claim to be God and His proclamation of the Kingdom of God and then answer the questions. You may also choose to call on students to take turns reading aloud and discuss the questions together as a class.
- B.** When they have finished, call on students to share and discuss their answers.

Formative Assessment



- A.** Have your students turn to **Scriptural Rosary: The Luminous Mysteries** on **pg. 156** in the Student Workbook. (This scriptural Rosary is taken from the Scriptural Rosary for Justice and Peace found at SophiaOnline.org/USCCBRosaryforJustice.)
- B.** Explain that the **Luminous Mysteries of the Rosary** reflect on key moments of Christ's life after His birth and before His Passion, Death, and Resurrection.
- C.** Lead your students in praying the Scriptural Rosary. Appoint a student or students to read the parts of the leader and pray together the prayers of the Rosary.



Warm-Up Worksheet

(page 150 in the Student Workbook)



Liar, Lunatic, or Lord?

Directions: Read the information and **answer** the reflection questions.

C.S. Lewis wrote in *Mere Christianity*:

"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 on Him and kill Him as a demon; or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God. But let's 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."

- 1 Why do you think some people say Jesus was merely a great teacher or just a good man, and not God as He claimed?

Accept reasoned answers, which may include because some may find it easier to believe that Jesus was just a man, even if it does not make logical sense, because of the implications for how they live their lives. Others may struggle to believe in the supernatural, or how a man could be God, all matters that require faith.

- 2 Why does C.S. Lewis say that Jesus has not left this possibility open to us, nor did He intend to?

Jesus' claim to be God leaves only two possibilities: either He is a liar (or a lunatic) or He is who He says He is. He could not just be a great teacher or a good man, because a great teacher or a good man does not lie.

- 3 If Jesus is neither a liar nor a lunatic, then who is He? What possibility remains? What does the answer to this question mean for our faith and how we live our lives?

Jesus is who He claimed to be, God. That Jesus is God had massive implications for Faith and how we live our lives. It confirms all we believe by the Catholic Faith, which means that the choices we make matter not only in this life, but for our eternal life.

- 4 Do you find C.S. Lewis' argument convincing? Why or why not?

Accept reasoned answers.



Activity Worksheet

(page 151 in the Student Workbook)

Jesus' Claim to be God

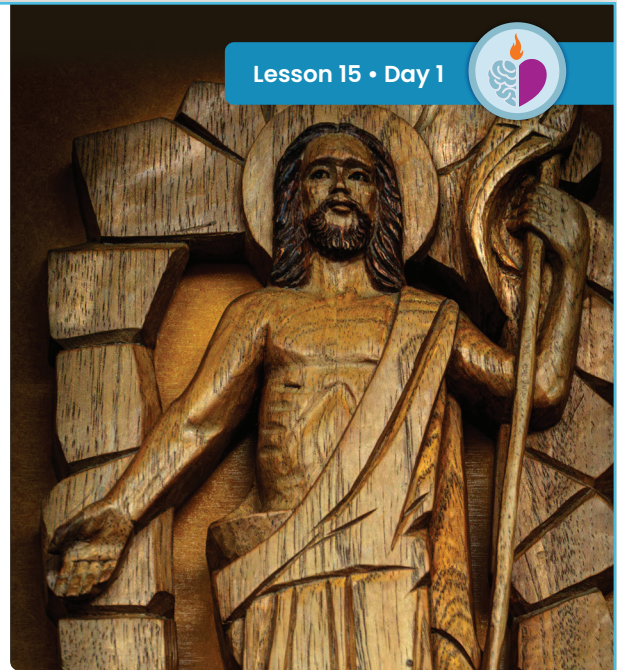
Directions: Read about Jesus' claims to be God and the proclamation of the Kingdom of God. Then **answer** the questions.

At the heart of the Christian Faith is the truth that God loves us, has a plan for our lives, and has saved us from sin and Satan. But for us to know these things, God had to reveal them to us. He had to tell us that He loves us and prove it by showing us His love.

Emmanuel, "God with us"

Throughout His earthly life, Jesus revealed Himself to be God, the divine Son of the Father, and the second Person of the Holy Trinity. He claimed to be Emmanuel, "God with us." He repeatedly taught that "The Father and I are one" (John 10:30), and "No one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6). He boldly proclaimed His divinity, even when facing death (Mark 14:61–62). Jesus' proclamation of His divinity was an astonishing claim and unique among the founders of all world religions. But Jesus did more than just claim to be God — He demonstrated the truth of His divinity by proclaiming the Kingdom of God, making love the law of the Kingdom, and by the example of His life.

The Gospels are the primary source of evidence for Jesus' divinity — and we can be fully confident in their trustworthiness. There are also sources from outside the



Bible dating to the time period of the early Church that speak of Jesus — *The Annals*, *The Antiquities of the Jewish People*, and *The Babylonian Talmud*. The authors of these works were not Christian nor writing for a Christian audience. In fact, they were hostile to Jesus! Yet they believed Him to be significant enough to include in their historical works. They recorded the facts of His trial and Crucifixion and named both Pontius Pilate as governor of Judea and Tiberius as Caesar of Rome. They also noted that Jesus was a wise and authoritative teacher and miracle worker.

The preaching of the early Church in the first decade after Jesus' Death, Resurrection, and Ascension also attests to the belief in Christ's divinity. Central to this earliest preaching were the shocking claims — especially for the time — that Jesus was crucified and died for our sins, rose from the dead in glory, sent the Holy Spirit, is now exalted in God, and is,



Activity Worksheet, continued (page 152 in the Student Workbook)



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therefore, the Messiah and Lord promised by the Old Testament prophets.

Jesus was a Jew, and God's promised Savior. But most Jews of the time did not accept this. Calling a human being "the Lord" would have been blasphemous (an insult to God, and a crime) to other Jews. Calling a crucified man God would have been disgusting to everyone.

Even more, the early Christians suffered terribly for their claim that Jesus is God. They lost their social and financial status. They were kicked out of the synagogue (a Jewish place of worship). And they were persecuted to the point of death. Why would anyone risk these things for claiming Jesus was God if they were not sure it was true?

Jesus Proclaimed the Kingdom of God

Central to Jesus' claim to be God was His proclamation of the Kingdom of God — the reign of God here on earth. Jesus made radical, unconditional love the law of the Kingdom. Jesus' public ministry centered on proclaiming this law of love.

- **First, Jesus defined love as *agapē*.** *Agapē* is the Greek word for the highest form of love. It means unconditional, self-sacrificing love, or charity. *Agapē* love always seeks the good of others and asks for no reward. It is the love God (and Jesus Himself) has for us and is the love we all aspire to. Jesus placed *agapē* love at the center of His teaching. All His other teachings flow from it.
- **Second, Jesus made love His greatest commandment and proclaimed that God is love.** Jesus made love the highest commandment of the Gospel.

He taught His disciples the Great Commandments as a summary of the Law:

"You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment. The second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself." (Matthew 22:37–40)

Jesus' commands to love God and neighbor also reveal that love is who God is. In the Jewish tradition, the Torah (the Jewish Law) reflects the heart of God. Thus, if the highest commandment — the summation of "all the Law," as Jesus said — is love, then God Himself must be love. And, because Jesus is the Son of God, He, too, is love.

- **Third, Jesus taught His disciples to address God the Father as He did — as *Abba*.** *Abba* is an Aramaic word (the language Jesus spoke) that means "affectionate, understanding, trustworthy father," similar to "Daddy." This teaching transforms how we ought to relate to God and He to us. Far from being distant and unknowable, God is near to us, loving, and knowable, as a small child knows his father.
- **Fourth, Jesus identified God the Father with the father in the Parable of the Prodigal Son** (Luke 15:11–32). The father in the parable is unconditionally forgiving, compassionate, and humble, just like God the Father. God, our Father, loves us in the same way.

Jesus' radical law of love makes *agapē* love the end goal of every person and



Activity Worksheet, continued
(page 153 in the Student Workbook)

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even of history and culture because “God is love” (1 John 4:8).

Jesus’ Love of the Poor, the Sick, and Sinners

Jesus showed us how to live His law of love by His loving concern for the poor, the sick, and for sinners, and by His own self-sacrifice on the Cross. He calls each of us to love others in the same radical way He loves us because our eternal salvation depends upon it.

Jesus’ Love of the Poor

Jesus taught that caring for the poor is neither a blind obligation, nor a mere sentimental soft spot. Rather, He made it clear that caring for those in need is what separates the good from the wicked. Having a compassionate heart is key to the Christian spiritual life.

Jesus made it a point to be with the poor and gave them alms (Matthew 11:4–6; 6:2–4). He commanded His followers to care for the poor as if they were caring for him: “Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me” (Matthew 25:40). And, in that same teaching, He made caring for the poor (and the sick, the hungry, and so forth) essential to our own salvation (Matthew 25:34–36).

Jesus’ Love of the Sick

Likewise, Jesus’ healings and exorcisms were part of His work of salvation. For Jesus, the power that breaks Satan’s grip on the world and ushers in the Kingdom is the recognition of the unique goodness,

lovability, and dignity of each person that leads to genuine care for them.

Jesus showed genuine concern for the sick person (their spiritual well-being as well as physical health). He desired that those asking for help have faith (such as the healing of blind Bartimaeus in Mark 10:46–52 or the raising of the widow’s son in Luke 7:11–17). His healing miracles pointed beyond themselves to more important truths of God’s love, God’s Kingdom, and the banishing of evil.

Jesus’ Unconditional Love of Sinners

In Jesus’ day, sinners were actively shunned in society. Refusing to associate with sinners was a sign of one’s own moral purity and faithfulness to God. But Jesus did not simply preach redemption to sinners from afar. Rather, He spent time with them and welcomed them into His company because He loved them. Jesus’ unconditional love extends to everyone, and sinners have the most need of that love. As Jesus explained, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick; I came not to call the righteous, but sinners” (Mark 2:17). He even loved the very Scribes and Pharisees who plotted His death. Most importantly to His love of sinners, however, is that He invited them — and us — to repent and follow Him.

Jesus came to invite all of us to belong to the Kingdom of God — the reign of God under His law of love. And He literally gave His life on the Cross to show us the extent of His love.



Activity Worksheet, *continued*
(page 154 in the Student Workbook)



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- 1 At the heart of the Christian is the truth that God love us, has a plan for our lives, and has saved us from sin.
- 2 How can we know the answer to question number 1?
God had to reveal them to us.
- 3 What astonishing claim did Jesus make about who He is?
That He is God, Emmanuel, "God with us."
- 4 Where do we find the most evidence for Jesus' divinity?
The Gospels
- 5 What facts about Jesus were recorded by non-Christian historical records?
They recorded the facts of His trial and Crucifixion, named Pontius Pilate as governor of Judea and Tiberius as Caesar of Rome, and noted that Jesus was a wise and authoritative teacher and miracle worker.
- 6 Which of the following is not a repeated theme of the preaching of the earliest Christians?
 - a. Jesus was crucified and died for our sins.
 - b. Jesus rose from the dead in glory.
 - c. Jesus is the Messiah and Lord.
 - ☒ d. Jesus is one of many paths to salvation.
- 7 Why was the preaching of Christians so shocking in the days of the early Church?
To the Jews, their claims were bold and blasphemous (i.e., that Jesus is Lord), and to all, some were disgusting (i.e., calling a crucified man God). Even more, the early Christians suffered and even died for these claims.
- 8 What is *agapē* love?
Agapē is the Greek word for the highest form of love. It means unconditional, self-sacrificing love, or charity. Agapē love always seeks the good of others and asks for no reward. It is the love God has for us and is the love we all aspire to.



Activity Worksheet, continued
(page 155 in the Student Workbook)

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- 9 In the Jewish tradition, the Torah reflects the heart of God.
Therefore, if the highest commandment is love, then God Himself must be love.
- 10 How does calling God “Abba, Father” change the way we understand our relationship with Him?
The meaning of Abba is similar to “Daddy.” God loves us with the affection, understanding, and trustworthiness of a loving father, similar to how a small child know his father.
- 11 What does it mean that God the Father is like the father from the parable of the prodigal son?
a. God the Father is unconditionally forgiving, compassionate, and humble, always waiting for us to return to Him so that He can pour out His mercy and love.
b. God the Father is distant, cold, and stern, always waiting to catch us in sin and failure so that He can punish us and condemn us to eternal torment in Hell.
c. God the Father gives us only one chance to love as we ought and is unforgiving and unwilling to welcome us back if we return to Him.
- 12 What did Jesus teach is a spiritual danger that separates the good from the wicked?
a. Forgetting to pray every day.
b. Heartlessness towards the poor.
c. Eating meat from unclean animals.
- 13 Why do you think it was important that Jesus healed the sick, instead of just forgiving people’s sins?
Jesus’ healings were a physical sign that pointed beyond themselves to more important truths of God’s love, God’s Kingdom, and the banishing of evil. They showed Jesus’ genuine compassion for the whole person and helped people have faith. Accept additional reasoned answers.
- 14 In Jesus’ day, refusing to associate with sinners was a sign of one’s own moral purity and faithfulness to God. But Jesus welcomed them into His company and dined with them as a sign of His love for them.



Formative Assessment Worksheet
(page 156 in the Student Workbook)



Scriptural Rosary: The Luminous Mysteries

The following Scriptural Rosary was taken from the Scriptural Rosary for Justice and Peace found at USCCB.org.

First Luminous Mystery: Baptism in the Jordan

Jesus begins his public ministry being baptized by John.

Our Father ...

For our sake he made him to be sin who did not know sin, so that we might become the righteousness of God in him. (2 Cor. 5:21)

Hail Mary ...

He went throughout [the] whole region of the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, as it is written in ... Isaiah:

"A voice of one crying out in the desert: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths.'" (Luke 3:3)

Hail Mary ...

And the crowds asked him, "What then should we do?" He said to them in reply, "Whoever has two cloaks should share with the person who has none. And whoever has food should do likewise." (Luke 3:10-11)

Hail Mary ...

Jesus also had been baptized ... heaven was opened and the holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased." (Luke 3:21-22)

Hail Mary ...

Here is my servant whom I uphold, my chosen one with whom I am pleased. Upon him I have put my spirit... (Isa. 42:1)

Hail Mary ...

A bruised reed he shall not break, and a smoldering wick he shall not quench. (Isa. 42:3)

Hail Mary ...

I, the LORD, have called you for the victory of justice. (Isa. 42:6)

Hail Mary ...

I formed you, and set you as a covenant of the people, a light for the nations. (Isa. 42:6)

Hail Mary ...

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring glad tidings to the poor. (Luke 4:18)

Hail Mary ...

He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, and to proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord. (Luke 4:18-19)

Hail Mary ...

Glory be ...

Lord Jesus, help us to persevere in living out our baptismal promises.



Formative Assessment Worksheet, continued
(page 157 in the Student Workbook)

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Second Luminous Mystery:
The Wedding at Cana

Jesus performs his first public sign revealing his true identity, at the request of his mother.

Our Father ...

When the wine ran short, the mother of Jesus said to him, "They have no wine." (John 2:3)

Hail Mary ...

Jesus said to her, "Woman, how does your concern affect me? My hour has not yet come." (John 2:4)

Hail Mary ...

His mother said to the servers, "Do whatever he tells you." (John 2:5)

Hail Mary ...

Jesus told them, "Fill the jars with water." So they filled them to the brim. Then he told them, "Draw some out now and take it to the headwaiter." (John 2:7-8)

Hail Mary ...

The headwaiter called the bridegroom and said to him, "Everyone serves good wine first, and then when people have drunk freely, an inferior one; but you have kept the good wine until now." (John 2:9-10)

Hail Mary ...

If I ... have washed your feet, you ought to wash one another's feet. I have given you a model to follow, so that as I have done for you, you should also do. (John 13:14-15)

Hail Mary ...

To you who hear I say, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. (Luke 6:27-28)



Depiction of the Wedding at Cana
by Xu Jihua (1934-1937).

Hail Mary ...

Stop judging and you will not be judged. Stop condemning and you will not be condemned. Forgive and you will be forgiven. (Luke 6:37)

Hail Mary ...

Then he said to all, "If anyone wishes to come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me." (Luke 9:23)

Hail Mary ...

This is my commandment: love one another as I love you. (John 15:12)

Hail Mary ...

Glory be ...

Lord Jesus, open us to the power of your grace to change our hearts and lives.



Formative Assessment Worksheet, continued
(page 158 in the Student Workbook)



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Third Luminous Mystery: Proclamation of the Kingdom of God

After John was arrested, Jesus began proclaiming the Good News of God's kingdom.

Our Father ...

Jesus came to Galilee proclaiming the gospel of God. (Mark 1:14)

Hail Mary ...

This is the time of fulfillment. The kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel. (Mark 1:15)

Hail Mary ...

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring glad tidings to the poor. (Luke 4:18)

Hail Mary ...

He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, and to proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord. (Luke 4:18-19)

Hail Mary ...

Today this scripture passage is fulfilled in your hearing. (Luke 4:21)

Hail Mary ...

You have heard that it was said, "An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth." But I

say to you ... when someone strikes you on [your] right cheek, turn the other one to him as well." (Matthew 5:38-39)

Hail Mary ...

You have heard that it was said, "You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy." But I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you. (Matthew 5:43-44)

Hail Mary ...

Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth. ... But store up treasures in heaven ... for where your treasure is, there also will your heart be. (Matthew 6:19-21)

Hail Mary ...

Do to others whatever you would have them do to you. This is the law and the prophets. (Matthew 7:12)

Hail Mary ...

Without cost you have received; without cost you are to give. (Matthew 10:8)

Hail Mary ...

Glory be ...

Lord Jesus, fill us with the desire to strive for ongoing conversion.

Fourth Luminous Mystery: The Transfiguration

Jesus is seen with Moses and Elijah, confirming that his suffering will end in glory.

Our Father ...

Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. And he was transfigured before them; his face shone like the sun

and his clothes became white as light. (Matthew 17:1-2)

Hail Mary ...

Two men were conversing with him, Moses and Elijah, who appeared in glory and spoke of his exodus that he was going to accomplish in Jerusalem. (Luke 9:30-31)

Hail Mary ...



Formative Assessment Worksheet, continued (page 159 in the Student Workbook)

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Peter and his companions ... saw his glory and the two men standing with him.
(Luke 9:32)

Hail Mary ...

Peter said ... "Master, it is good that we are here; let us make three tents ..." But he did not know what he was saying. (Luke 9:33)

Hail Mary ...

A voice [said], "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him." (Matthew 17:5)

Hail Mary ...

But Jesus came and touched them, saying, "Rise, and do not be afraid." And when the disciples raised their eyes, they saw no one else but Jesus alone.
(Matthew 17:7-8)

Hail Mary ...

Through him was life, and this life was the light of the human race; the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. (John 1:4-5)

Hail Mary ...

No one has ever seen God. The only Son, God, who is at the Father's side, has revealed him. (John 1:18)

Hail Mary ...

Fifth Luminous Mystery: Institution of the Eucharist

At the last supper, Jesus instructs us to remember him in celebration of the Eucharist.

Our Father ...

Before the feast of Passover, Jesus knew that his hour had come to pass from this world to the Father. He loved his own in the



Icon of Transfiguration of Jesus, unknown artist (15th century).

All of us, gazing with unveiled face on the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, as from the Lord who is the Spirit.
(2 Corinthians 3:18)

Hail Mary ...

You are the light of the world. ... [Y]our light must shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your heavenly Father. (Matthew 5:14, 16)

Hail Mary ...

Glory be ...

Lord Jesus, grant us the courage to shine your light in our lives.

world and he loved them to the end.
(John 13:1)

Hail Mary ...

My appointed time draws near; in your house I shall celebrate the Passover with my disciples. (Matthew 26:18)

Hail Mary ...



Formative Assessment Worksheet, continued
(page 160 in the Student Workbook)



Lesson 15 • Day 1

I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer, for, I tell you, I shall not eat it [again] until there is fulfillment in the kingdom of God. (Luke 22:15-16)

Hail Mary ...

Then he took the bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body, which will be given for you; do this in memory of me." (Luke 22:19)

Hail Mary ...

And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which will be shed for you." (Luke 22:20)

Hail Mary ...

For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the death of the Lord until he comes. (1 Corinthians 11:26)

Hail Mary ...

The Hail Holy Queen (*The Salve Regina*)

Hail, holy Queen, mother of mercy,
our life, our sweetness, and our hope.
To you we cry,
poor banished children of Eve;
to you we send up our sighs,
mourning and weeping in
this valley of tears.

I pray not only for them, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, so that they may all be one ... that the world may believe that you sent me. (John 17:20-21)

Hail Mary ...

Now you are Christ's body, and individually parts of it. (1 Corinthians 12:27)

Hail Mary ...

For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, slaves or free persons, and we were all given to drink of one Spirit. (1 Corinthians 12:13)

Hail Mary ...

If [one] part suffers, all the parts suffer with it; if one part is honored, all the parts share its joy. (1 Corinthians 12:26)

Hail Mary ...

Glory be ...

Lord Jesus, make of us a sign of the unity for which you prayed.

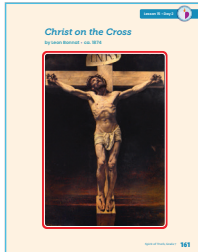
Turn, then, most gracious advocate,
your eyes of mercy toward us;
and after this, our exile,
show unto us the blessed fruit
of your womb, Jesus.

O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary.
Amen.



Day 2

Warm-up



- A.** Begin by having your students turn to **Christ on the Cross** by Leon Bonnat on **pg. 161** in the Student Workbook. **Project**  the image of the painting found at **SophiaOnline.org/Gr7Unit4Lesson15**, and give them a few moments to quietly view and reflect on the art. Once several minutes have passed, ask the following questions:
- What do you see? What stands out to you? *Accept reasoned answers.*
 - How does this work of art make you feel? *Accept reasoned answers.*
 - Do you think this painting is more realistic or stylized? Why do you think the artist chose to paint in this style? *This is an ultra-realistic depiction of the Crucifixion, though perhaps minus much of the bloodiness of the violence Christ endured. The realism helps make the viewer present in the horror of Christ's suffering and Death on the Cross. Accept additional reasoned answers.*
 - Where is Jesus looking? Why do you think so? *Jesus is looking upwards towards Heaven. The painting could be depicting various moments from Christ's Crucifixion: when He asked His Father to forgive His executioners or just before He breathed His last breath and commended His spirit to the Father. Accept additional reasoned answers.*
- B.** Explain that Crucifixion is one of the most brutal and torturous forms of punishment and execution that mankind has ever devised. Those who were crucified were beaten, stripped naked, nailed to a cross, and left hanging outdoors, often for days, suffering until they died.
- C.** Then ask if your students think this painting does a good job of portraying the horror of Jesus' Crucifixion? Why or why not? *Accept reasoned answers.*
- D.** Next, ask your students to recall the words Jesus spoke from the Cross. After a few moments, if no one has named it, prompt them further to recall what Jesus said to His Father from the Cross: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Matthew 27:46)
- E.** Then, ask your students what they think this verse means. *At face value, the words seem to indicate that Jesus believed the Father had abandoned Him. But is that really what Jesus was saying? In fact, Jesus was quoting the first line of Psalm 22.*



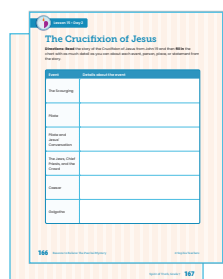
- F.** Explain that, today, when we want to quote a Scripture passage, we typically cite the chapter and verse numbers. These numbers, however, are not original to the text. They were added by later editors and scholars of the Bible to make it easier to study. In Jesus' time, faithful Jews often had the entire Book of Psalms memorized! It was common that people would simply recite the first verse of a Psalm to refer to the entire Psalm. Knowing this, we can see that when Jesus quoted the first line of Psalm 22 from the Cross, He was actually referring to the entire Psalm, not just the first line. Taken as a whole, Psalm 22 is about trusting in God, vindication (or clearing someone of blame), and salvation for the world. The Psalm tells the story of someone who is suffering greatly, but who is not only confident in God, but foresees God's intervention as bringing salvation to all the people of the world throughout the ages. And it is this suffering servant with whom Jesus identifies Himself.
- G.** Finally, create a prayerful atmosphere and **read aloud**  for your class the entirety of Psalm 22 from your Bible. Invite them to reflect on the painting as they listen to the Psalm.

DAY 2 > Activity



- A.** Have your students turn to **Jesus' Plan of Redemption** on **pg. 162** in the Student Workbook and read independently about Jesus' plan to give away His unconditional love for our redemption and then answer the questions. You may also choose to call on students to take turns reading aloud and discuss the questions together as a class.
- B.** When they have finished, call on students to share and discuss their answers.

DAY 2 > Formative Assessment



- A.** Arrange your students in pairs or trios and have them turn to **The Crucifixion of Jesus** on **pg. 166** in the Student Workbook. Have each group read together the story of Jesus' Crucifixion from John 19:1–42 in their Bibles. Then have them discuss and record as much detail as they can about each event, person, place, or statement mentioned in the account. You may also choose to complete this activity together as a class, calling on students to take turns reading aloud from John 19 and filling in the chart together.
- B.** After groups have finished, call on groups to share the details they recorded, and create a master chart together as a class. Encourage your students to add to their own charts details they might have missed.



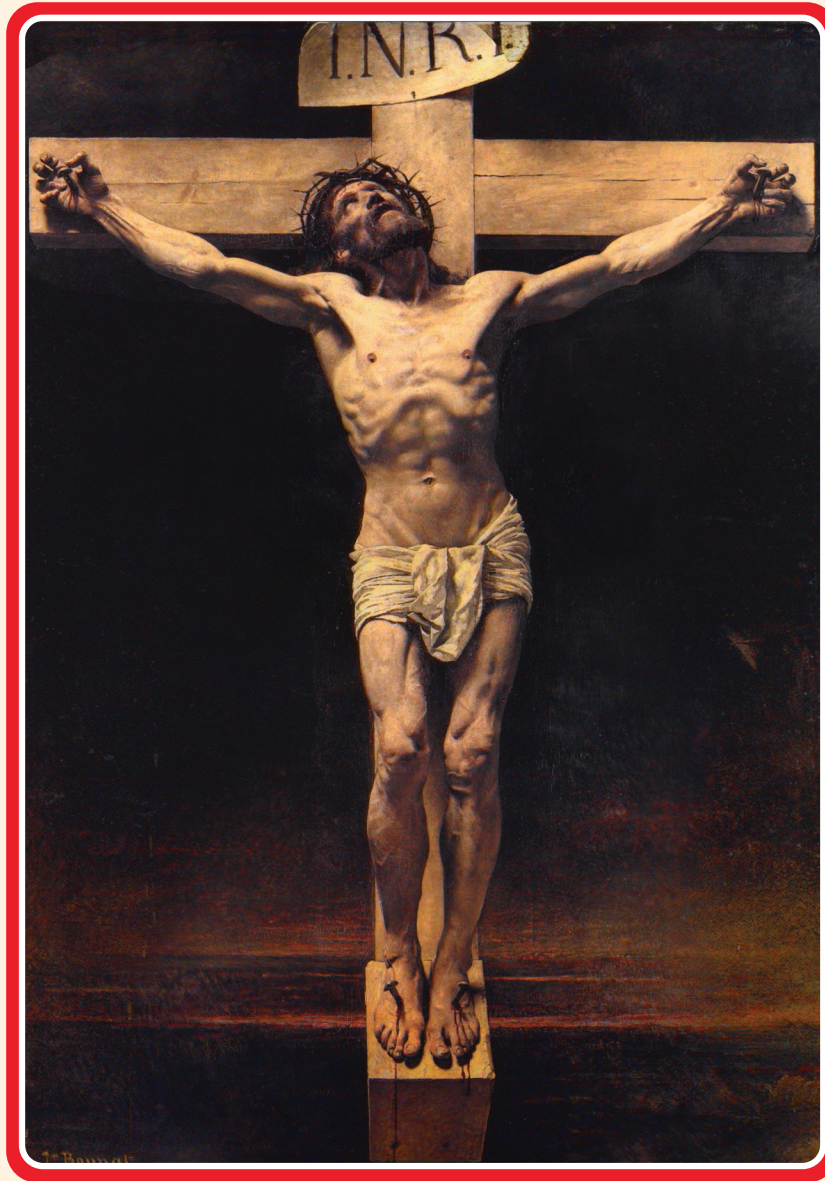
Warm-Up Worksheet
(page 161 in the Student Workbook)

Lesson 15 • Day 2



Christ on the Cross

by Leon Bonnat • ca. 1874



Spirit of Truth, Grade 7

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**Activity Worksheet***(page 162 in the Student Workbook)*

Jesus' Plan of Redemption

Directions: Read about the greatest proof of Jesus' divinity of all, His Paschal Mystery. Then **answer** the questions.

Are you someone who makes plans? Or do you find yourself more often than not making things up as you go along? It can be intimidating to plan out how we want something to go. But it can also be helpful to have a step-by-step vision to get things done. And it can be incredibly rewarding once we have successfully completed our plan! We make plans all the time, for things both great and small. Often, we succeed in carrying out our plans and evaluating whether our plan worked.

From the beginning, God had a plan to reveal Himself to us so that we can know and love Him and to save us from sin. Throughout Salvation History, by a series of covenants, God made Himself and His love

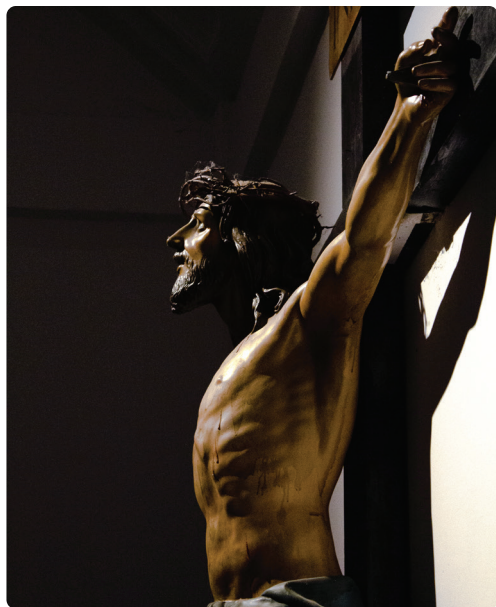
for us known to us. Then, in the fullness of time, He sent His only Son to finish the work of Salvation.

God's Plan

Jesus is Emmanuel, "God with us." His Paschal Mystery is the Passover of the New Covenant — the ultimate expression of Jesus' unconditional love through His self-sacrifice at the end of His earthly mission. The Paschal mystery is Jesus' plan to give away His healing and love to the world forevermore. Jesus' love is redemptive. In other words, His love saves us from sin and death. It would lead to universal redemption — salvation for all people everywhere for all time.

The first part of His plan came on the night before died for all people on the Cross. During the Last Supper, He gave His disciples — and us — the Eucharist and commanded them to repeat this sacred meal "in memory of me" (Luke 22:19). In the Eucharist, Jesus offered His whole self, Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity, in a complete and unconditional gift of love.

Jesus' command was not simply a request to celebrate the anniversary of His Death. Rather, He commanded the Apostles to perform the Eucharistic ritual so that He would actually be present with them when they do, anywhere on Earth, throughout history. Jesus is still present in the Eucharist today — and has been in every Mass celebrated throughout the world since the Last Supper.





Activity Worksheet, continued

(page 163 in the Student Workbook)

Lesson 15 • Day 2



The second part of His plan came the next day. On that first Good Friday, Jesus suffered and died on the Cross in the most painful and humiliating of ways. His sacrifice on the Cross may have seemed to onlookers at the time to be a horrible and tragic ending. But, in fact, it would bring salvation to our entire human race and would lead, in three short days, to the triumph of the Resurrection. Jesus knew His love was redemptive. He knew His sacrifice would lead to salvation for all people everywhere for all time. And so, He trusted in His Heavenly Father and offered His life for the world so that the unconditional and saving love of God could be poured out for everyone.

The Resurrection

Jesus' Resurrection is the most important event in Salvation History. Without it, as St. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15, "our faith is in vain" and we would still be in our sins. In other words, if Jesus had not risen from the dead, Christians would be wasting their time.

Thankfully, Christ did not just die. He did rise from the dead, and we are saved from our sins. Christ's victory over sin and death is won not just by His Passion and Death, but also in His glorious Resurrection. How can we know that He truly rose from the dead? Let us look at three ways.

The Empty Tomb

On the third day after Jesus was crucified, on the first Easter Sunday, His tomb was discovered empty. The empty tomb by itself is not enough to prove Jesus' Resurrection, but it supports the Apostles' claim that He rose again. The Gospels tell us that the

Jewish leaders tried to make people doubt the news of the Resurrection. They spread the false rumor that the Apostles stole Jesus' body. They could not have accused the Apostles of this unless there really was a burial site that was found empty.

The Gospel Accounts of Jesus' Risen Appearances to the Apostles

The Gospel accounts of the Resurrection show that the Apostles were not expecting to see Jesus again after He died on the Cross. They record how the Apostles doubted the Resurrection at first. When the Risen Jesus appeared to them, Jesus had to reassure them that it was Him and His actual, spiritually transformed body they were seeing.

St. Paul's Testimony to the Resurrection of Jesus

St. Paul recorded a list of witnesses to the Risen Jesus in 1 Corinthians 15:3–8 and stated that Jesus appeared to more than 500 people, most of them still living. St. Paul was basically saying, "If you don't believe me, go ask all 500 of them!" This list would have been important as legal evidence.

After sharing the evidence of these witnesses, St. Paul then highlighted a problem: either these witnesses believed Jesus is God, or they did not. In either case, it would make no sense for them to falsely claim they saw Him risen.

For those who believed Jesus is God, lying about His Resurrection would have been a terrible crime: breaking God's Commandment against bearing false witness. It also would have undermined the Christian Faith and caused many people



Activity Worksheet, continued

(page 164 in the Student Workbook)



Lesson 15 • Day 2

to leave the Church. Likewise, it would be absurd for a non-believer to claim Jesus had risen from the dead if they did not believe He had. Spreading the news of the Resurrection meant conflict with both the Jews and the Romans, leading to active persecution, torture, and even death. Why would an unbeliever willingly put himself in so much danger for a lie?

The most reasonable conclusion is that these witnesses were telling the truth — Jesus really and truly rose from the dead. And if He rose from dead, He is really God, as He claimed to be.

There is another argument for Jesus' Resurrection considered convincing by scholars today. The Apostles were doing miracles in Jesus' name. How can we be so sure that they were doing these miracles? Beyond the testimony in St. Paul and the Acts of the Apostles, the Church was experiencing a huge increase in numbers even in the midst of two centuries of extreme persecution. Most

scholars today do not think this could have happened unless the Apostles were doing the miracles (healing, raising the dead, and exorcisms) to which Scripture testifies. If this is the case, then we must ask the question, "Why would God be performing supernatural acts (like raising the dead) in Jesus' name if the Apostles were lying about His Resurrection and His claim to be the Son of God? If it seems implausible that God would do this, then it is very likely that Jesus was raised in glory and that His claim to be the Son of God is true.

Conclusion

Ultimately, we must remember that faith in Jesus requires more than just evidence that He is God. While we can be absolutely confident in His divinity — that He is Emmanuel, "God with us" — there is a personal choice involved. Even faced with all the evidence in the world, we still must choose to believe in Him, accept His teachings, and follow Him.

- 1 Why do you think God would have a plan to save us? What is His plan?

Accept reasoned answers, which may include that, with a discernable plan for our salvation, it would be more reasonable for us to conclude that accepting God's gift of salvation makes sense and to act upon His invitation. We can see the evidence for what was accomplished by the work of salvation by understanding His plan. God's plan was to reveal Himself to us gradually and in stages throughout the covenants of the Old Testament to prepare us for the coming of His Son, Jesus Christ, who, by His suffering, Death, Resurrection, and Ascension, won for us salvation from sin and death.

- 2 Why is the Resurrection the most important event of Salvation History?

Without the Resurrection, our faith is vain and we are still in our sins (as St. Paul said). Christians would be wasting their time.



Activity Worksheet, continued
(page 165 in the Student Workbook)



- 3 What indirect evidence does the empty tomb give us about Jesus' Resurrection?

It gives us evidence that something happened, strongly suggesting Jesus rose from the dead as He said He would. If Christ's body had been stolen, as some skeptics had suggested at the time (an accusation that would not be necessary unless there was an identifiable burial site that was now empty), it would be unthinkable that the Christians would have reported such a damaging claim to their own credibility in the Gospel (Matthew 28:13) unless it were true that Jesus had risen from the dead. The empty tomb also indicates that it was Jesus' same body that was buried and later raised and left the tomb transformed in glory.

- 4 Why do you think Jesus needed to reassure those He appeared to after His Resurrection?

Generally speaking, in our human experience, no one comes back from the dead. To encounter a person risen from the dead defies the ordinary and would require reassurance for most. Accept additional reasoned answers.

- 5 What list does St. Paul provide in 1 Corinthians 15? Why is this list noteworthy?

In 1 Corinthians 15:3–8, St. Paul records a list of witnesses to the Resurrection. St. Paul mentions that there are more than five hundred witnesses of the risen Christ, and that they are still alive at the time of his writing. This indicates that St. Paul offered the list of witnesses as sound, legal evidence for the Resurrection.

- 6 Why would it not make sense for believers in Christ to have lied about His Resurrection? Why would it not make sense for a non-believer to lie about Jesus' Resurrection?

For a believer, lying about His Resurrection would have been a terrible crime: breaking God's Commandment against bearing false witness. It also would have undermined the Christian Faith and caused many people to leave the Church. It would be absurd for a non-believer to claim Jesus had risen from the dead if they did not believe He had. Spreading the news of the Resurrection meant conflict with both the Jews and the Romans, leading to active persecution, torture, and even death.



Formative Assessment Worksheet

(page 166 in the Student Workbook)



The Crucifixion of Jesus

Directions: **Read** the story of the Crucifixion of Jesus from John 19 and then **fill in** the chart with as much detail as you can about each event, person, place, or statement from the story.

Event	Details about the event
The Scourging	
Pilate	
Pilate and Jesus' Conversation	
The Jews, Chief Priests, and the Crowd	
Caesar	
Golgotha	

Accept reasoned answers.



Formative Assessment Worksheet, *continued*
(page 167 in the Student Workbook)

Lesson 15 • Day 2



Event	Details about the event
The Inscription on the Cross	
Jesus' Clothes	
Those Present at the Foot of the Cross	
Jesus' Mother	
"I Thirst."	
Jesus' Death	
Blood and Water	
The Tomb	

Spirit of Truth, Grade 7

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Accept reasoned answers.

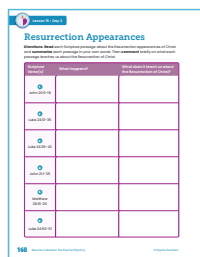


Day 3

Warm-Up

- A.** Begin by **reading aloud**  from your Bible 1 Corinthians 15:14–17 while your students follow along in their own Bibles.
- B.** Next, ask your students the following questions:
- What does St. Paul in this passage suggest is the most important teaching/doctrine of our Faith? *That Jesus rose from the dead (the Resurrection).*
 - Why does St. Paul believe that the Resurrection is so important to our Faith? *If Jesus did not rise from the dead, then our preaching is empty and so is our faith. If Jesus did not rise from the dead, in essence, we have been lying to others that He has. And, even worse, if Jesus did not rise from the dead, then our sins have not been forgiven, and we are still sinners.*
- C.** Explain that the Resurrection is one of the most important moments in the history of salvation. Without the Resurrection, sin and death would have won. We would still be sinners and still be enslaved by sin and death. There would be no hope of Heaven and no hope of salvation. But Jesus did rise from the dead on the third day. He did defeat death and sin. And we do have hope of salvation and hope that we too will share in Jesus' Resurrection. This is the Paschal Mystery: how Christ's Passion, Death, and Resurrection saved us from sin and death for new life as sons and daughters of God.

Activity



The worksheet is titled "Resurrection Appearances" and contains a table with 5 rows and 2 columns. The first column is labeled "Scripture Passage" and the second column is labeled "Summary of the Passage". The rows are numbered 1 through 5.

Scripture Passage	Summary of the Passage
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	

- A.** Have your students turn to **Resurrection Appearances** on **pg. 168** in the Student Workbook. Working individually or with a partner, have them read each Scripture passage from their Bibles about the Resurrection appearances of Christ and summarize the passages in their own words. Then have your students comment briefly on what each passage teaches us about the Resurrection.
- B.** When your students have completed the activity, call on them to share their answers to create more complete portrait of Jesus' Resurrection.



Activity Worksheet

(page 168 in the Student Workbook)



Lesson 15 • Day 3

Resurrection Appearances

Directions: **Read** each Scripture passage about the Resurrection appearances of Christ and **summarize** each passage in your own words. Then **comment** briefly on what each passage teaches us about the Resurrection of Christ.

Scripture Verse(s)	What happens?	What does it teach us about the Resurrection of Christ?
1 John 20:11-18		
2 Luke 24:13-35		
3 Luke 24:36-43		
4 John 21:1-25		
5 Matthew 28:16-20		
6 Luke 24:50-51		



DAY 3 > Formative Assessment

- A.** Explain that we come in contact with sin, suffering, and death on a daily basis. Ask your students to share and have a discussion about what kinds of sin, suffering, and death we encounter in our lives? Point out that “death” does not necessarily have to mean an actual end of life. It could also refer to the end of something else, such as a school year, or moving to a new house or city, or losing a friend, and so forth. Any time one thing ends in our lives, it’s a kind of death and is often something we mourn.
- B. Read aloud**  John 12:24 from your Bible.
- C.** Have your students write a response to the following prompt on their own paper:
- How do Jesus’ Death and Resurrection help us to understand more fully His teaching in John 12:24? In what ways have you experienced the Paschal Mystery — the life, Death, and Resurrection of Christ — in your own life?



Lesson 15

The Paschal Mystery



Reasons to Believe: The Paschal Mystery

Lesson 15 Overview



Vocabulary

- The **Kingdom of God** is God's reign, or rule, over all things. The Church, established by Christ, is the seed, or beginning, of the Kingdom here on earth. The Kingdom will be fulfilled in Heaven. Also called "Kingdom of Heaven."
- The **Paschal Mystery** refers to the Passion, Death, Resurrection, and Ascension of Jesus, which saved us from sin and death as the Passover of the New Covenant.
- The **Passion** refers to the great suffering endured by Christ on His way to freely offering His life on the Cross.
- The **Crucifixion** refers to the events surrounding Jesus' Death on the Cross.
- The **Resurrection** is the crowning truth of the Christian Faith that Jesus Christ rose from the dead on the third day after His Death on the Cross.
- The **Ascension** is Jesus' return to Heaven in His glorified body 40 days after His Resurrection. There, He is seated at the right hand of the Father in all His glory.
- **Agapē** is sacrificial, or self-giving, love. It is the highest form of love, the love God has for us and that He calls us to.
- The **Great Commandments** are Jesus' summary of the Law and the Prophets: Love God with all your heart, soul, and mind, and love your neighbor as yourself.
- **Abba** is an affectionate word for "father" that some scholars suggest was similar to "daddy" in Aramaic (the language Jesus spoke). Jesus taught us to call God "Abba, Father."



Prayer for This Lesson

Lord Jesus Christ Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner. (3 times)



Liar, Lunatic, or Lord?

Directions: Read the information and **answer** the reflection questions.

C.S. Lewis wrote in *Mere Christianity*:

"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 on Him and kill Him as a demon; or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God. But let's 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."

- 1 Why do you think some people say Jesus was merely a great teacher or just a good man, and not God as He claimed?

- 2 Why does C.S. Lewis say that Jesus has not left this possibility open to us, nor did He intend to?

- 3 If Jesus is neither a liar nor a lunatic, then who is He? What possibility remains? What does the answer to this question mean for our faith and how we live our lives?

- 4 Do you find C.S. Lewis' argument convincing? Why or why not?



Jesus' Claim to be God

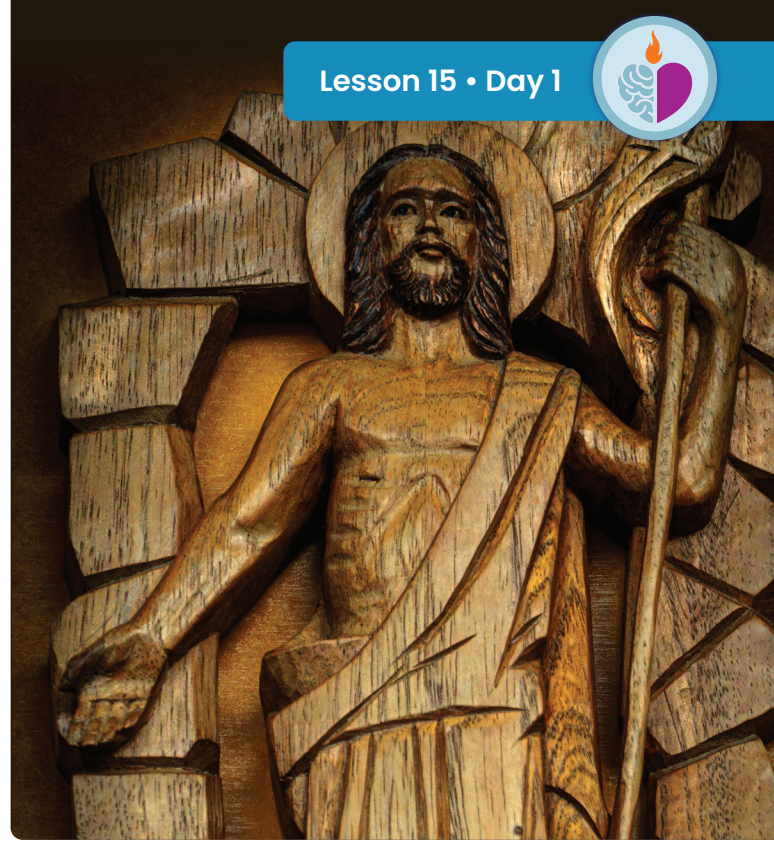
Directions: Read about Jesus' claims to be God and the proclamation of the Kingdom of God. Then **answer** the questions.

At the heart of the Christian Faith is the truth that God loves us, has a plan for our lives, and has saved us from sin and Satan. But for us to know these things, God had to reveal them to us. He had to tell us that He loves us and prove it by showing us His love.

Emmanuel, "God with us"

Throughout His earthly life, Jesus revealed Himself to be God, the divine Son of the Father, and the second Person of the Holy Trinity. He claimed to be Emmanuel, "God with us." He repeatedly taught that "The Father and I are one" (John 10:30), and "No one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6). He boldly proclaimed His divinity, even when facing death (Mark 14:61–62). Jesus' proclamation of His divinity was an astonishing claim and unique among the founders of all world religions. But Jesus did more than just claim to be God — He demonstrated the truth of His divinity by proclaiming the Kingdom of God, making love the law of the Kingdom, and by the example of His life.

The Gospels are the primary source of evidence for Jesus' divinity — and we can be fully confident in their trustworthiness. There are also sources from outside the



Bible dating to the time period of the early Church that speak of Jesus — *The Annals*, *The Antiquities of the Jewish People*, and *The Babylonian Talmud*. The authors of these works were not Christian nor writing for a Christian audience. In fact, they were hostile to Jesus! Yet they believed Him to be significant enough to include in their historical works. They recorded the facts of His trial and Crucifixion and named both Pontius Pilate as governor of Judea and Tiberius as Caesar of Rome. They also noted that Jesus was a wise and authoritative teacher and miracle worker.

The preaching of the early Church in the first decade after Jesus' Death, Resurrection, and Ascension also attests to the belief in Christ's divinity. Central to this earliest preaching were the shocking claims — especially for the time — that Jesus was crucified and died for our sins, rose from the dead in glory, sent the Holy Spirit, is now exalted in God, and is,



therefore, the Messiah and Lord promised by the Old Testament prophets.

Jesus was a Jew, and God's promised Savior. But most Jews of the time did not accept this. Calling a human being "the Lord" would have been blasphemous (an insult to God, and a crime) to other Jews. Calling a crucified man God would have been disgusting to everyone.

Even more, the early Christians suffered terribly for their claim that Jesus is God. They lost their social and financial status. They were kicked out of the synagogue (a Jewish place of worship). And they were persecuted to the point of death. Why would anyone risk these things for claiming Jesus was God if they were not sure it was true?

Jesus Proclaimed the Kingdom of God

Central to Jesus' claim to be God was His proclamation of the Kingdom of God — the reign of God here on earth. Jesus made radical, unconditional love the law of the Kingdom. Jesus' public ministry centered on proclaiming this law of love.

- **First, Jesus defined love as *agapē*.** *Agapē* is the Greek word for the highest form of love. It means unconditional, self-sacrificing love, or charity. *Agapē* love always seeks the good of others and asks for no reward. It is the love God (and Jesus Himself) has for us and is the love we all aspire to. Jesus placed *agapē* love at the center of His teaching. All His other teachings flow from it.
- **Second, Jesus made love His greatest commandment and proclaimed that God is love.** Jesus made love the highest commandment of the Gospel.

He taught His disciples the Great Commandments as a summary of the Law:

"You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment. The second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself." (Matthew 22:37–40)

Jesus' commands to love God and neighbor also reveal that love is who God is. In the Jewish tradition, the Torah (the Jewish Law) reflects the heart of God. Thus, if the highest commandment — the summation of "all the Law," as Jesus said — is love, then God Himself must be love. And, because Jesus is the Son of God, He, too, is love.

- **Third, Jesus taught His disciples to address God the Father as He did — as *Abba*.** *Abba* is an Aramaic word (the language Jesus spoke) that means "affectionate, understanding, trustworthy father," similar to "Daddy." This teaching transforms how we ought to relate to God and He to us. Far from being distant and unknowable, God is near to us, loving, and knowable, as a small child knows his father.
- **Fourth, Jesus identified God the Father with the father in the Parable of the Prodigal Son** (Luke 15:11–32). The father in the parable is unconditionally forgiving, compassionate, and humble, just like God the Father. God, our Father, loves us in the same way.

Jesus' radical law of love makes *agapē* love the end goal of every person and



even of history and culture because “God is love” (1 John 4:8).

Jesus’ Love of the Poor, the Sick, and Sinners

Jesus showed us how to live His law of love by His loving concern for the poor, the sick, and for sinners, and by His own self-sacrifice on the Cross. He calls each of us to love others in the same radical way He loves us because our eternal salvation depends upon it.

Jesus’ Love of the Poor

Jesus taught that caring for the poor is neither a blind obligation, nor a mere sentimental soft spot. Rather, He made it clear that caring for those in need is what separates the good from the wicked. Having a compassionate heart is key to the Christian spiritual life.

Jesus made it a point to be with the poor and gave them alms (Matthew 11:4–6; 6:2–4). He commanded His followers to care for the poor as if they were caring for him: “Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me” (Matthew 25:40). And, in that same teaching, He made caring for the poor (and the sick, the hungry, and so forth) essential to our own salvation (Matthew 25:34–36).

Jesus’ Love of the Sick

Likewise, Jesus’ healings and exorcisms were part of His work of salvation. For Jesus, the power that breaks Satan’s grip on the world and ushers in the Kingdom is the recognition of the unique goodness,

lovability, and dignity of each person that leads to genuine care for them.

Jesus showed genuine concern for the sick person (their spiritual well-being as well as physical health). He desired that those asking for help have faith (such as the healing of blind Bartimaeus in Mark 10:46–52 or the raising of the widow’s son in Luke 7:11–17). His healing miracles pointed beyond themselves to more important truths of God’s love, God’s Kingdom, and the banishing of evil.

Jesus’ Unconditional Love of Sinners

In Jesus’ day, sinners were actively shunned in society. Refusing to associate with sinners was a sign of one’s own moral purity and faithfulness to God. But Jesus did not simply preach redemption to sinners from afar. Rather, He spent time with them and welcomed them into His company because He loved them. Jesus’ unconditional love extends to everyone, and sinners have the most need of that love. As Jesus explained, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick; I came not to call the righteous, but sinners” (Mark 2:17). He even loved the very Scribes and Pharisees who plotted His death. Most importantly to His love of sinners, however, is that He invited them — and us — to repent and follow Him.

Jesus came to invite all of us to belong to the Kingdom of God — the reign of God under His law of love. And He literally gave His life on the Cross to show us the extent of His love.



- 1 At the heart of the Christian is the truth that God _____ us, has a _____ for our lives, and has _____ us from sin.
- 2 How can we know the answer to question number 1?

- 3 What astonishing claim did Jesus make about who He is?

- 4 Where do we find the most evidence for Jesus' divinity?

- 5 What facts about Jesus were recorded by non-Christian historical records?

- 6 Which of the following is not a repeated theme of the preaching of the earliest Christians?
 - a. Jesus was crucified and died for our sins.
 - b. Jesus rose from the dead in glory.
 - c. Jesus is the Messiah and Lord.
 - d. Jesus is one of many paths to salvation.
- 7 Why was the preaching of Christians so shocking in the days of the early Church?

- 8 What is *agapē* love?



- 9 In the Jewish tradition, the _____ reflects the heart of _____.
Therefore, if the highest commandment is _____, then God Himself must be _____.
- 10 How does calling God “Abba, Father” change the way we understand our relationship with Him?
- _____
- _____
- _____
- 11 What does it mean that God the Father is like the father from the parable of the prodigal son?
- a. God the Father is unconditionally forgiving, compassionate, and humble, always waiting for us to return to Him so that He can pour out His mercy and love.
 - b. God the Father is distant, cold, and stern, always waiting to catch us in sin and failure so that He can punish us and condemn us to eternal torment in Hell.
 - c. God the Father gives us only one chance to love as we ought and is unforgiving and unwilling to welcome us back if we return to Him.
- 12 What did Jesus teach is a spiritual danger that separates the good from the wicked?
- a. Forgetting to pray every day.
 - b. Heartlessness towards the poor.
 - c. Eating meat from unclean animals.
- 13 Why do you think it was important that Jesus healed the sick, instead of just forgiving people’s sins?
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- 14 In Jesus’ day, refusing to associate with _____ was a sign of one’s own moral _____ and _____ to God. But Jesus welcomed them into His company and dined with them as a sign of His _____ for them.



Scriptural Rosary: The Luminous Mysteries

The following Scriptural Rosary was taken from the Scriptural Rosary for Justice and Peace found at USCCB.org.

First Luminous Mystery: Baptism in the Jordan

Jesus begins his public ministry being baptized by John.

Our Father ...

For our sake he made him to be sin who did not know sin, so that we might become the righteousness of God in him. (2 Cor. 5:21)

Hail Mary ...

He went throughout [the] whole region of the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, as it is written in ... Isaiah:

"A voice of one crying out in the desert: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths.'" (Luke 3:3)

Hail Mary ...

And the crowds asked him, "What then should we do?" He said to them in reply, "Whoever has two cloaks should share with the person who has none. And whoever has food should do likewise." (Luke 3:10-11)

Hail Mary ...

Jesus also had been baptized ... heaven was opened and the holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased." (Luke 3:21-22)

Hail Mary ...

Here is my servant whom I uphold, my chosen one with whom I am pleased. Upon him I have put my spirit... (Isa. 42:1)

Hail Mary ...

A bruised reed he shall not break, and a smoldering wick he shall not quench. (Isa. 42:3)

Hail Mary ...

I, the LORD, have called you for the victory of justice. (Isa. 42:6)

Hail Mary ...

I formed you, and set you as a covenant of the people, a light for the nations. (Isa. 42:6)

Hail Mary ...

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring glad tidings to the poor. (Luke 4:18)

Hail Mary ...

He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, and to proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord. (Luke 4:18-19)

Hail Mary ...

Glory be ...

Lord Jesus, help us to persevere in living out our baptismal promises.



Second Luminous Mystery: The Wedding at Cana

Jesus performs his first public sign revealing his true identity, at the request of his mother.

Our Father ...

When the wine ran short, the mother of Jesus said to him, "They have no wine." (John 2:3)

Hail Mary ...

Jesus said to her, "Woman, how does your concern affect me? My hour has not yet come." (John 2:4)

Hail Mary ...

His mother said to the servers, "Do whatever he tells you." (John 2:5)

Hail Mary ...

Jesus told them, "Fill the jars with water." So they filled them to the brim. Then he told them, "Draw some out now and take it to the headwaiter." (John 2:7-8)

Hail Mary ...

The headwaiter called the bridegroom and said to him, "Everyone serves good wine first, and then when people have drunk freely, an inferior one; but you have kept the good wine until now." (John 2:9-10)

Hail Mary ...

If I ... have washed your feet, you ought to wash one another's feet. I have given you a model to follow, so that as I have done for you, you should also do. (John 13:14-15)

Hail Mary ...

To you who hear I say, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. (Luke 6:27-28)



Depiction of the Wedding at Cana
by Xu Jihua (1934-1937).

Hail Mary ...

Stop judging and you will not be judged. Stop condemning and you will not be condemned. Forgive and you will be forgiven. (Luke 6:37)

Hail Mary ...

Then he said to all, "If anyone wishes to come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me." (Luke 9:23)

Hail Mary ...

This is my commandment: love one another as I love you. (John 15:12)

Hail Mary ...

Glory be ...

Lord Jesus, open us to the power of your grace to change our hearts and lives.



Third Luminous Mystery: Proclamation of the Kingdom of God

After John was arrested, Jesus began proclaiming the Good News of God's kingdom.

Our Father ...

Jesus came to Galilee proclaiming the gospel of God. (Mark 1:14)

Hail Mary ...

This is the time of fulfillment. The kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel. (Mark 1:15)

Hail Mary ...

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring glad tidings to the poor. (Luke 4:18)

Hail Mary ...

He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, and to proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord. (Luke 4:18-19)

Hail Mary ...

Today this scripture passage is fulfilled in your hearing. (Luke 4:21)

Hail Mary ...

You have heard that it was said, "An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth." But I

say to you ... when someone strikes you on [your] right cheek, turn the other one to him as well." (Matthew 5:38-39)

Hail Mary ...

You have heard that it was said, "You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy." But I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you. (Matthew 5:43-44)

Hail Mary ...

Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth. ... But store up treasures in heaven ... for where your treasure is, there also will your heart be. (Matthew 6:19-21)

Hail Mary ...

Do to others whatever you would have them do to you. This is the law and the prophets. (Matthew 7:12)

Hail Mary ...

Without cost you have received; without cost you are to give. (Matthew 10:8)

Hail Mary ...

Glory be ...

Lord Jesus, fill us with the desire to strive for ongoing conversion.

Fourth Luminous Mystery: The Transfiguration

Jesus is seen with Moses and Elijah, confirming that his suffering will end in glory.

Our Father ...

Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. And he was transfigured before them; his face shone like the sun

and his clothes became white as light. (Matthew 17:1-2)

Hail Mary ...

Two men were conversing with him, Moses and Elijah, who appeared in glory and spoke of his exodus that he was going to accomplish in Jerusalem. (Luke 9:30-31)

Hail Mary ...



Peter and his companions ... saw his glory and the two men standing with him. (Luke 9:32)

Hail Mary ...

Peter said ... "Master, it is good that we are here; let us make three tents ..." But he did not know what he was saying. (Luke 9:33)

Hail Mary ...

A voice [said], "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him." (Matthew 17:5)

Hail Mary ...

But Jesus came and touched them, saying, "Rise, and do not be afraid." And when the disciples raised their eyes, they saw no one else but Jesus alone. (Matthew 17:7-8)

Hail Mary ...

Through him was life, and this life was the light of the human race; the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. (John 1:4-5)

Hail Mary ...

No one has ever seen God. The only Son, God, who is at the Father's side, has revealed him. (John 1:18)

Hail Mary ...

Fifth Luminous Mystery: Institution of the Eucharist

At the last supper, Jesus instructs us to remember him in celebration of the Eucharist.

Our Father ...

Before the feast of Passover, Jesus knew that his hour had come to pass from this world to the Father. He loved his own in the



Icon of Transfiguration of Jesus, unknown artist (15th century).

All of us, gazing with unveiled face on the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, as from the Lord who is the Spirit. (2 Corinthians 3:18)

Hail Mary ...

You are the light of the world. ... [Y]our light must shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your heavenly Father. (Matthew 5:14, 16)

Hail Mary ...

Glory be ...

Lord Jesus, grant us the courage to shine your light in our lives.

world and he loved them to the end. (John 13:1)

Hail Mary ...

My appointed time draws near; in your house I shall celebrate the Passover with my disciples. (Matthew 26:18)

Hail Mary ...



I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer, for, I tell you, I shall not eat it [again] until there is fulfillment in the kingdom of God. (Luke 22:15-16)

Hail Mary ...

Then he took the bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body, which will be given for you; do this in memory of me." (Luke 22:19)

Hail Mary ...

And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which will be shed for you." (Luke 22:20)

Hail Mary ...

For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the death of the Lord until he comes. (1 Corinthians 11:26)

Hail Mary ...

The Hail Holy Queen (*The Salve Regina*)

Hail, holy Queen, mother of mercy,
our life, our sweetness, and our hope.
To you we cry,
poor banished children of Eve;
to you we send up our sighs,
mourning and weeping in
this valley of tears.

I pray not only for them, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, so that they may all be one ... that the world may believe that you sent me. (John 17:20-21)

Hail Mary ...

Now you are Christ's body, and individually parts of it. (1 Corinthians 12:27)

Hail Mary ...

For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, slaves or free persons, and we were all given to drink of one Spirit. (1 Corinthians 12:13)

Hail Mary ...

If [one] part suffers, all the parts suffer with it; if one part is honored, all the parts share its joy. (1 Corinthians 12:26)

Hail Mary ...

Glory be ...

Lord Jesus, make of us a sign of the unity for which you prayed.

Turn, then, most gracious advocate,
your eyes of mercy toward us;
and after this, our exile,
show unto us the blessed fruit
of your womb, Jesus.

O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary.
Amen.



Christ on the Cross

by Leon Bonnat • ca. 1874





Jesus' Plan of Redemption

Directions: Read about the greatest proof of Jesus' divinity of all, His Paschal Mystery. Then **answer** the questions.

Are you someone who makes plans? Or do you find yourself more often than not making things up as you go along? It can be intimidating to plan out how we want something to go. But it can also be helpful to have a step-by-step vision to get things done. And it can be incredibly rewarding once we have successfully completed our plan! We make plans all the time, for things both great and small. Often, we succeed in carrying out our plans and evaluating whether our plan worked.

From the beginning, God had a plan to reveal Himself to us so that we can know and love Him and to save us from sin. Throughout Salvation History, by a series of covenants, God made Himself and His love

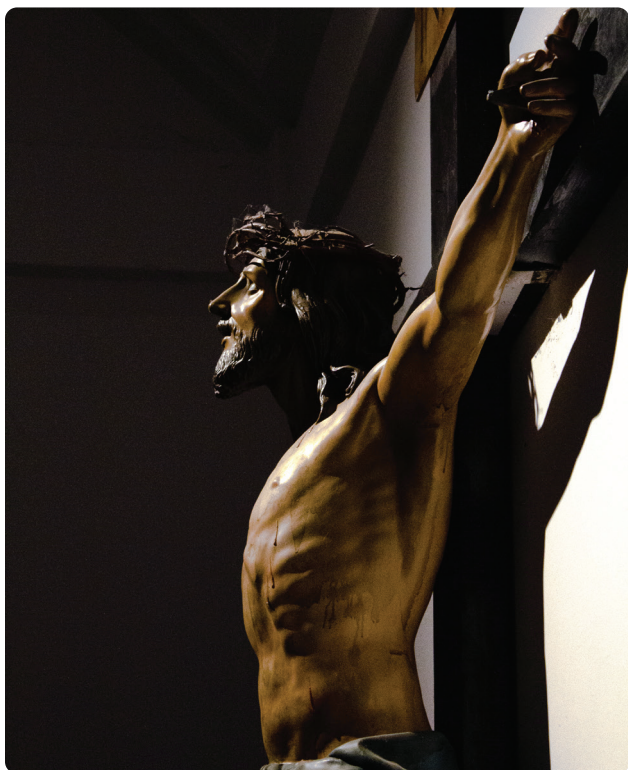
for us known to us. Then, in the fullness of time, He sent His only Son to finish the work of Salvation.

God's Plan

Jesus is Emmanuel, "God with us." His Paschal Mystery is the Passover of the New Covenant — the ultimate expression of Jesus' unconditional love through His self-sacrifice at the end of His earthly mission. The Paschal mystery is Jesus' plan to give away His healing and love to the world forevermore. Jesus' love is redemptive. In other words, His love saves us from sin and death. It would lead to universal redemption — salvation for all people everywhere for all time.

The first part of His plan came on the night before died for all people on the Cross. During the Last Supper, He gave His disciples — and us — the Eucharist and commanded them to repeat this sacred meal "in memory of me" (Luke 22:19). In the Eucharist, Jesus offered His whole self, Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity, in a complete and unconditional gift of love.

Jesus' command was not simply a request to celebrate the anniversary of His Death. Rather, He commanded the Apostles to perform the Eucharistic ritual so that He would actually be present with them when they do, anywhere on Earth, throughout history. Jesus is still present in the Eucharist today — and has been in every Mass celebrated throughout the world since the Last Supper.





The second part of His plan came the next day. On that first Good Friday, Jesus suffered and died on the Cross in the most painful and humiliating of ways. His sacrifice on the Cross may have seemed to onlookers at the time to be a horrible and tragic ending. But, in fact, it would bring salvation to our entire human race and would lead, in three short days, to the triumph of the Resurrection. Jesus knew His love was redemptive. He knew His sacrifice would lead to salvation for all people everywhere for all time. And so, He trusted in His Heavenly Father and offered His life for the world so that the unconditional and saving love of God could be poured out for everyone.

The Resurrection

Jesus' Resurrection is the most important event in Salvation History. Without it, as St. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15, "our faith is in vain" and we would still be in our sins. In other words, if Jesus had not risen from the dead, Christians would be wasting their time.

Thankfully, Christ did not just die. He did rise from the dead, and we are saved from our sins. Christ's victory over sin and death is won not just by His Passion and Death, but also in His glorious Resurrection. How can we know that He truly rose from the dead? Let us look at three ways.

The Empty Tomb

On the third day after Jesus was crucified, on the first Easter Sunday, His tomb was discovered empty. The empty tomb by itself is not enough to prove Jesus' Resurrection, but it supports the Apostles' claim that He rose again. The Gospels tell us that the

Jewish leaders tried to make people doubt the news of the Resurrection. They spread the false rumor that the Apostles stole Jesus' body. They could not have accused the Apostles of this unless there really was a burial site that was found empty.

The Gospel Accounts of Jesus' Risen Appearances to the Apostles

The Gospel accounts of the Resurrection show that the Apostles were not expecting to see Jesus again after He died on the Cross. They record how the Apostles doubted the Resurrection at first. When the Risen Jesus appeared to them, Jesus had to reassure them that it was Him and His actual, spiritually transformed body they were seeing.

St. Paul's Testimony to the Resurrection of Jesus

St. Paul recorded a list of witnesses to the Risen Jesus in 1 Corinthians 15:3–8 and stated that Jesus appeared to more than 500 people, most of them still living. St. Paul was basically saying, "If you don't believe me, go ask all 500 of them!" This list would have been important as legal evidence.

After sharing the evidence of these witnesses, St. Paul then highlighted a problem: either these witnesses believed Jesus is God, or they did not. In either case, it would make no sense for them to falsely claim they saw Him risen.

For those who believed Jesus is God, lying about His Resurrection would have been a terrible crime: breaking God's Commandment against bearing false witness. It also would have undermined the Christian Faith and caused many people



to leave the Church. Likewise, it would be absurd for a non-believer to claim Jesus had risen from the dead if they did not believe He had. Spreading the news of the Resurrection meant conflict with both the Jews and the Romans, leading to active persecution, torture, and even death. Why would an unbeliever willingly put himself in so much danger for a lie?

The most reasonable conclusion is that these witnesses were telling the truth — Jesus really and truly rose from the dead. And if He rose from dead, He is really God, as He claimed to be.

There is another argument for Jesus' Resurrection considered convincing by scholars today. The Apostles were doing miracles in Jesus' name. How can we be so sure that they were doing these miracles? Beyond the testimony in St. Paul and the Acts of the Apostles, the Church was experiencing a huge increase in numbers even in the midst of two centuries of extreme persecution. Most

scholars today do not think this could have happened unless the Apostles were doing the miracles (healing, raising the dead, and exorcisms) to which Scripture testifies. If this is the case, then we must ask the question, "Why would God be performing supernatural acts (like raising the dead) in Jesus' name if the Apostles were lying about His Resurrection and His claim to be the Son of God? If it seems implausible that God would do this, then it is very likely that Jesus was raised in glory and that His claim to be the Son of God is true.

Conclusion

Ultimately, we must remember that faith in Jesus requires more than just evidence that He is God. While we can be absolutely confident in His divinity — that He is Emmanuel, "God with us" — there is a personal choice involved. Even faced with all the evidence in the world, we still must choose to believe in Him, accept His teachings, and follow Him.

1 Why do you think God would have a plan to save us? What is His plan?

2 Why is the Resurrection the most important event of Salvation History?



3 What indirect evidence does the empty tomb give us about Jesus' Resurrection?

4 Why do you think Jesus needed to reassure those He appeared to after His Resurrection?

5 What list does St. Paul provide in 1 Corinthians 15? Why is this list noteworthy?

6 Why would it not make sense for believers in Christ to have lied about His Resurrection? Why would it not make sense for a non-believer to lie about Jesus' Resurrection?



The Crucifixion of Jesus

Directions: Read the story of the Crucifixion of Jesus from John 19 and then **fill in** the chart with as much detail as you can about each event, person, place, or statement from the story.

Event	Details about the event
The Scourging	
Pilate	
Pilate and Jesus' Conversation	
The Jews, Chief Priests, and the Crowd	
Caesar	
Golgotha	



Event	Details about the event
The Inscription on the Cross	
Jesus' Clothes	
Those Present at the Foot of the Cross	
Jesus' Mother	
"I Thirst."	
Jesus' Death	
Blood and Water	
The Tomb	



Resurrection Appearances

Directions: **Read** each Scripture passage about the Resurrection appearances of Christ and **summarize** each passage in your own words. Then **comment** briefly on what each passage teaches us about the Resurrection of Christ.

Scripture Verse(s)	What happens?	What does it teach us about the Resurrection of Christ?
1 John 20:11-18		
2 Luke 24:13-35		
3 Luke 24:36-43		
4 John 21:1-25		
5 Matthew 28:16-20		
6 Luke 24:50-51		