



Diocese of Buffalo

Department of Lifelong Faith Formation

A member of the Division for Evangelization and Catechesis

II. Jesus and the New Testament

Rationale: Catholic Christian tradition is rooted in an understanding of the message of Jesus found in the New Testament, particularly the Gospels. Discovering who Jesus is and what He means in each person's life leads to the development of a personal, deeply relational experience of Him.

Goal: That students will have a general knowledge of the Sacred Scripture and recognize the impact that Jesus' message had on the people of his time and still has today.

Objectives:

- To master the background knowledge necessary for students to approach the New Testament as an accessible faith source.
- To invite students to listen to God speaking to them through the New Testament.
- To explore the use of Scripture, its major sections, and its value as a source for prayer and spiritual growth.
- To discover that the mission of Jesus was the establishment of a Kingdom of love and service to which students are invited to participate.



Jesus and the New Testament

Outline	Activities	Critical Reflection
<p>I. Jesus: Who is this Person?</p> <p>A. Who do you say that I am?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. the historical Jesus <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the early years • His public life • Suffering, Death, and Resurrection 2. who is this man? 3. Jesus and you <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to make a mature decision about Jesus, you need to find out more about who Jesus is. <p>B. Sources of knowledge about Jesus</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. experts such as biblical scholars and theologians 2. the Bible 	<p>Create Jesus' <i>Facebook</i> page: include his profile, status updates, and posts.</p> <p>What <i>human</i> qualities does Jesus show in the following passages: Mt 8:20, 26: 36-46; Mk 15:33-37; Jn 4:5-8, 11:38-44.</p> <p>What <i>divine</i> qualities does Jesus show in these passages: Mk 4: 35-41, 7:31-37; Lk 9:28-36, Lk 24:36-49; Jn 11:38-44.</p> <p>Make a list of all the people you can think of who may have contributed to your knowledge of Jesus. What was the level of their expertise?</p> <p>Find the Old and New Testament in a bible. Which is larger? Speculate on why that might be.</p> <p>Find the Gospels in the New Testament. How many gospels are there? What percentage of the New Testament do the gospels occupy?</p>	<p>What questions do you have about Jesus?</p> <p>What were some ideas you had about Jesus when you were younger?</p> <p>If Jesus came to your town today, where would he go first? Where would he live? Work? What would be different about your town a year later because he was physically there?</p> <p>In what ways would you hope to be more like him? How can we be sure our source of information about Jesus is true and accurate?</p> <p>The bible is like a library. It is a collection of different kinds of books written at different times for different reasons. If you were collecting a library of inspired readings, what types of books might be in your library?</p>



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<p>C. The origins, content, and purpose of the Christian Scriptures</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Christian Scriptures <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Old Testament • the New Testament • origins and history • authors and divine inspiration • the canon of the Christian Scriptures 2. gospels 3. other books of the New Testament <p>II. The Gospels: Primary Source for Understanding the Historical Jesus</p> <p>A. Unique nature of the Gospels as a source of religious truth as timeless.</p>	<p>Imagine you are a reporter living in Jesus' time. Write a news article about a specific incident in Jesus' life. Answer the questions: who, what, when, why, where, and how.</p> <p>Write a Gospel for today. Decide how it would be transmitted/recorded Then decide which teachings, miracles, etc. you will include.</p> <p>What popular song(s) expresses the messages of the Gospels? (visit www.cornerstonemedia.org for ideas)</p>	<p>Why is the bible an important work for a believing people? Is it important for your age group? Why/why not?</p> <p>Is it better to have four gospels with unique perspectives or would it be better to have one <i>definitive</i> gospel?</p> <p>The gospels were written out of a post resurrection faith with the earliest (Mark) written around 70 AD. How did these two facts color the portraits of Jesus that we find in the gospels?</p> <p>What is the difference between historical truth and religious truth? Which is more important from a faith perspective?</p> <p>Do the messages of the gospels still apply today? Does anything need to be added?</p>



Jesus and the New Testament (Page 3)

Outline	Activities	Critical Reflection
<p>B. Three stage development of the gospels</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • oral tradition • written • editing <p>C. Gospels as four portraits of Jesus and individual characteristics of each gospel</p> <p>III. The World of Jesus</p> <p>A. Jesus as a Jew</p> <p>B. Brief view of Jewish history</p> <p>C. Political world of Jesus</p> <p>D. The expectation of a Messiah to liberate the Jewish people</p> <p>E. Culture and religion</p>	<p>Read Mt 1:1-2, 2:18, and Lk 1:1, 2:38. List the details of the Christmas story found in these gospels. Discuss what information has been added through oral tradition.</p> <p>What would a text message (summary) be for each of the Gospels?</p> <p>Develop a timeline for the major events of Jewish biblical history</p> <p>Watch the <i>Rugrats Passover</i> and then discuss how the Jewish religion impacted Jesus. Also, connect the Feast of Passover to our Eucharistic celebration.</p> <p>Read Mk 10:13-16. How is Jesus approachable in this story?</p>	<p>Describe how a Jewish man might view his world in terms of his relationship with others, his responsibility to creation, as a person in covenant with God and as a member of the chosen people.</p> <p>Compare and contrast the essential elements of Christianity and Judaism.</p> <p>Why is a basic understanding of the world of Jesus important to our understanding of Jesus and his message? Give an example to illustrate your point.</p> <p>Why were the people who were poor, and outcasts, attracted to Jesus? Who are today's outcasts and how would Jesus respond to them?</p> <p>If Jesus came to earth today how would he spread his message? How would he connect with people?</p>



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<p>F. Social classes of Jesus' time</p> <p>IV. The Mission Begins</p> <p>A. Infancy narratives of Jesus' early years</p> <p>B. Jesus' style as itinerant preacher and teacher</p> <p>C. Jesus' sayings and stories</p> <p>D. Parables and their relationship to the Kingdom of God</p> <p>E. Jesus heals and performs miracles</p>	<p>Read Phil 2:5-11. What does this passage teach us about the humility of Jesus?</p> <p>Explore what it means to be considered one of God's friends. Read Mt 25:35-40. Brainstorm ways that you can be open to God's friendship.</p> <p>Read Jn 14:1-14. Share the words of Jesus you find most comforting.</p> <p>Choose a parable and rewrite it for the modern day.</p> <p>Read Mt 6:26-34. Select one line that is particularly relevant for you or for young people today. Explain.</p> <p>Read Mt 5:3-12. Reflect on the Beatitudes. Use magazine pictures or newspaper headlines present the practice of each Beatitude in today's world.</p> <p>Rewrite the Lord's Prayer (Mt 6:8-13) in modern language.</p>	<p>What are some of the gospel episodes which help you to see him as someone who understands our humanness?</p> <p>Did Jesus need Apostles? What were the benefits and challenges?</p> <p>Jesus was <i>counter-cultural</i>; meaning he reversed a lot of conventional wisdom to give things a whole new meaning. Find examples of this in one of the gospels.</p> <p>Jesus used a variety of actions and verbal styles of communication to spread his message. Describe specific actions and ways of speaking that were essential methods of communicating for Jesus.</p> <p>If you knew nothing of Jesus and his teachings, what might the term: <i>Kingdom of God</i> mean to you?</p>



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<p>V. The Kingdom of God: Proclaiming the Dream of Jesus</p> <p>A. Jesus' vision: the Kingdom of God</p> <p>B. Jesus' understanding of God</p> <p>C. Jesus' vision of the command to love</p> <p>D. The Reign of God and the "Reign of Sin:" call to repentance of both personal and communal sin</p> <p>E. The Kingdom: fully present but not fully realized</p>	<p>Working in a small group, create a symbol, poem, collage, or drawing that captures what you think God's reign in its fullness will be like.</p> <p>Write briefly about a time in your life (or the life of someone you know) when doing good became a source of conflict and tension.</p> <p>Compare and contrast the key events of the Passion accounts in each of the four gospels in summary form.</p> <p>Participate in the Triduum Services (Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter Vigil) during Holy Week.</p>	<p>In what areas of your life do you apply God's words well? In what areas do you need improvement?</p> <p>Describe the difference between personal and communal sin.</p> <p>How can I find reconciliation with God for communal sins?</p> <p>Describe how the kingdom of God is "right now but not yet."</p> <p>When was the last time you shared food and drink with the hungry, made someone feel welcome, gave clothes to the needy, and visited the sick or the lonely?</p> <p>Describe some of the reasons that Jesus, as a healer and person who showed concern for the poor and outcast, became a source of conflict.</p>
<p>VI. The Cross: the End or a Beginning?</p> <p>A. The road to the cross</p>	<p>In writing, briefly discuss the degree to which each of these people were responsible for Jesus' death: Judas, the Jewish leaders, Caiaphas, and Pontius Pilate.</p>	



Jesus and the New Testament (Page 6)

Outline	Activities	Critical Reflection
<p>B. Jesus' final days</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Last Supper • Agony in the garden <p>C. Jesus' final hours</p> <p>D. Understanding the cross: three common expressions on the meaning of Jesus' death</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jesus died for our sins • Jesus conquered death • Jesus gave his life as a ransom for many <p>VII. The Resurrection</p> <p>A. Gospel accounts and accepting the Resurrection</p> <p>B. The Paschal Mystery - what does Resurrection mean?</p>	<p>Read the following passages: Mt 26:17-30; Mk 14: 12-26; Lk 22:14-22; and 1 Cor 11:23-26. Compare and contrast the stories.</p> <p>Participate in the Holy Thursday Mass of the Lord's Supper. Discuss its similarities to the Jewish Seder Meal.</p> <p>Create a prayerful meditation or power point on the scourging and crucifixion of Jesus and the meaning of those events.</p> <p>From the 3 common expressions for the meaning of Jesus' death, choose the one that has the most meaning for you and write a brief essay explaining why.</p> <p>List examples in nature of dying/rising. Is similar to the Paschal Mystery?</p> <p>Imagine yourself as one of the disciples first hearing the news of Jesus' resurrection. In writing, briefly describe how you, as a disciple, might react to this news.</p>	<p>Why is Jesus' free acceptance of his death central to all Christian theology?</p> <p>What is the Roman Catholic teaching of the <i>real presence</i> of Jesus and how does it pertain to the Last Supper?</p> <p>How important is the Eucharist to you and your faith life as a Christian?</p> <p>How do Christians today find meaning in the cross?</p> <p>What does it mean to you that Christ died not for his sins, but for your sins?</p> <p>In today's world, it sometimes seems that patterns of meaning and value are coming unraveled. What are some of the ways that the world needs Jesus? What can Jesus give to this world that seems to be falling apart?</p>



Jesus and the New Testament (Page 7)

Outline	Activities	Critical Reflection
<p>C. Recognizing the risen Jesus today</p> <p>D. The Ascension of Jesus</p> <p>E. Pentecost</p> <p>VIII. Good News from Age to Age: the Church’s under-standing of Jesus Christ</p> <p>A. Apostolic times: what was Jesus’ intent for his followers?</p> <p>B. The early years</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the developing understanding of Jesus in the early centuries • Christological heresies • councils which formed the church’s response 	<p>Read Lk 24:13-35. How can this passage help a believer recognize the risen Jesus in our midst today?</p> <p>Find images which describe Jesus in the New Testament. Create a visual image using various media.</p> <p>Choose 12 role-model apostles from today’s world and make a poster listing their names and why you chose them. Be sure to choose both men & women.</p> <p>Did Jesus intend to found a Church? Write a summary of your ideas about this and be prepared to debate some-one who may have a different opinion.</p> <p>Identify the three great Christological councils and briefly explain what each council decided about Jesus’ identity.</p>	<p>Through his redemptive act, Jesus responded to hate, rejection, and evil with love. What are some concrete ways we can be “co-redeemers”?</p> <p>What episode in Jesus’ life most helps you believe in his divinity?</p> <p>Matthew’s gospel calls us to seek fulfillment in Jesus. What pressures in society lead us to seek fulfillment elsewhere? How can we cope with or respond to these pressures?</p> <p>Jesus is risen and everything He claimed was made true by this reality. How does the Resurrection affect your life as a Christian?</p> <p>How do you experience the presence of Jesus in your daily life? Compare this experience to the experience of the real presence of another person.</p> <p>What things about Jesus, his life, mes-sage, identity do you find confusing?</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Rev. 2010</p>



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