

Who Is Jesus' Daddy?



SMALL GROUP LESSON

Lesson Objective:

Our eternal resting place hinges on who we believe Jesus' daddy to be. Is Jesus the ordinary son of Joseph and no different than any other man, or is Jesus the extraordinary Son of God and thereby unlike any other man? This lesson focuses our attention squarely on the identity of Jesus Christ of Nazareth.

Set Up Info:

Supplies Needed:

1. Computer or internet connection to watch the YouTube video
2. A ball or a sock
3. Copies of the Student Response sheet (printed below)
4. Bibles so you can look up the Scripture story (or copy the ones below)
5. A passion to see students transformed in their thinking towards the central person in all of Christianity and ultimately human history.

Instructive Prep:

No one else in history has stirred the will, touched the heart, intrigued the imagination, challenged the intellect, or provoked the ire of people like Jesus Christ of Nazareth. We need not waste our time showing that such a well-known historical figure actually existed. The avalanche of evidence is so overwhelming that to doubt his existence is to belie all rational thought. Rather, the biggest question surrounding this first-century carpenter is his *identity*.

At his trial, neither the Pharisees, Pontius Pilot, nor Herod the Great could find any evidence of wrongdoing on Jesus' part. In the end, he was crucified

not for what he did but who he claimed to be. It was his *identity* that was on trial. Can you imagine someone today being given the death penalty simply for who they claim to be? Yeah, it's insane!

Perhaps you are familiar with authors like C.S. Lewis and Josh McDowell. McDowell succinctly gives us three options for Jesus identity in his book *More Than a Carpenter*.¹ Jesus can either be our Lord, a liar, or a lunatic. In a more sophisticated, yet accessible, argument, Lewis concludes the following regarding Jesus identity:

I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: "I'm ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don't accept His claim to be God." That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic – on the level with the man who says he is a poached egg – or else he would be the Devil of Hell. 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 at him and kill Him as a demon; or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God. But let us not come up with any patronizing [sic] nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. *He did not intend to* [italics mine].²

In light of these options, this session is designed to allow your teens to share candidly about who they really believe Jesus to be. So please take care to set a safe emotional environment for your discussion. That means no one should ever be ridiculed for "wrong" answers. The aim here is honest answers. Should a student offer a different opinion it is totally appropriate to ask follow-up questions to challenge his/her thinking. But it is never okay to put anyone down during small group time. Then, we will consider the implications of Jesus identity. If Jesus is who he claims to be, then everything changes.

The progression of these studies is four-fold: *learn, feel, do and what next*. We want students to learn something new, connect at an emotional level to some

¹ Josh McDowell, *More Than a Carpenter* (Wheaton: Living Books, 1977). Incidentally, this book alone can be a great basis for a small group study, especially if you have kids who enjoy reading or who need a good introduction to the Christian faith.

² C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1980), 52.

degree, and participate in doing something during study that brings them to a point of decision. Finally, the *what next* focuses on a change of attitude and/or behavior, which you will find in the challenge of the Life Application section. Remember, the goal is a complete transformation in kids' lives (i.e. spiritual, emotional, mental, and behavioral), so the application section based on God's truth is really the crux of the time together! Have fun and lead well.

INTRO:

C.S. Lewis is regarded as one of the most significant thinkers of the 20th century. He had a remarkable capacity for intriguing the mind and the heart, reason and imagination. Better than most, Lewis possessed an uncanny knack for reducing complex subjects, such as the identity of Jesus Christ, into manageable components that communicated his point to large audiences.

INTRO STORY:

In the early summer of 1940, Britain found itself the focus of Hilter's Blitzkrieg. Continuous air strikes aimed at weakening the British Royal Air Force (RAF) tested the will and resolve of its citizens. But the RAF pilots, who were regularly outnumbered four to one, miraculously succeeded in defending their country from an all out invasion. This success, however, came with a heavy economic and emotional toll on its citizens. It was during this time that C.S. Lewis delivered a series of radio addresses: *Broadcast Talks* (1942), *Christian Behavior* (1943), and *Beyond Personality* (1944). His words inspired the beleaguered nation and kept their hopes alive when the country needed it most. Eventually, those talks were bound into a single book entitled *Mere Christianity*. The following is an audio excerpt from one of his addresses that was made into video:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-5079rCfs6I>

Intro Questions:

1. C.S. Lewis is considered to be a great Christian thinker. Do you know what else he wrote that is a series of books and being made into a series of movies?
2. A lot of the scenes were taken from the movie, *The Passion of the Christ*. Did you see that movie? How does it add or distract from what Lewis was saying?

PERSONAL REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

Take a ball and give it to one student. They can pass or toss it to another student to begin the discussion on question one. After answering, each person gets to pass it to someone who hasn't answered. Do the same randomness through all the questions.

1. In your own words answer this question: What is it about Jesus that makes him such a controversial figure? Some love him and die for him. Others despise the mere name. Why?
2. Do you believe it is possible to know for sure Jesus' true identity? Explain.
3. True or False - If Jesus is not the Son of God, Christianity would still be able to exist. Why or why not?
4. C.S. Lewis told us what he believes about Jesus. But what about you? From all that you know or have learned about Jesus, who do you believe him to be? What has led you to this conclusion?
[Leaders, be sure to stress that you are most interested in the honest answer and not the "right" answer. Also, do not let students say, "What she said." Try to have everyone articulate their own beliefs.]

CENTRAL BIBLE PASSAGES:

The following passages are selected because they conclusively show not only that Jesus believed himself to be sent by God but also that he was crucified specifically because the Jewish religious leaders correctly understood the implications of the claims Jesus was making about himself.

John 14:6– *a passage where Jesus claims to be the only means by which people will see God. This places him as the mediator between God and humankind.*

⁶Jesus answered him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no one goes to the Father except by me."

John 6:35-38, 40– *a passage that links Jesus being sent from God. To be fair to the text, all of chapters six, seven, and eight of John's Gospel develop this concept of Jesus identity. These passages here are only a representative selection of a much greater framework.*

³⁵"I am the bread of life," Jesus told them. "Those who come to me will never be hungry; those who believe in me will never be thirsty. ³⁶Now, I told you that you have seen me but will not believe. ³⁷Everyone whom my Father

gives me will come to me. I will never turn away anyone who comes to me,
³⁸because I have come down from heaven to do not my own will but the will
 of him who sent me. ...

⁴⁰For what my Father wants is that all who see the Son and believe in him
 should have eternal life. And I will raise them to life on the last day.”

Luke 22:70-71– *a passage where Jesus explicitly affirms himself as the Son of God*

⁷⁰They all said, “Are you, then, the Son of God?” He answered them, “You say that I am.” ⁷¹And they said, “We don’t need any witnesses! We ourselves have heard what he said!”

Matthew 26:63-65– *another passage, this time from Matthew’s account, where Jesus explicitly affirms his divinity*

⁶³But Jesus kept quiet. Again the High Priest spoke to him, “In the name of the living God I now put you under oath: tell us if you are the Messiah, the Son of God.” ⁶⁴Jesus answered him, “So you say. But I tell all of you: from this time on you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right side of the Almighty and coming on the clouds of heaven!” ⁶⁵At this the High Priest tore his clothes and said, “Blasphemy! We don’t need any more witnesses! You have just heard his blasphemy!”

LIFE APPLICATION:

1. The definition of integrity is “the quality of being honest and having strong moral principles.” In other words, it is a commitment to living principally. Consequently, part of being full of integrity means owning what those commitments entail. Based upon your individual beliefs regarding Jesus’ identity, what implications does that have for you today? How are you living consistently with your beliefs?
2. What is your initial response to John 14:6 and who Jesus claims to be?
3. What fears do you have in telling your friends about Jesus? Challenge yourself this week to pray for God’s strength to speak with a friend about what you learned today. Be prepared to share next week how it went!
4. Write your own challenge:

