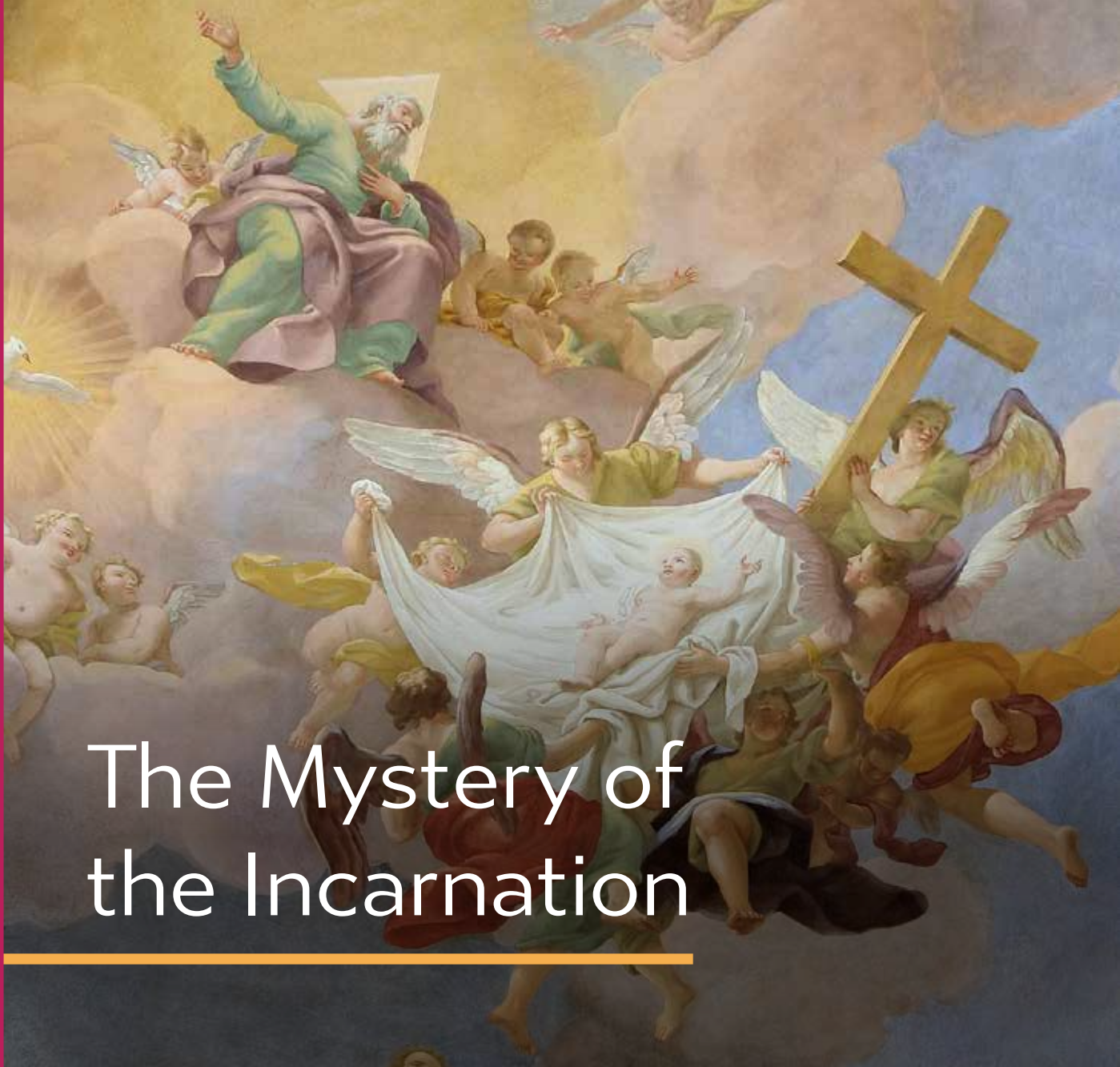




The Mystery of the Incarnation

Teacher Introduction

“And by the Holy Spirit, was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man.” We bow as we say these words about Jesus from the Nicene Creed at every Sunday Mass, but do we really know what they mean? The Incarnation is a mystery that surpasses human understanding, and yet we can begin to understand Jesus Himself and the way He saves us from sin by studying it.

As with many aspects of the Faith, a challenge to teaching the Incarnation can be its apparent familiarity to students. They may have memorized these words long ago and never given much thought to their implications. This is such a tragic irony! Let them see in your teaching a genuine appreciation for this truly marvelous miracle, so their wonder might be awakened and their hearts turned toward Jesus and opened to what He can teach them.

Chapter at a Glance

Enduring Understandings

In this chapter, students will understand that...

- The Incarnation is the very center of Christian reality.
- Through the Incarnation, God the Son became fully human while remaining fully divine.
- Jesus experienced family, friends, work, and the emotions of human life, thereby sanctifying the human experience and affirming human dignity.
- We are called to follow God's path to love Him and resist the temptation to sin.
- The Eucharist extends the Incarnation to us and is the source and summit of Christian life.
- Through the Incarnation and the Crucifixion we know of God's complete love for us..

Essential Questions

- What is the Incarnation?
- What does the Incarnation mean for the human experience and human dignity?
- How can Christ's humanity inspire our choices on our journey towards salvation?
- What is the relationship between the Incarnation and the Eucharist?
- What does the Incarnation teach us about God's love?

Chapter 11 Lesson Plan Chart

ACTIVITY	TEACHER'S GUIDE PAGES	STUDENT TEXTBOOK PAGES	STUDENT WORKBOOK PAGES
Focus and Reflection Questions	pages 286–287	page 172	
Straight to the Source Primary Source Material	pages 288–289	pages 173–175	
Warm Up: Sacred Art Walk and Share	page 290		
Activity #1: Incarnation Bible Search	pages 291–292		pages 92–93
Activity #2: Incarnation in Action	pages 293–294		page 94
Activity #3: Aristotle's Three Kinds of Friendships	pages 295–296		pages 95–96

What Your Students Will Learn in Chapter 11

Unless otherwise noted, all page numbers refer to the Student Textbook.

Vocabulary

- Holy Family (pg. 165)

Scripture Encounters

Students will directly engage with the following Scripture passages over the course of the chapter:

- Genesis 2:15 (pg. 166)
- Matthew 6:11 (pg. 167)
- Matthew 15:36 (pg. 167)
- Luke 22:61 (pg. 170)
- John 15:13–15 (pg. 166)
- Hebrews 4:15 (pg. 165)

Connections to the Catechism

- CCC 469 (pg. 165)

Straight to the Source

Additional readings from primary sources

- Excerpt from the General Audience of Pope Paul VI, November 15, 1972 (pg. 173)
- *Salvifici Doloris* 16 (pg. 174)
- *Deus Caritas Est* 18 (pg. 175)

Materials

- Selection of images from **SophiaOnline.org/SacredArtWalk**, printed in color.
- Tape
- Sticky notes of four different colors.
- Service project materials ranging from plastic gloves, ribbon, napkins, cutlery, cardstock cut into various sizes, markers, crayons, colored pencils, scissors, placemats, and so forth.

Lives of Faith

- St. Francis of Assisi (pg. 168)

Teacher Notes

Chapter Text and Discussion Questions

- 1 Can you think of any examples that illustrate the point that no other religion can claim that God came to us to become our brother? *Students might share specific examples from Greco-Roman myths or draw on knowledge of other world religions.*
- 2 What does God becoming man say about humanity and human dignity? *God's assumption of our humanity elevates our dignity—God chooses to not just become like us but to become one of us.*

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Encountering Christ

The Mystery of The Incarnation

Sometimes, the most basic truth of Christianity is too much to get our minds around: God became our brother. That is an astounding thing. No other religion makes this claim. In Greek and Roman mythology, the gods came down to earth to meddle and to frustrate humanity—not to become human. In other major religions, such as Islam, God is so far above and beyond the world that the idea of God becoming man is inconceivable. Only in Christianity does God, as part of the economy of salvation, take on our human nature and become man.

As we have seen, this was such a challenging idea that it took several hundred years for the Church to learn how to articulate it properly. The Incarnation is a great mystery. It also is the very center of the Christian understanding of all reality. In the Incarnation, God and man, Heaven and earth, come together. It is the event that gives all other events meaning. For this reason, it was extremely important that the Church get its articulation of that mystery right and be able to precisely say that the eternal God became totally and completely a man without sacrificing any of His divinity; that the man Jesus remained totally God.

▼ At the center of our Faith is the profound mystery that God “came down from Heaven, and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the virgin Mary, and became man.”



Incarnation of Christ by Piero di Cosimo (ca. 1505).

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When we understand that, it makes His invitation to us all the more remarkable: the man who is God invites us to be part of his family, that is to say, to become the sons and daughters of God the Father. This is salvation.

“What he was, he remained and what he was not, he assumed,” sings the Roman Liturgy. And the liturgy of St. John Chrysostom proclaims and sings: “O only-begotten Son and Word of God, immortal being, you who deigned for our salvation to become incarnate of the holy Mother of God and ever-virgin Mary, you who without change became man and were crucified, O Christ our God, you who by your death have crushed death, you who are one of the Holy Trinity, glorified with the Father and the Holy Spirit, save us!” (CCC 469)

While Jesus remained who He is from all eternity, the Eternal Son of God, in time and history He was “incarnate of the virgin Mary” (Nicene Creed). This means He took on our human nature and lived an entirely human life, “For by His incarnation the Son of God has united Himself in some fashion with every man. He worked with human hands, He thought with a human mind, acted by human choice and loved with a human heart. Born of the Virgin Mary, He has truly been made one of us, like us in all things except sin” (*Gaudium et Spes* 22).

When we say Jesus lived an entirely human life this is saying that Jesus is like us **“yet without sin” (Heb. 4:15)**. He demonstrated this humanity in every aspect of His earthly life and had many common human experiences. Consider the following:

Family

Like you and me, Jesus had a family, Mary and Joseph—the **Holy Family**. He grew up with them, was taught by them, and traveled with them (Lk. 2:41–52). He also had an extended family: John the Baptist was a cousin, and James and Joseph (Matt. 13:55; 28:1; cf. 27:56), the “brothers of the Lord,” may have been sons of a close relative whom Matthew calls “the other Mary.” The fact that Jesus had close relatives with whom He grew up and spent time means that He had the same familial experiences we have. This is important because it affirms that the human family is itself good and is a part of God’s plan for humanity. God created us to live as families. He wants us to live as families because our families are a part of what it means to be created in the image of God (Gen. 1:27–28). When the Eternal Son assumed a human nature, He became a little baby, then a child, an adolescent, and then a man in His prime. He had a mother and a foster father. The family part of his life is integral to His human life. Without it, Christ would have missed something of what it means to be human.

Aa Vocabulary

Holy Family (n.): The earthly family of Jesus which includes His Blessed Mother Mary, and His foster father Joseph.

Jesus had the same familial experience we have. And His experience in a family affirms that the human family is itself good and is a part of God’s plan for humanity. God created us to live as families.

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- 3 **Why is it significant to say that Jesus was not simply born of the Virgin Mary but incarnate of her?** *This truth reminds us that Jesus had a fully human nature. He was incarnate of a human woman—the Virgin Mary—from whom He received His very flesh and blood. She was not simply a vessel that carried Jesus, she was His true mother.*
- 4 **Can you think of other Biblical figures not mentioned here who are a part of Jesus’ family?** *Mary’s mother Ann; Mary’s cousin Elizabeth and brother-in-law Zechariah, for example.*
- 5 **Consider Mt 1:1–17 in the Nativity narrative. Jesus has a genealogical heritage. Have you heard of any of those figures before?** *Accept reasoned responses and elaborate on some of the figures listed (i.e. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Ruth, Jesse, David, Solomon).*
- 6 **The Trinity is an eternal exchange of life-giving love. What are some ways our families image the Trinity?** *The Father eternally begets the Son in love, the Son pours Himself out in love to the Father, and the Holy Spirit proceeds from them both; Husband and wife give themselves completely to each other; in the normal course of things, their love creates life—a baby.*

- 7 **What are qualities of a true friend?** *Accept reasoned responses like loyalty, trust, and compassion. A true friend desires our good.*
- 8 **How did Jesus demonstrate these qualities?** *Accept reasoned responses. Point to Jesus visiting friends like Mary and Martha, His grieving over the death of His friend Lazarus, and the trust He places in Peter and the other Apostles to keep watch when he prays at the Mount of Olives.*
- 9 **How can we love our friends for their own sake?** *Accept reasoned responses about how the love of friends is unselfish. We must desire the true good of our friends, and that may mean we sacrifice what we might think we want from them.*
- 10 **Discussion question: How is work an opportunity to participate in the wonder of creation?** *Accept reasoned responses but draw the connection that God created the world and then created man to have stewardship over the world to continue to shape it, and build the Kingdom of Heaven. In using our gifts and talents, we demonstrate God's love and are participating more fully in His creation.*
- 11 **Do human beings ever truly create anything new? Explain.** *Accept reasoned answers.*

We should have friends. But we need to love them for their own sake and not treat them as a means for our pleasure or enjoyment. Jesus died for His friends.

Friends

Also like us, Jesus had friends with whom He spent time: Martha, Mary, and Lazarus (see Jn. 11:17–27; Lk. 10:38–42; Jn. 11:1–11ff.). Jesus wept when Lazarus died (Jn. 11:35) and gave Martha advice (Lk. 10:41). Then, there were the Twelve Apostles, his closest friends (see Matt. 10:1–4). Jesus “hung out” with his friends. He ate with them, lived with them, and had common experiences with them. Ultimately, He died for them. To His Apostles at the Last Supper, Jesus said, **“No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. I no longer call you slaves, because a slave does not know what his master is doing. I have called you friends, because I have told you everything I have heard from my Father” (Jn. 15:13–15).** It was a part of Christ’s incarnational mission to befriend us.

As was the case with the family, Jesus’ friendships show us that friendship is itself good and a part of the divine plan. We should have friends. But we need to love them for their own sake and not treat them as a means for our pleasure or enjoyment. Jesus died for His friends. He died for us. He did not take advantage of us, and He most certainly was not indifferent to our suffering. His whole mission was focused on bringing us to true happiness. We need to treat our own friends in the same loving, considerate way.

Work

When God became man, He had a job: He was a carpenter. His foster father Joseph was a carpenter, and Jesus followed in His foster father’s footsteps (Mk. 6:3; Matt. 13:55). The work Jesus did as a carpenter is an example to us. It shows us that our labor is a participation in God’s creation. God delighted in His creation when He made the world, which the book of Genesis referred to as God’s “work” or “craftsmanship” (*melakhah*; Gen. 2:2). He wants us to have fulfilling work too, work that builds up His Kingdom on earth.

Oftentimes, cultural representations of work depict it as a meaningless drudgery that people have to do just to get by; but that is not anything like the purpose God has in mind for our labor. While it is true that we experience suffering in our work as a result of Original Sin (Gen. 3:17), even before the Fall, God **“took the man and settled him in the garden of Eden, to cultivate and care for it” (Gen. 2:15; emphasis added).** When we work, we create new things, and so our work is yet another example of us being made in the image of God. Jesus participated fully in this aspect of our humanity.

Food

Both before and after His Resurrection, Jesus ate and drank. Eating and drinking were so tied to the Jewish culture that the experience of community gathered around a table was a key tool for evangelization. Jesus would often eat with people He did not agree with (see Lk. 7:36ff., 14:1ff.), and He looked forward to a good meal with friends (Lk. 22:15).

Food likewise had a very important place in Jesus' ministry. Consider the number of times we hear about food, especially bread, in the Gospels. For example, when Jesus fasted in the desert, He got hungry and the Devil tempted Him with bread (Lk. 4:2–3). Later, He told us to pray in the Our Father, “**Give us today our daily bread**” (Matt. 6:11, 15:36). He also multiplied the loaves to feed thousands of people (Matt. 14:19); referred to the Kingdom of God as a wedding banquet (Matt. 22:2–3; Rev. 19:9); and Jesus even referred to Himself as the Bread of Life, as the food that will make us live forever (Jn. 6:35).

This, of course, is in reference to the Eucharist, the Sacrament in which Jesus gives Himself to us under the appearance of bread (Matt. 26:26; Mk. 14:22; Lk. 22:19; 1 Cor. 11:24). The Church describes the Eucharist as the very source and summit of the Christian life (CCC 1324). At the Mass, through consuming the food that is Jesus, we are united with God and with each other. In this, we see the centrality of food to Jesus' mission. We also see that Christianity

▼ When Jesus multiplied the loaves and fishes in order to feed the multitudes, He was preparing His Disciples for the institution of the Holy Eucharist.



The Miracle of the Loaves and Fishes by Jacopo Tintoretto (ca. 1515).

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12 Can you think of some examples where food is brought up in Scripture?

Accept reasoned responses. In addition to stories like the miracle at Cana, the feeding of the 5,000, and of course, the Last Supper, many of the parables concern themselves with food such as the seed that grows into the fig or mustard tree or a bountiful harvest, the rich man and Lazarus, and Jesus' encounter at Emmaus.

† Lives of Faith

St. Francis of Assisi

Every year around Christmas, small children everywhere dress up to put on a live nativity play. Maybe you did the same thing when you were little. Unless you were lucky enough to be Joseph, Mary, or the angel Gabriel, you were probably stuck playing shepherd number 3, sheep number 2 or any other number of animals who might have been present at Jesus' birth.

It is St. Francis of Assisi you can thank for your character; actually, you can thank him for the nativity play altogether and even the nativity set your family puts out at Christmas!

Born around 1182, St. Francis of Assisi grew up in Italy as the son of a prosperous silk merchant. Given the name Giovanni, his father called him Francesco because of his love for the French culture and lifestyle. Francis' father dreamed that he would grow up to share that love as well as a penchant for business, and for many years it seemed Francis' father was going to get his wish.

Francis had a magnetic personality and his family's wealth financed a lifestyle of parties and sin. Francis was not just popular, he was also a shrewd businessman. But wealth and business success were not enough for the young Francis. He also wanted glory. That meant becoming a knight and fighting battles.

Around the age of 20, he was captured and spent nearly a year in prison before being ransomed. When he came home, he resumed his partying lifestyle, and about a year later he was set to go to war again. After only a day's journey he came home, claiming God had told him in a dream that he was living for all the wrong things. This began his search for a better way to live.

The next few years were marked by impetuous attempts to figure out what God wanted him to do with his life. The most famous story says that Jesus spoke to St. Francis while he was in prayer in the Church of San Damiano. It was then Jesus told Francis to "Go, rebuild my Church." In his passion—and perhaps short-sightedness—Francis assumed Jesus meant only for him to repair the crumbling Church he was praying in. He sold some of his father's cloth and tried to give the money to the pastor. The pastor would not accept the money since it was acquired dishonestly and eventually Francis was cited by his own father!

No, Francis was not perfect. But he pursued God with passion, and ultimately that passion was attractive. At one point about ten years after his conversion, there were over 5,000 men wishing to follow his way of life. He never stopped trying to do God's will, and before the end of his life he had founded the Franciscans and the Order of Saint Clare.

And we cannot forget: amongst his many contributions to the Church, St. Francis was the first person to create a manger scene on Christmas. Complete with live animals, he invited townspeople out to the countryside to gaze upon the scene as he preached about the child Jesus who was born in a manger. This was the first live-nativity, and it started the popular practice of putting nativity scenes in the home.



No, Francis was not perfect. But he pursued God with passion, and ultimately that passion was attractive.

does not have any disdain for the body. Rather, through the Incarnation extended to us in the Eucharist, God has demonstrated that our bodies are great gifts. They are good. They also are central to the economy of salvation.

Jesus enjoyed eating and drinking with His friends because sustaining our bodies is part of what it means to be human. And in the Eucharist, sustenance for the body and sustenance for the soul come from one and the same meal.

Temptation

Jesus did not just enjoy the good parts of human existence, such as family, friends, and food. He also experienced the difficult parts. One of those is temptation. In the desert, at the beginning of His public ministry, Jesus was tempted in the desert by the Devil (Matt. 4:1–11). He was not tempted in the sense that He considered doing something wrong, but in the sense that the Devil put Him to the test. The Devil presented Him with the option of an “easier” path than that of the will of God—a path that He immediately rejected in favor of the suffering that lay before Him. That is where Jesus differed from us. When Satan tested Adam, the man failed. When Satan tested Jesus, the man was victorious. He endured temptation, but He endured it without sin (Heb. 4:15). He never gave in to it. Still, even without the sin that we normally associate with the entertaining of temptations, this must have been a painful experience.



The Temptation of Christ by Sandro Botticelli (ca. 1482).

Jesus did not just enjoy the good parts of human existence, such as family, friends, and food. He also experienced the difficult parts. One of those is temptation.

◀ Christ underwent the temptations of the Devil and remained sinless, giving us a perfect example to imitate in our lives.

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13 What are some signs of the reality that the Church does not have any disdain for the body? *The Sacraments are a chief sign of how Christianity recognizes the body as good. Christ knows His disciples wash, eat, drink, and tire; therefore, He seamlessly coordinates physical life with spiritual life in Baptism, Eucharist, and Anointing of the Sick. God disdains nothing He has made; all of the natural world is good. Accept additional reasoned answers.*

14 Why do you think it was important that Jesus experience this test by the devil? *Jesus is the example to us of a fully human life. We will all experience temptation by the Devil, and Jesus gives us a model to follow.*

15 Temptation itself is not sinful, but it is something best to avoid if we can. What are some ways to resist temptation? *Point students to the connection that it is important to identify situations that lead to temptations so that they can be avoided.*

16 This highlights the difference between physical and spiritual suffering. Which do you think our culture treats as worse?

Which do you think is actually worse? Our culture behaves as though physical suffering is the worst kind. However, spiritual suffering can be much worse. Loneliness, abandonment, and other spiritual hurts not only cause us to hurt emotionally but can lead us to develop vices and to serious sin.

Jesus, in the Incarnation, shows us that God feels our pain in a more direct and real way than even we do. He knows what we are going through, and He remains ever ready to help us.

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Encountering Christ

Christ loves us so much that He suffered betrayal, torture, and an agonizing death for our sake.



The Crucifixion by the Dreux Budé Master (ca. 1450).

Sorrow, Suffering, and Death

Jesus also experienced the emotions of sorrow and distress, particularly the night before His Crucifixion. He contemplated the torturous death that He was about to experience and felt deeply troubled, so much so that He sweat drops of blood. While Jesus' will never deviated from the will of God, that does not mean that He would not have liked to avoid the physical pain that awaited Him. He knew what was coming, and it grieved His heart.

Even more than the physical suffering, Jesus suffered when His closest friends let Him down. Jesus grew frustrated when Peter, John, and James could not manage to stay awake with Him. Then, one of his closest followers, one of the Twelve Apostles, Judas, betrayed Him outright, arriving at the garden at the head of a mob. When Jesus referred to Judas as "friend" and asked him what he was doing (Lk. 22:47–51), can we not hear the sadness in His voice? That same night, as Jesus was being mocked and beaten, St. Peter denied even knowing Him, not once but three times. At the third denial, **"the Lord turned and looked at Peter" (Lk. 22:61)**. This must have been a moment of extreme sorrow for the Lord, one to which, unfortunately, so many of us can relate.

Death and sickness are a constant of human life, and Jesus did not avoid them either. In fact, He spent much of His ministry healing the sick and helping outcasts (Matt. 8:13, Luke 14:4ff., Jn. 4:47ff., Lk. 5:12ff.). In doing so, He personified compassion. The word *compassion* literally means "to suffer with," and this is just what Jesus did. When He saw those who were hurting, He hurt with them. This is the nature of love. When you love someone, their joy is your joy, and their pain is your pain. God loves us completely. He feels our pain in a more direct and real way than even we do. Jesus, in the Incarnation, shows us this is true. He healed people, He helped them, and ultimately He went to the Cross and died for them. That death was both excruciatingly painful and humiliating. Because of it, not one of us, when we are hurting, can say, "God doesn't know what I'm going through!" He does. He has been there. And He remains ever ready to help us, heal us, and carry us as we carry our cross.

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The Truth Is...



God loves us so much that He assumed a human nature. The Word became flesh and dwelt among us! The Incarnation shows us that real love and friendship mean being truly present to one another. Jesus' command to love our neighbor cannot be accomplished without our being present to them—our response to this command cannot be phoned in. Just as Jesus made His Body an offering, we must use our bodies to will the good of others—through service, practice of the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy, and sacrifice. When we make serving the needy a habit, and frequent the Sacraments, we begin to see Jesus in others, especially the poor.

In our present-day society, there are so many demands on our attention that even when we are physically with someone, we may not be fully present. This demand of discipleship is also especially challenging because it is difficult to look suffering people in the eyes—to face their pain and need head on. But that is exactly what Jesus did and what we need to do as well.

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Chapter Activities

Focus and Reflection Questions

(page 172 in the Student Textbook)

- 1** What is one way in which Christianity is unique from all other world religions? *God fully became man—taking on our human nature to become one of us.*
- 2** What does the Church say about the mystery of the Incarnation? *The eternal God became totally and completely a man without sacrificing any of His divinity; the man Jesus remained totally God.*
- 3** How does Jesus' familial life shape our understanding of family today? *God created us to live as families.*
- 4** According to St. Thomas Aquinas, how does the Incarnation impact our friendship with Jesus? *Friendship is based on a certain equality; by becoming man, God became visible, thereby allowing us to be drawn more to the love of things invisible.*
- 5** Before He began His preaching ministry, what type of work did Jesus do? *Jesus followed in his foster father's footsteps as a carpenter.*
- 6** How should the Incarnation shape our outlook on work? *We should delight in our work; God has a purpose in mind for our labor—to utilize our talents to create new things.*
- 7** How does the Church describe the Eucharist for Christians? *The Eucharist is the source and summit of Christian life.*

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Encountering Christ

Chapter 11

Focus and Reflection Questions

- 1** What is one way in which Christianity is unique from all other world religions?
- 2** What does the Church say about the mystery of the Incarnation?
- 3** How does Jesus' familial life shape our understanding of family today?
- 4** According to St. Thomas Aquinas, how does the Incarnation impact our friendship with Jesus?
- 5** Before he began His preaching ministry, what type of work did Jesus do?
- 6** How should the Incarnation shape our outlook on work?
- 7** How does the Church describe the Eucharist for Christians?
- 8** How does the celebration of the Eucharist extend the Incarnation to us?
- 9** How did Jesus differ from humanity in the difficulty of temptation?
- 10** In what way did Jesus experience the pain and sorrow of human life?
- 11** How does the Incarnation illustrate God as compassionate?
- 12** St. Francis of Assisi was the first to erect a Nativity Scene, such as the ones we set up in our homes at Christmas. How does the Nativity Scene teach us about the Incarnation?

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-
- 8** **How does the celebration of the Eucharist extend the Incarnation to us?** *God becomes fully present in the consecration of the bread and wine. In the Eucharist, sustenance for the body and the soul—earthly and eternal—come from one in the same meal.*
-
- 9** **How did Jesus differ from humanity in the difficulty of temptation?** *Jesus immediately rejected the easy path of sin in favor of the suffering that lay before Him for our sake.*
-
- 10** **In what way did Jesus experience the pain and sorrow of human life?** *Accept reasoned responses from Scripture. For example: Jesus was aware of the suffering that awaited him and grieved it; He witnessed His friends abandon Him in His hour of need; He endured pain and agony in His Passion.*
-
- 11** **How does the Incarnation illustrate God as compassionate?** *By becoming fully human, God has endured our human experience and existence: He has been there and remains ready to help, heal, and carry us.*
-
- 12** **St. Francis of Assisi was the first to erect a Nativity Scene, such as the ones we set up in our homes at Christmas. How does the Nativity Scene teach us about the Incarnation?** *The Nativity Scene depicts Jesus birth, when the Incarnation of the Son of God became revealed to the world. God became man in the baby Jesus at Christmas.*
-

Primary Source Activity

Straight to the Source

(pages 173–175 in the Student Textbook)

These optional primary source readings and reflection questions are meant to help root the learning from this chapter in the documents and tradition of the Catholic Church. The first reading is always a more simple reading, the second is of average difficulty, and the third is intended for more advanced students.

Answer Key

Excerpt from the General Audience of Pope Paul VI, November 15, 1972:

- 1 God's grace.
- 2 The virtues.
- 3 To teach us how to resist the devil ourselves.

Salvifici Doloris 16

- 1 He healed the sick; consoled the afflicted; fed the hungry; freed people from deafness, blindness, leprosy, the devil and various physical disabilities; three times he restored the dead to life.
- 2 Jesus teaches us that we will suffer for the Truth, therefore suffering is good and brings us closer to Christ.
- 3 Knowing He would suffer, Jesus willingly offered Himself as a sacrifice for the world. By saving the world through His own suffering and death, He gave suffering a good, and specifically redemptive aspect.

Deus Caritas Est 18

- 1 Accept reasoned answers that touch on the fundamental need each person has to be loved. Seeing with the eyes of Christ means seeing with total self-giving love for every person, even people we do not like, or even know, because they are made in the image of God.
- 2 Accept reasoned answers that demonstrate understanding of the inseparable nature of these two commandments. By assuming a human nature while keeping His divine nature, Jesus entered into human relationships of love, becoming our God and neighbor at the same time.

Unit 3, Chapter 11: The Mystery of the Incarnation

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Straight to the Source

ADDITIONAL READINGS FROM PRIMARY SOURCES

Excerpt from the General Audience of Pope Paul VI, November 15, 1972

What defense, what remedy should we use against the Devil's action?—even though it remains difficult to put into practice. We could say: everything that defends us from sin strengthens us by that very fact against the invisible enemy. Grace is the decisive defense. Innocence takes on the aspect of strength. Everyone recalls how often the apostolic method of teaching used the armor of a soldier as a symbol for the virtues that can make a Christian invulnerable. The Christian must be a militant; he must be vigilant and strong; and he must at times make use of special ascetical practices to escape from certain diabolical attacks. Jesus teaches us this by pointing to "prayer and fasting" as the remedy. And the Apostle suggests the main line we should follow: "Be not overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good."

- 1 What does Pope Paul VI say is the best defense against the Devil?
- 2 What is the "armor" of a Christian soldier?
- 3 Jesus faced temptation by the Devil. Why do you think He allowed Himself to be tempted?

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Straight to the Source

ADDITIONAL READINGS FROM PRIMARY SOURCES

Salvifici Doloris 16—An Apostolic Letter of Pope St. John Paul II, February 11, 1984

In his messianic activity in the midst of Israel, Christ drew increasingly closer to *the world of human suffering*. "He went about doing good," and his actions concerned primarily those who were suffering and seeking help. He healed the sick, consoled the afflicted, fed the hungry, freed people from deafness, from blindness, from leprosy, from the devil and from various physical disabilities, three times he restored the dead to life. He was sensitive to every human suffering, whether of the body or of the soul. And at the same time he taught, and at the heart of his teaching there are *the eight beatitudes*, which are addressed to people tried by various sufferings in their temporal life. These are "the poor in spirit" and "the afflicted" and "those who hunger and thirst for justice" and those who are "persecuted for justice sake," when they insult them, persecute them and speak falsely every kind of evil against them for the sake of Christ.... Thus according to Matthew; Luke mentions explicitly those "who hunger now."

Christ drew close above all to the world of human suffering through the fact of having taken *this suffering upon his very self*. During his public activity, he experienced not only fatigue, homelessness, misunderstanding even on the part of those closest to him, but, more than anything, he became progressively more and more isolated and encircled by hostility and the preparations for putting him to death.... Christ goes towards his Passion and death with full awareness of the mission that he has to fulfil precisely in this way. *Precisely by means of this suffering* he must bring it about "that man should not perish, but have eternal life." Precisely by means of his Cross he must strike at the roots of evil, planted in the history of man and in human souls. Precisely by means of his Cross he must accomplish *the work of salvation*. This work, in the plan of eternal Love, has a redemptive character.

- 1 What are some ways Jesus entered into the world of human suffering, as listed by Pope St. John Paul II?
- 2 How do the Beatitudes connect to human suffering?
- 3 How did the Incarnation bring new meaning to suffering?

Straight to the Source

ADDITIONAL READINGS FROM PRIMARY SOURCES

Deus Caritas Est 18—An Encyclical Letter of Pope Benedict XVI, December 25, 2005

Love of neighbour is thus shown to be possible in the way proclaimed by the Bible, by Jesus. It consists in the very fact that, in God and with God, I love even the person whom I do not like or even know. This can only take place on the basis of an intimate encounter with God, an encounter which has become a communion of will, even affecting my feelings. Then I learn to look on this other person not simply with my eyes and my feelings, but from the perspective of Jesus Christ. His friend is my friend. Going beyond exterior appearances, I perceive in others an interior desire for a sign of love, of concern. This I can offer them not only through the organizations intended for such purposes, accepting it perhaps as a political necessity. Seeing with the eyes of Christ, I can give to others much more than their outward necessities; I can give them the look of love which they crave. Here we see the necessary interplay between love of God and love of neighbour which the *First Letter of John* speaks of with such insistence. If I have no contact whatsoever with God in my life, then I cannot see in the other anything more than the other, and I am incapable of seeing in him the image of God. But if in my life I fail completely to heed others, solely out of a desire to be "devout" and to perform my "religious duties," then my relationship with God will also grow arid. It becomes merely "proper," but loveless. Only my readiness to encounter my neighbour and to show him love makes me sensitive to God as well. Only if I serve my neighbour can my eyes be opened to what God does for me and how much he loves me. The saints—consider the example of Blessed Teresa of Calcutta—constantly renewed their capacity for love of neighbour from their encounter with the Eucharistic Lord, and conversely this encounter acquired its real-ism and depth in their service to others. Love of God and love of neighbour are thus inseparable, they form a single commandment. But both live from the love of God who has loved us first. No longer is it a question, then, of a "commandment" imposed from without and calling for the impossible, but rather of a freely-bestowed experience of love from within, a love which by its very nature must then be shared with others. Love grows through love. Love is "divine" because it comes from God and unites us to God; through this unifying process it makes us a "we" which transcends our divisions and makes us one, until in the end God is "all in all" (1 Cor 15:28).

- 1 What do you think Pope Benedict XVI means by "seeing with the eyes of Christ"? How does seeing with the eyes of Christ allow us to offer our neighbors what they truly need?
- 2 The Pope explains that love of God and love of neighbor "form a single commandment." How would you put that idea in your own words? How does the Incarnation especially demonstrate it?

Warm-Up

Sacred Art Walk and Share

(not in the Student Workbook)

This activity is meant to introduce the chapter's topic, activate student knowledge, and encourage students to reflect on their own experience in order to set the stage for the learning in the rest of the chapter.

Scored _____ / 10

Activity Instructions

- A** Post a series of images around the room such as the ones from the list below, and/or any others you may wish to add. Digital images are available at SophiaOnline.org/SacredArtWalk.
- *Adoration of the Shepherds*, Stomer, (1632).
 - *Presentation of Christ at the Temple*, Holbein the Elder, (1500–01).
 - *Christ among the Doctors*, Veronese, (1560)
 - *The Finding of the Saviour in the Temple*, Hunt, (1860).
 - *The Wedding Feast at Cana*, Tintoretto, (1545).
 - *Christ at the home of Martha and Mary*, Stettner, (17th C).
 - *Christ in the house of his parents*, Millais, (1850).
 - *Christ in the carpenter's shop*, van Honthorst, (1620).
- B** Provide each student with four sticky notes, each a different color.
- C** Write four questions on the board for students to respond to on their sticky notes as they walk around the room viewing the images. Students should choose a different painting to contemplate for their response to each question. For example, a student might choose *Adoration of the Shepherds* for their response to Question 1, *The Wedding Feast at Cana* for their response to Question 2, and so on.
- **Question 1:** What can you discern about Jesus' relationship with the other people in this painting?
 - **Question 2:** Which image resonates with a story from your own life?
 - **Question 3:** What is something interesting you observe in this piece of art?
 - **Question 4:** What does this image show us about what it means to be human?
- D** When students have responded to all four questions, facilitate a discussion about their reflections on the works of art to debrief and ultimately transition into the content of this chapter's essay.

Activity #1

Incarnation Bible Search

(pages 92–93 in the Student Workbook)

This activity is meant to help your students work directly with the text of this chapter and think more deeply about it.

Scored ____ / 10

Activity Instructions

Have students work individually or in pairs to look up the Scripture passages from the chapter text that are provided on the worksheet **Incarnation Bible Search** found on **pg. 92** of the Student Workbook. They should write a one sentence summary in the first column and then draw a connection to human experience in the second column.

Answer Key

Note: These are suggested responses. Accept other reasoned answers.

Passage	Summary	Connection to human experience
Matthew 2:13–15	Jesus and His family flee to Egypt to escape persecution	Humans experience fear, and have need to escape from persecution.
John 11:35	Jesus' friend Lazarus dies.	We feel emotional and spiritual pain and have the capacity to mourn the loss of our friends.
Matthew 9:23–27	Jesus is sleeping and is woken up to calm the storm at sea.	We need sleep, we should come to the aid of friends.
Luke 2:7	Jesus is born in Bethlehem.	The birth of a child is a profoundly joyful event.
Matthew 16:32–39	Jesus feeds the large crowd.	We need to be fed — both physically and spiritually.
Mark 6:3	Description of Jesus' family.	The human family has a special dignity and is a blessed institution.
Matthew 26:17–19	Jesus and the Apostles prepare to celebrate Passover.	We prepare to celebrate holy days.

Incarnation Bible Search

_____ / 10 pts.

Directions: Look up the Scripture passages below. In the first column, write a one to two sentence summary of the passage. In the second column, make a connection between the passage and human experience. The first one has been done for you as an example.

Passage	Summary	Connection to human experience
Matthew 2:13–15	Jesus and His family flee to Egypt to escape persecution	Humans experience fear, and have need to escape from persecution.
John 11:35		
Matthew 9:23–27		
Luke 2:7		
Matthew 16:32–39		

Passage	Summary	Connection to human experience
Mark 6:3		
Matthew 26:17–19		
Luke 2:21		
Matthew 21:12–17		
Matthew 26:39		

Passage	Summary	Connection to human experience
Luke 2:21	Jesus is brought to the Temple to be led into His Jewish faith and named.	We need religion; we are given a name by our parents; everything we have is a gift from God.
Matthew 21:12–17	Jesus cleanses the Temple of the money lenders and market.	It is just to express righteous anger when it is warranted.
Matthew 26:39	Jesus' Agony in the Garden in which He asks if it is possible for the cup to pass from Him, but ultimately for God's will to be done.	We experience fear, and when we do we should pray for God's will to be done.

Activity #2

Incarnation in Action

(page 94 in the Student Workbook)

This activity is meant to help extend, deepen, or apply the learning that has occurred in this chapter.

Teacher's Note: Prior to this lesson/activity, contact your local soup kitchen or food pantry to inquire about what food needs they currently have. Some soup kitchens or food pantries will only accept items on their lists or at specific times. Use that information to assemble your list of items for students to bring to class.

Scored ____ / 10

Activity Instructions

- A** Begin by explaining to your students how Christ's humanity challenges us to be Christ for others and to see Christ in others, especially those who are less fortunate than ourselves. God became man to be with us—He was fully present and used His own hands and His own voice when He ministered to others.
- B** In this activity, students will spend the class period assembling/creating materials for a local soup kitchen to bring not just nourishment, but also joy to those eating a meal there. And then, if at all possible, take your class to meet the people they are serving. Stress that love is incarnational—it means being present to each other.
- C** Following are some ideas that may engage your students; feel free to add your own, being sure to address both physical and spiritual needs of people. Draw connections between the incarnational aspects of what students are doing and the Incarnation: Jesus, as a fully human man, had a body and a soul. We all have mortal bodies and immortal souls. This is why Christians are called to perform Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy.
- D** Have students journal responses about their service experience on **Incarnation in Action** found on **pg. 94** of the Student Workbook.

94

The Revelation of Christ in Scripture

The Incarnation in Action

____ / 10 pts.

- 1** Describe your service project.

- 2** What corporal work of mercy did you perform? What spiritual work of mercy?

- 3** Why do you think we focused our service project not just on the Corporal Works of Mercy, but also the Spiritual?

- 4** How did you feel during and after your service? What (if any) attitudes or beliefs changed for you as a result?

- 5** Giving money to charitable causes is very good, but how does making things with your own hands and meeting people in person differ from giving money to a cause? How is it more Christ-like?

- 6** How does this activity connect to our study of the Incarnation?

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Prepare the following:

- **Food items:** Create a list of items for students to bring in for donation to the local soup kitchen or food pantry. Consider assigning students specific items, or having them select specific items from a list.
- **Cutlery:** Students can wrap a fork, knife, and spoon in a napkin and tie with a colorful ribbon. Attach a tag with a Bible verse written out that would bring encouragement to the soup kitchen guests.
- **Place Mats:** Have the class make place mats to set the tables for the guests. Encourage students to take their time and be neat, creative, and thoughtful. They should decorate their placemat with images, designs, or encouraging messages.

Notes of Encouragement

Have students write encouraging notes that will be used at place settings at the soup kitchen. Use a Bible verse or quote as inspiration.

Activity #3

Aristotle's Three Kinds of Friendships

(pages 95–96 in the Student Workbook)

This activity is meant to help extend, deepen, or apply the learning that has occurred in this chapter.

Scored ____ / 10

Activity Instructions

- A** Write on the board the St. Thomas Aquinas quote, “There is nothing on this earth more to be prized than true friendship.”
- B** Explain to your students in a mini-lecture that Aquinas speaks here of “true friendship.” Explain that our culture today tends to use the term *friends* very loosely, as though all friendships are the same. They are not! The friendship between, say, two members of a soccer team might be quite different than between a husband and wife, or that between two women preparing to take religious vows. The ancient

Unit 3, Chapter 11: The Mystery of the Incarnation

95

Aristotle's Three Kinds of Friendships

____ / 10 pts.

Directions: Take notes on each type of friendship from your teacher. Then fill in some examples of this type of friendship from literature or film. In the last column, explain how a Christian lives out this type of friendship. Then answer the questions that follow.

Aristotle's Type of Friendship	Examples From Literature/Film	How Does A Christian Live Out This Friendship?
Friendship of utility Definition:		
Friendship of pleasure Definition:		
Friendship of virtue Definition:		

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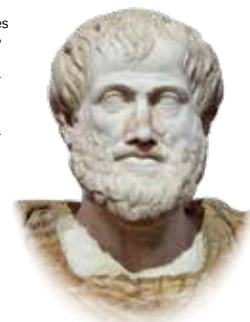
The Revelation of Christ in Scripture

- 1** Which type(s) of friendships are likely to end when the good outcomes or feelings associated with them end? Which type is likely to endure?

- 2** Is it possible to have a lot of true friends? Why or why not?

- 3** Can a person who encourages you to sin truly be your friend? Why or why not?

- 4** What type of friendship does God want you to develop with Him? Why?



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Greek philosopher Aristotle (whose ideas were taken up by Aquinas) delineated three types of friendship. Friendship of utility, friendship of pleasure, and friendship of virtue. Friendship of utility is one of usefulness—you are friends with someone because you carpool together in the mornings or because they got you a good job. Friendship of pleasure is one where you enjoy doing things together, whether that be playing sports, socializing, or other activities. You wish good for each other so these pleasurable activities can continue. Friendship of virtue, the highest in Aristotle's hierarchy, is one where you and your friend love each other because you each recognize virtue in the other. You desire each other's good for the other person's own sake and not because you hope to gain anything yourself.

- C** Give students time to complete the chart with a partner, then complete the questions that follow independently. When finished, debrief as a large group.

Answer Key

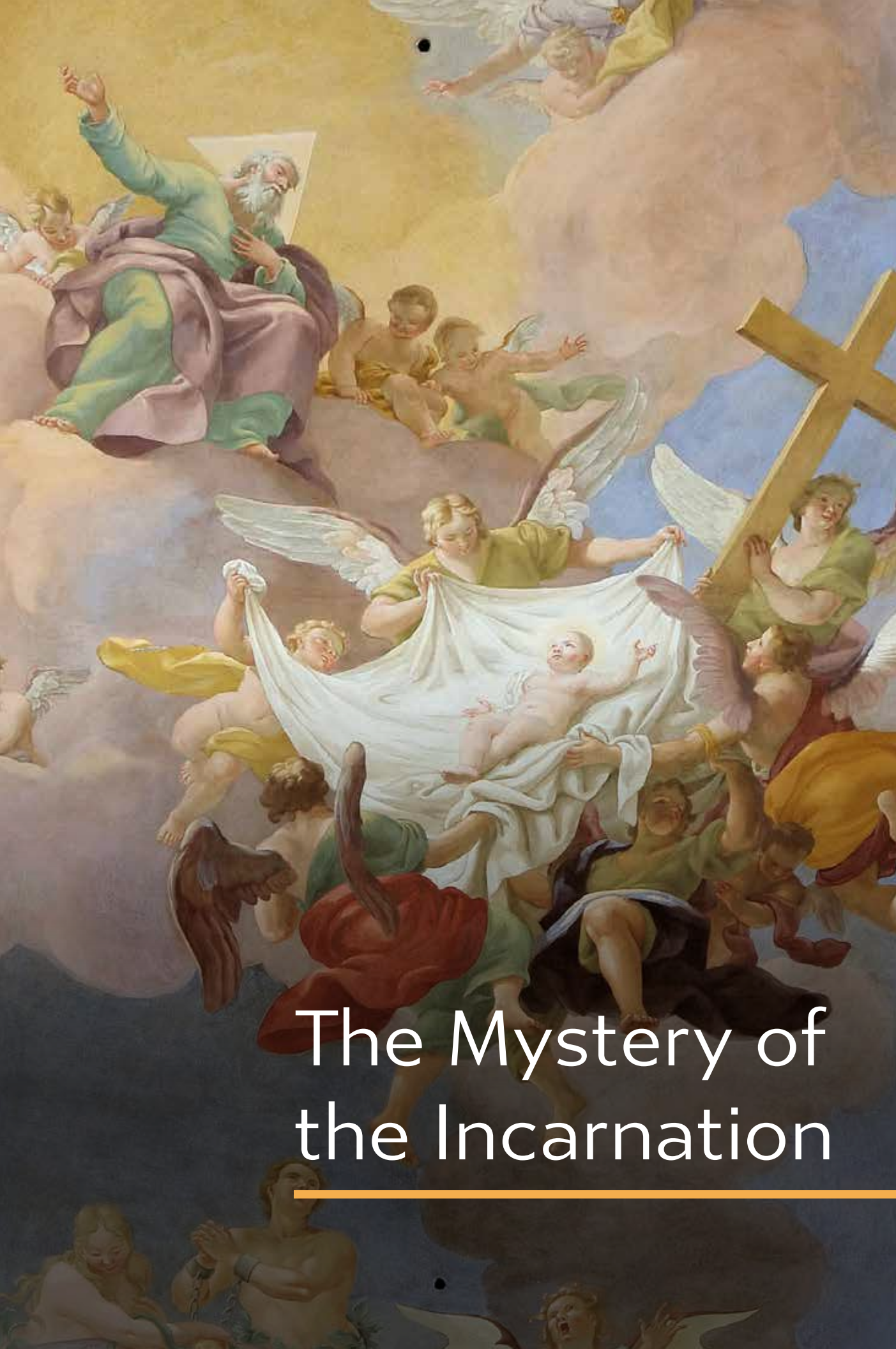
Friendships of Utility: A Christian can live this kind of friendship out by helping others—offering help with studying, running errands, and so on. It is morally good, of course, to graciously accept help and gifts freely given, and so while it falls short of the ideal friendship, there is nothing inherently wrong with friendships of utility provided we do not use others simply for what they can do for us.

Friendships of Pleasure: A Christian can live this out by doing any number of good and wholesome activities with friends. The pleasure that comes from friendship is good, but this kind of friendship can tend toward selfishness and falls short of the ideal.

Friendships of Virtue: A Christian can live this out by seeking out virtuous people and forming friendships based on helping the other grow in holiness. This kind of friendship is about desiring the good of the other for his own sake, and the highest good for any person is to get to Heaven.

- 1** Friendships of utility and of pleasure will end when either party stops getting the good outcomes or feelings that came with the friendship. Friendship of virtue will endure because the friendship is based not on feelings but on mutual recognition of virtue.
- 2** Accept reasoned answers, but guide students to understand the answer is probably no because a true friendship requires knowing someone intimately, which requires an investment of time.
- 3** No, because true friends desire the good of the other.
- 4** A friendship of virtue as God always desires our holiness and what is best for us because of our own goodness, not for any utility or pleasure.

Teacher Notes



The Mystery of the Incarnation

Incarnation Bible Search

_____ / 10 pts.

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The Incarnation in Action

_____ / 10 pts.

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