JESUS OF NAZARETH
DIRECTED BY FRANCO ZEFFIRELLI

VIEWING GUIDE FOR FAMILIES
2-DVD SERIES
(Recommended: see brief vocabulary list on last page; view the questions before viewing each segment of the DVDs)

DVD #1 (Questions # 1-55)
- THE ANNUNCIATION
- THE NATIVITY
- THE PRESENTATION OF JESUS IN THE TEMPLE
- JESUS' CHILDHOOD AND JOHN THE BAPTIST
- THE BEGINNING OF JESUS' MINISTRY
- JESUS' MINISTRY EXPANDS

DVD #2 (Questions # 56-114)
- THE MIDDLE YEARS OF MINISTRY
- WHO DO YOU SAY THAT I AM?
- EASTER WEEK BEGINS
- THE OPPOSITION AGAINST JESUS GROWS
- THE LAST SUPPER
- THE BETRAYAL OF JESUS
- THE TRIAL, CRUCIFIXION, AND RESURRECTION OF JESUS
THE ANNUNCIATION:

1. When Mary runs out of her house, she looks back and the streets are empty. Dogs are barking and it is haunting. What feeling do you get from this scene? 
   *Accept all answers. Discuss.*

2. How serious was a Jewish *betrothal* (engagement) in Palestine? 
   *Marriage law in Palestine was unique in one thing: when two people became betrothed, the betrothal lasted for one year. It was a very serious commitment. During that year they were treated as if they were married and the betrothal could not be broken by any other means than by divorce. The betrothal was just as binding as the marriage.*

3. What do you think of the way the director (Franco Zeffirelli) *portrays* the angel who comes to Mary?
   *Accept all answers. Discuss.*

4. How would you have portrayed the Annunciation?
   *Accept all answers. Discuss.*

5. What does the name *Messiah* mean?
   *Messiah means "the anointed one"; the Christ.*
THE VISITATION:

6. Whom is Mary visiting? Why? What is their relationship and the relationship of their babies?

*Mary is visiting her cousin Elizabeth. She has been told by the angel Gabriel that Elizabeth is pregnant and that the child that Elizabeth is carrying will be her own son, Jesus' prophet. Also, Mary goes to help her cousin for a few months. Their babies will be cousins.*

7. Notice the two archways above Mary and Elizabeth. What might that symbolize?

*Accept all answers. Discuss.*

8. What is so special about Elizabeth's pregnancy?

*Elizabeth is beyond child-bearing age. She is carrying the "Prophet of the Most High!" Note: At the sound of Mary's voice, the baby in Elizabeth's womb does a flip! Ask the students what they think of this. Relate this to the sanctity of life.*

9. Who will be Elizabeth and Zechariah's son?

*John the Baptist*

10. What very important roles will he play in his life?

*Prophet, Preacher, Precursor (the one to announce the coming of Jesus)*

11. Why does the Jewish faith include a presentation of a newborn in the temple?

*For the naming of the baby, for circumcision if it's a boy, and it is a ritual that seals the covenant between God and his people. It is a promise that the faith will be continued.*
12. How does Joseph react when Mary tells him about the special nature of her pregnancy?

13. Why does Joseph hesitate to wed Mary? (Think of the Jewish tradition).
He suspects that she has been unfaithful to him. Joseph is loyal to his faith and traditions and he knows the Jewish law for this crime.

14. What is written in Jewish law about punishment for adultery?
Being stoned to death outside the community walls.

15. What does Joseph decide to do?
He decides to divorce her quietly and perhaps send her away so as not to embarrass her.

16. What helps Joseph decide to wed Mary?
The dream with God’s message clarifies what has happened to Mary.

THE NATIVITY:

17. What is the purpose of a census? Does our country require one? 
The purpose of a census is to officially count the population. Yes, our country requires a census and the last one was in 2010. It is done every 10 years.
18. Read Micah 5:2 (Old Testament). This is a prophecy. Why does Joseph say, "So even Augustus obeys God"?

*Because no power on earth can compete with God's will. Bethlehem is in the Old Testament prophecy which reveals the birthplace of the Messiah.*

19. Which two groups of travelers does director Zeffirelli highlight? What is their destination? What film technique does he use to show movement?

*He highlights the travels of Mary and Joseph and the journeys of the Magi. They are all going to Bethlehem. The director cuts back and forth to show movement.*

20. Who visits the manger where Jesus is born?

*The shepherds and the Magi*

21. What three gifts do the Magi bring and what do each symbolize?

*Gold (Kingship), Myrrh (Death), and Frankincense (Priesthood)...each having to do with Jesus in some way.*

22. What is Herod afraid of?

*He is afraid of losing his power and status! He is afraid of the Old Testament prophecies about the Messiah.*

**THE PRESENTATION:**

23. When Mary and Joseph present Jesus in the synagogue, why does Simeon, the prophet, say to Mary, "And a sword shall pierce your heart"?

*He is foreshadowing that Mary will suffer greatly when her son dies. Simeon also recognizes the cry of Jesus as being the cry of the Messiah. During his long life, he had asked God for the privilege of seeing the Messiah. Now that he has, he is ready to die in peace.*
24. Why does Herod wish to kill all male children up to two years old? *He wishes to destroy any possibility of a Messiah (new ruler of heaven and earth) growing up.*

**JESUS' CHILDHOOD AND JOHN THE BAPTIST:**

25. There is a conflict between the Romans and the Zealots. The Zealots are Jews who are seen as religious fanatics; they want to make war against the Romans. Listen as one says, "We want to see the power of God on earth fighting against the Romans". They want Jesus to be that "warrior". Will he be? Is he a military leader? What do you think? *Accept all answers. Discuss.*

26. What does John the Baptist mostly preach about? *Repentance for sins*

27. What do you think about John the Baptist's lifestyle? How would you have reacted to him if you had been there? *Accept all answers. Discuss.*

28. As a review, what are the three very important roles that John the Baptist played in his life's ministry?
   - *Prophet...he is called the Prophet of the Most High; he has been chosen to speak for God and to be Jesus' special prophet*
   - *Preacher...he teaches spiritual lessons and firmly leads people*
   - *Precursor...he comes before Christ and he prepares the way for Him*
THE BEGINNINGS OF JESUS' MINISTRY:

30. If Jesus is God, then why does he choose to be baptized? 
*Jesus does not come to be baptized to repent for sins. He chooses to be baptized because this is the beginning of his ministry and he leads by example, calling the people to open their hearts and to turn back to God with their lives. Some scholars say that in being baptized, he identifies himself with the human race...he is one of us.*

31. What was the reason that John the Baptist called people to be baptized?
*To repent for their sins*

32. Why do we have baptisms today?
*The ritual of baptism is to be welcomed into God's love and the church community's family. It is the first sacrament of initiation. The Holy Spirit sanctifies (blesses) this event.*

33. What symbol does director Zeffirelli use during the moment of Jesus' baptism? What does the voice of God say? Do *you* feel that God said this when *you* were baptized?
*A dove. "This is my son, with whom I am well pleased". Accept all answers. Discuss.*
34. What does John the Baptist mean when he says to Andrew and Philip, "He must increase as I must decrease"?
   *He means that his role is over and Jesus is the one to follow!*

35. After Jesus reads the scripture in the synagoge of his native town of Nazareth, he boldly states, "Today, in our presence, the Scriptures have been fulfilled". What is he really saying? What is the reaction of the crowd?
   *He is saying that He is the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecy of the Messiah. Meditate on this a bit. There is no being on earth or in any faith tradition who has EVER claimed to be God. Jesus is unique! Note: challenge the students with this: Jesus is either a disillusioned fool or he is whom he says he is! What do YOU think?*

36. What does Jesus mean when he says, "God wants to write the Law of God on your hearts"?
   *He is saying that God is of love. He wants people to open their hearts to love, God, others and to put love before the law. There were 613 Mosaic laws that the Jewish people abided by. Much of this was very rigid and almost enslaved the people. Jesus wanted people to be alive with love, not just fearful of the laws.*

37. How does director Zeffirelli use shadow and light around Jesus' hand as he casts the demon out of the young man?
   *Accept all answers. Discuss*

38. What types of people does Jesus invite to be his followers?
   *Accept all answers. Discuss.*

39. What do you think of Jesus' parables?
   *Accept all answers. Discuss. If they are not aware of parables, give them a few examples. Jesus tried to use everyday images and settings so that the people could identify with his stories: fishing, farming, cultural images, grapes, bread, simple things like these.*
40. What is a **miracle**? What four types of miracles does Jesus perform? 

*A miracle is a supernatural event which cannot be explained by the laws of nature or science. They are: 1) nature 2) healing 3) casting out demons 4) raising from the dead; all of which Jesus performed.*

41. What kind of reputation did tax collectors have? Why? Does Jesus invite or reject them? Which apostle was a tax collector?

*They had a terrible reputation. They collected more taxes than they needed to. The people detested them. Jesus came for all people! His mercy and forgiveness are for all who ask. Matthew was a tax collector.*

42. What is Peter afraid of?

*Accept all answers. Discuss. He is afraid of how his life will change so drastically; he is afraid of not being worthy; he is afraid of what Jesus will ask of him; etc.*

**JESUS' MINISTRY EXPANDS:**

43. Which parable does Jesus tell in order to help create a relationship between Peter and Matthew?

*The parable of the prodigal son.*

44. What is the main point of that parable? What sacrament is this in our Catholic tradition?

*Forgiveness. Reconciliation.*
45. Describe an experience in your life where you have known forgiveness.

*Accept all answers. Discuss.*

46. What does John the Baptist mean when he says to King Herod Antipas: "Before kingdoms change, men must change"?

*Each of our hearts must change before the world can become God’s holy kingdom!*

47. What were Mark’s, Matthew’s, Luke’s, and John’s professions?

*Mark’s is unknown; Matthew was a tax collector; Luke was a physician; John was a fisherman.*

48. What was Jesus’ earthly profession before he began his heavenly ministry? (His father, Joseph’s trade)

*He was a carpenter. Most boys learned their father's trade. Girls learned all the home-related skills from their mothers and grandmothers.*

49. What do you think is going through Peter’s head as he watches the boat float away, back to Capernaum, his home town.

*Accept all answers. Discuss*

50. What might you be willing to give up to follow Jesus?

*Accept all answers. Discuss.*

51. What might you be willing to take on to follow Jesus?

*Accept all answers. Discuss.*

52. What type of miracle occurs with Jairus’ daughter? What do you think the 3 shafts of light represent?

*Raising of the dead; accept all answers. Discuss.*
53. Jesus asks Jairus' servant to join Him as a disciple. What is his name?
Thomas

THE MIDDLE YEARS OF MINISTRY:

54. Why is Herod Antipas so afraid of John the Baptist?
He knows deep inside that John the Baptist is preaching the truth. He is feeling guilty and he is afraid of God's wrath.

55. Which of the disciples do you identify with so far: Mary (note: Mary, the mother of Jesus is often referred to as Jesus' first disciple.) Andrew, Philip, John, Peter, Matthew, James, Thomas, Judas, Mary of Magdalene? Why?
Accept all answers. Discuss.

VIEWING GUIDE FOR DVD # 2

56. The feeding of the 5,000 is what type of miracle?
A nature miracle because nature was altered.

57. This is the first miracle mentioned in all four Gospels. Why is this important?
Over 5,000 people were involved and affected and all four evangelists (authors of the Gospels) felt that it had been a huge event which claimed many followers that day.
WHO DO YOU SAY THAT I AM?:

58. How do you feel about the scene with Mary entering the house of a Pharisee and washing Jesus' feet?
Accept all answers. Discuss. Forgiveness; acceptance; Jesus calls all of us; love; the first shall be last, etc.

59. What does Jesus ask Mary to do with the container of ointment that she has in her hands?
He asks her to use the herbal ointment for his burial later on.

60. Which teachings and prayer does the Sermon on the Mount include?
The Beatitudes and the Lord's Prayer

61. For which Jewish holiday are the large crowds of Jews going to Jerusalem?
Passover, based on Exodus 11 and 12

62. What is a pilgrimage?
A spiritual journey to a holy site

63. The siblings, Lazarus, Martha, and Mary of Bethany, are some of Jesus' closest friends. What has happened to Lazarus?
He has died

64. What kind of faith do his sisters have?
Accept all answers. Discuss.

65. In scripture, it says that "Jesus wept" when he found out about Lazarus. Does this surprise you? Why or why not?
Accept all answers. Discuss.
66. What type of miracle does Jesus conduct on Lazarus' behalf?
*Raising of the dead*

67. What techniques does Director Zeffirelli use to highlight this miracle?
*Light, shadow, the hand looks bigger, etc.*

68. Whom does Peter say that Jesus is? Why is that SO important?
*Peter says that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of the Living God; it is the first time that one of the Apostles articulates this truth. This is the moment when Peter stands out as a leader and is named so by Jesus. He is called the "rock" upon whom the church will be built. He will become the Church's first pope.*

**EASTER WEEK BEGINS:**

69. Master Zerah is the character that Director Zeffirelli introduces to be the representative of the Sanhedrin (temple leaders and officials). Judas wants the Sanhedrin to hear Jesus out and give him a chance to prove himself to them. What does Judas not understand about Jesus?
*Judas does not understand that Jesus is not a political figure to be manipulated. He does not understand that Jesus knows that he will be rejected by the Jewish hierarchy and be put to death. Judas is blinded by his own agenda and ambition.*

70. The entry of Jesus into Jerusalem is celebrated on which Sunday in our Catholic tradition?
*Palm Sunday, a week before Easter Sunday*

71. What is Jesus so angry about in the temple?
*He is angry because his Father's house, the temple, is being used for exchanging money and doing business.*
72. How do **you** feel about Jesus' anger and actions?
*Accept all answers. Discuss.*  

73. Anger is an emotion? Is it a sin?
*No but it can lead to sin.*  

74. How could anger lead to sin in our lives?
*Accept all answers. Perhaps giving them an image to focus on: a fire... discuss the good things about fire; anger can be a catalyst for good change; just as fires can lead to destruction, anger can do the same.*  

75. What is Jesus really forecasting when he says, "Destroy this temple and in three days I will make it rise again"?
*He is referring to his upcoming death and resurrection in 3 days.*  

76. "All who take up the sword will perish by the sword". Why does Jesus say this to Barabbas?
*Accept all answers. Discuss.*  

77. Predict what you think will happen to Barabbas.
*Accept all answers.*  

78. As Jesus is preaching, Master Zerah closes the door. What does this symbolize?
*Zerah symbolizes the closing of our hearts to God.*
THE OPPOSITION GROWS:

79. What was the punishment for the crime of adultery according to ancient Jewish law? (Remember the seriousness of the betrothal from DVD #1?)
*Stoning to death outside the community walls*

80. What 3 lessons does Jesus teach us during the episode of the adulterous woman about to be stoned to death?
*Forgiveness; Do not judge others; sin no more*

81. How deep is the faith of the **centurion**? (You will see him later at the crucifixion)
*Accept all answers. Discuss. Note: Faith means "to hold firm" and it is a supernatural gift from God which allows us to believe, even without proof.*

82. In which part of our Mass liturgy do we hear, "**Only say the word and I shall be healed**"? Did you know that this is in reference to the centurion story? Cool hunh!!)
*Just before we take communion*

83. What is the **Sanhedrin**? What is it about Jesus that is really upsetting them?
*They were the highest council of religious judges in the ancient Jewish nation of Israel; They are upset because Jesus was teaching and healing as though he were God! They thought this was blasphemous.*

84. Why is Judas confused at this time?
*Jesus is not turning out to be the political leader that he wanted him to be. He does not know how to "read" Jesus anymore and he is frustrated because the Sanhedrin won't listen to him and won't give Jesus a chance to prove himself.*
THE LAST SUPPER:

85. What is the connection between the Old Testament Passover meal and the Last Supper?

During the Passover, the Jewish people held a Seder meal to remember the Passover, the freedom of their ancestors' enslavement in Egypt. The Last Supper was a Seder meal to commemorate (remember and honor) the same thing. At the Last Supper, Jesus instituted the Eucharist and he made it clear that just as a lamb was sacrificed to mark the doorways of the Israelites so that the angel of death would not take their sons, so would Jesus be the sacrificial lamb for our sins.

86. Just before the Last Supper, when Jesus says to Judas, "What you are going to do, do it quickly", what does he know and what does Judas think Jesus is saying?

Jesus knows that Judas will betray him and Judas thinks that Jesus is telling him to go ahead and organize a meeting with the Sanhedrin.

87. The Last Supper was the birth of which sacrament in our Catholic faith?

The Eucharist

88. Does Jesus encourage his Apostles to be served by others or servants to others?

Jesus tells the apostles to serve others. He even washes their feet as an example.

89. Where does Jesus pray before he is arrested?

In the Garden of Gethsemane
90. Why does Jesus often pray, meditate, and seek time alone? 
Accept all answers. Discuss. He communicates and listens to his Father.

91. How do you try to follow that example in your life? 
Accept all answers. Discuss.

THE BETRAYAL:

92. What does Master Zerah have in mind for Jesus, a meeting or a trial? 
A trial

93. How do the apostles and disciples react when Jesus is arrested? 
They scatter with fear

94. Listen to Caiaphas, the highest official of the Sanhedrin, as he asks Jesus, "I ask you now, in the name of the eternal, are you the Messiah, the Son of God?" What is Jesus' response? WOW!!! Meditate on this for a few moments! Share your thoughts and feelings. 
Jesus responds, "I AM". (Note: I AM is the name that God gives himself, as indicated in the Old Testament. The great I AM is like no other being. When Jesus says I AM, he identifies himself with God and is affirming that He is the Son of God, and actually God.)

THE TRIAL, THE CRUCIFIXION, AND THE RESURRECTION:

95. What are your feelings about Judas, his fate, and his death? 
Accept all answers. Discuss. (Note: Judas uses his mind more than his heart. Because of this, he is blinded to the God in Jesus. Judas falls in total despair because he does not realize that God can forgive him. Therefore, he cannot live with himself. Sad.)
96. Whom does Pontius Pilate release into freedom? Remember him? He was an enemy of Rome and an assassin. 
   *Barabbas*

97. Why is Jesus, an innocent man, such a threat to the Jewish Sanhedrin and to Rome? 
   *He threatens their power and he teaches the people a radically different way of living and being!*

98. Many people argue that the Jews put Jesus to death. What do you think? 
   *Accept all answers. Discuss. (Note: Remind them of not being judgmental)*

99. What is meant by the *PASCHAL MYSTERY*? Note: For Christians, it is the most significant event of the entire New Testament. 
   *The passion (suffering), crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus.*

100. Director Zeffirelli cuts back and forth from the crucifixion to Master Zerah walking alone in the quiet, empty temple. What do you think Zerah is thinking at this time? 
   *Accept all answers. Discuss.*

101. During the crucifixion, what two clues show us that forgiveness is very important to Jesus? 
   *He forgives the sinner to his right and he utters, "Forgive them, for they know not what they do".*

102. Remember the centurion whose servant was healed by Jesus? What is his duty today, the day of Jesus' crucifixion? 
   *His duties included seeing to the details of the crucifixion of Jesus.*
103. Place yourself in Peter's shoes. What is he suffering at this time? 
*Accept all answers. Discuss.*

104. Is Peter the only one who denies Jesus? How do we deny Jesus? 
*Accept all answers. Discuss.*

105. Why did Jesus die for us?
*In our Catholic faith, we believe that Jesus' death is our salvation and the promise of heaven, eternal life with the Blessed Trinity.*

106. Can we earn our way to heaven with good thoughts, words, and deeds?
*No! We are taught that just and good thoughts, words, and deeds (in other words...LOVE) are what Jesus teaches us but this is not the reason we go to heaven.*

107. Why is it hard for the Apostles to believe that Mary Magdalene is the first one to see the risen Lord? Note: Mary Magdalene is mentioned in all four gospels!
*In the culture of Jesus' time, woman had no status. Jesus was counter-cultural and he radically accepted them as equals and many of them become his disciples. Many travelled with Jesus (Luke’s gospel names some of them!) and some may have even been deacons (Paul’s letter to Timothy). No one would have believed Mary’s stories about seeing the risen Lord. Yet, it must have been the truth because all four Gospel authors included it in their accounts. These four would never have risked their reputation by including this account in their writings if it had not been true! Way to go girls!* 

108. What transformed Jesus' apostles and disciples from terrified followers into brave and bold witnesses, many of whom died for their faith?
*The resurrection. Jesus said he would, and he did!*
109. When Jesus is in the upper room with the Apostles, what does he promise them and what does he ask of them? 

He promises to not leave them orphaned. He promises to send them an advocate, a helper to be with them (the Holy Spirit). He promises that He will always be with them, even though they would not physically see him. He commissions them to go to the ends of the earth to evangelize.

110. Has that changed 2000+ years later? 

Accept all answers. Discuss.

Read St. Paul's letter about the apparitions of Jesus after his resurrection: 1 Corinthians 15: 3-11. Convincing or not? 
Note: Although Paul's letters are listed after the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles in the Bible, they were actually written 15 years before the Gospels.

111. What things about God, the Blessed Trinity, Jesus, the Catholic Church, are you struggling to believe or have questions about? 

Accept all answers. Discuss the anonymous questions addressed to Jesus which the students wrote during the first class with you.

112. What are your honest reactions to this Jesus of Nazareth movie? 

Accept all answers. Valid!

113. After watching this movie, do you feel like you know the story of Jesus? 

Accept all answers. Valid!

114. Would you recommend this movie for the next class? 

Accept all answers. Valid!
VOCABULARY FOR YOUNG SCHOLARS  
JESUS OF NAZARETH

1. **betrothal**...a one year engagement between two people which was just as binding as marriage for Jewish Israelites
2. **portrays**...show, illustrates, depicts, interprets
3. **Messiah**...means the "anointed one"; refers to Christ
4. **circumcision**...a Jewish ritual usually performed on the eighth day of a boy's life in which the foreskin of the penis is surgically removed. This was an outward sign of a boy's/man's participation in Israel's covenant with God; it was also a sign/promise that they would continue to teach the Jewish faith.
5. **adultery**...infidelity; not being faithful to one's spouse
6. **census**...an official counting of the population (last one done in the USA was in 2010)
7. **prophecy**...an inspired prediction of the future (scholars estimate that there are over 300 prophecies in the Old Testament that refer to the coming of the Messiah/Jesus.
8. **evangelization**...preaching and sharing the "good news" (Gospels) through thought, word, and deed
9. **synagogue**...Jewish temple of prayer (also called a "shul")
10. **parables**...a fictional story which uses simple and familiar images to express a deeper spiritual message
11. **miracle**...a supernatural event which cannot be explained by the laws of nature or science
12. **Pharisee**...a member of an ancient Jewish group who strictly followed the 613 Mosaic laws; also refers to a hypocritical and self-righteous person
13. **pilgrimage**...a journey to a holy site taken for spiritual reasons
14. **centurion**...a Roman officer who was in charge of 100 soldiers (the word "cent" is Latin for 100)
15. **Sanhedrin**...highest council of religious judges in the ancient Jewish nation. They judged Jesus before sending him to Pontius Pilate
16. **meditate**...the form of prayer which involves listening to God
17. **Paschal Mystery**...refers to the passion, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ. It is considered, for Christians, the most important event of the entire New Testament.