

What does Jesus mean to me or others?

- God
- Teacher
- Judge
- Brother
- Friend
- Just a good man
- A challenge

People will report their own view. This is not the time to challenge them or 'correct' them!

Note what is common and what is different about what people say.

FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS

- What impact has that 'view' of Jesus had on your relationship with him?
- When and how do you think our 'views' of Jesus were formed?
- How close to or how distant from 'your Jesus' would you like to be?

What challenges me about Jesus?

- I don't measure up to his standards.
- I feel a hypocrite - saying Lord but not being faithful
- Our situation is not his situation and I don't know what Jesus would do now.
- I don't know whether he is God and so 'right in all he says' or someone I can discuss and argue with.

If it does not feel intrusive, ask how they have dealt with the challenge.

FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS

- What impact has that 'view' of Jesus had on your relationship with him?
- How do you think we challenge Jesus?!

2. Our Experience

'The time of prayer with Scripture is followed by a time looking at where some of the themes connect with our own lives and descriptions.'

Some people find it easier to answer questions on the spot. Others prefer to think a little first, and even to write down part of their answer. Spend a minute or so with the questions and do make a note of thoughts, if you wish. There's plenty of white space provided!

- What does Jesus mean to me or others?
- What challenges me about Jesus?
- Do you hear God speak? If so, how?

3. The Church Teaches

'When the time had fully come, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.' This is 'the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God'. God has visited his people. He has fulfilled the promise he made to Abraham and his descendants. He acted far beyond all expectation - he has sent his own 'beloved Son'.

We believe and confess that Jesus of Nazareth, born a Jew of a daughter of Israel at Bethlehem at the time of King Herod the Great and the emperor Caesar Augustus, a carpenter by trade, who died crucified in Jerusalem under the procurator Pontius Pilate during the reign of the emperor Tiberius, is the eternal Son of God made man. He 'came from God', 'descended from heaven', and 'came in the flesh'. For 'the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father. . . And from his fullness have we all received, grace upon grace.'

Moved by the grace of the Holy Spirit and drawn by the Father, we believe in Jesus and confess: 'You are the Christ, the Son of the



'living God.' On the rock of this faith confessed by St. Peter, Christ built his Church.

JESUS

Jesus means in Hebrew: 'God saves.' At the annunciation, the angel Gabriel gave him the name Jesus as his proper name, which expresses both his identity and his mission. Since God alone can forgive sins, it is God who, in Jesus his eternal Son made man, 'will save his people from their sins'. In Jesus, God recapitulates the whole history of salvation on behalf of all humankind.

The name 'Jesus' signifies that the very name of God is present in the person of his Son, made man for the universal and definitive redemption from sins. It is the divine name that alone brings salvation, and henceforth all can invoke his name, for Jesus united himself to all men through his Incarnation, so that 'there is no other name under heaven given to the human race by which we must be saved.'

The name of the Saviour God was invoked only once in the year by the high priest in atonement for the sins of Israel, after he had sprinkled the mercy seat in the Holy of Holies with the sacrificial blood. The mercy seat was the place of God's presence. When St. Paul speaks of Jesus whom 'God put forward as an expiation by his blood', he means that in Christ's humanity 'God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself.'

Jesus' Resurrection glorifies the name of the Saviour God, for from that time on it is the name of Jesus that fully manifests the supreme power of the 'name which is above every name'. The evil spirits fear his name; in his name his disciples perform miracles, for the Father grants all they ask in this name.

The name of Jesus is at the heart of Christian prayer. All liturgical prayers conclude with the words 'through our Lord Jesus Christ'. The Hail Mary reaches its high point in the words 'blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.' The Eastern prayer of the heart, the Jesus Prayer, says: 'Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner.' Many Christians, such as St. Joan of Arc, have died with the one word 'Jesus' on their lips.

cf Catechism of the Catholic Church 422-4; 430-435

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- What is meant by 'Jesus saves'?
- Does Jesus save? How?
- How would you explain 'faith in Jesus' to a non-believer?

What is meant by 'Jesus saves'?

- Jesus has paid the price of our sins
- God forgives our sins?
- Jesus shows us what is right to do
- Jesus helps us to do what is right and good?
- Jesus protects us from the devil and our enemies?

FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS

- How have you learnt to believe what you believe?
- What makes you think it is true?

Does Jesus save? How?

Yes

- by defeating the devil
- by freeing us from sin
- by teaching us to choose good

No - or at least not directly

- he helps us overcome sin
- he helps us love our neighbour

No

- In the end, it's really down to us

How would you explain 'faith in Jesus' to a non-believer?

- It is about believing Jesus is Son of God
- It is about a whole way of life
- It is about falling in love with Jesus
- It is wanting to live like Jesus did
- It is about trying to live the life of heaven here on earth
- It is about believing that love and goodness are possible

For your own notes