

# SESSION 9: MORE

**TOPIC:** Why Jesus? pt. 2

## GOAL

The goal of this session is to introduce Jesus as teacher, healer, and exorcist, which leads to the conclusion that Jesus must also be Savior. The teens will also be challenged to personally answer the question, “Who do you say that I am?”

## KEY CONCEPTS

Jesus’ mission was to bring about the Kingdom of God. He did so by teaching, working miracles, and most importantly, forgiving sins.

Jesus came for the meek: those questioning the existence of God, the sinners, the broken-hearted, the enslaved, the overlooked.

Jesus asks us, “Who do you say that I am?” We must offer a response; our response determines our relationship with Him.

## KEY TERMS

**Kingdom of God:** The reign or rule of God. The Kingdom of God draws near with the coming of the Incarnate Word; it is announced in the Gospel; it is the messianic Kingdom, present in the person of Jesus, the Messiah; it remains in our midst in the Eucharist.

**Savior:** Jesus (which means “God saves” in Hebrew). The Son of God became man to achieve our salvation; He is the unique savior of humanity.

## SCRIPTURE

Luke 5:17-26

Luke 17:11-19

Matthew 4:17-23

Matthew 5:1-12

Matthew 8:28-32

Matthew 16:13-20

## CATECHISM

541

547-549

## ABOUT THIS SESSION

The Gather challenges the teens to look at pictures and guess the identity of people they know, but may not recognize. The Proclaim discusses the revelation of Jesus as Savior and how we must respond to this revelation. The Break is a small group discussion on identity, reputation, and who Jesus is to us. The Send is a period of silent prayer and reflection on the Beatitudes and the question from the Gospel of Matthew, “Who do you say that I am?”

## AS YOU GET STARTED

*For a deeper Proclaim,* consider Inviting a leader from Life Teen to give a short testimony on who Jesus is to them before transitioning into the Break.

## **GATHER**

*Welcome and Opening Prayer (5 min)*

Gather the teens in the main meeting space. Welcome them to the session and begin in prayer.

*Who Is It? (10 min)*

Prior to the session, create a slideshow of people the teens know, but at first may not be able to recognize. Use pictures of celebrities without makeup, actors who gained or lost weight for a role, people in costume, Core Members when they were younger, priests not in clerics, etc.

Gather the teens in the main meeting space and instruct them to remain with their small groups. Give each small group a stack of notecards and a pen. Project the first picture and ask the teens to write down who they think it is. Then, at the same time, the teens share their answer with the whole group and the true identity of the person is revealed. Repeat this process until all of the images have been shown.

## **PROCLAIM**

*“More” Teaching (15 min)*

### **Reputation**

Has someone ever said something about you that was not true? Have you ever been accused of doing something that you did not do? Have your actions ever been misinterpreted?

Some people looked at Jesus on the cross and saw a criminal. Others saw a zealous revolutionary. Still others saw the one who loved them. If a man was put to death in a gruesome manner, do you think he would want his final action to be misinterpreted?

Before Jesus died on the cross, He lived.

### **Jesus Was a Preacher**

Jesus' public life began with His proclamation of the Kingdom of God. His first teaching was to “repent for the Kingdom of God is at hand.” He wanted us to return to God, to return to His love and to His plan for our lives.  
*CCC 541; Matthew 4:17*

Jesus' proclamations were followed by teachings. He taught in synagogues and public places. He taught us to pray — to ask, seek, and knock — and to trust the Father with our needs. He taught us not to judge or retaliate, and to love our neighbors as ourselves. He also taught us to love our enemies. He spoke with authority and those who listened were amazed. He developed a reputation and crowds began to follow Him.  
*Matthew 4:23, 7*

One day, upon seeing the crowds, Jesus gave His most well known teaching on the Kingdom He came to establish.

*Read Matthew 5:1-11.*

The Beatitudes communicate Jesus' vision of the Kingdom of God — an extraordinarily upside-down Kingdom. The Kingdom of God does not favor those in power — religious, political, and civil leaders — but rather, favors:

- The Poor in Spirit: Those who “just do not get the whole God thing,” those who leave Adoration wondering what it was that happened that everyone else got to experience but they were left out of, and those who have yet to consider the existence of a God who loves them.
- Those who Mourn: Those who come from a troubled family, those who are going through a break-up, those who have lost loved ones, and those who are suffering from illness.
- The Meek: Those who go unnoticed, whose power is not found in conventional strength but in their reliance wholly on God.

If you are questioning the existence of God, if you are broken-hearted or feel overlooked, God sees you. He meets you in your poverty and makes you whole. The Kingdom of God favors you. You belong in the Kingdom.

When God works miracles in our poverty, mess, and ache, our view of others who are in the middle of their own messy and hurting lives changes as well. We begin to judge less and see ourselves in others who are struggling. We extend compassion and lead them to the same grace we received when we were in need. We become more merciful and pure in heart because we seek to lead others to the same refuge amidst the storms that we have come to know. Soon, a new community is formed, a community with God as it is center and king: the Kingdom of God.

### **Jesus Was a Healer**

Jesus not only taught about the Kingdom of God; He also made it manifest through His miracles. The Scriptures are full of accounts of Jesus healing lepers and paralytics, as well as the woman with the hemorrhage, the man with a withered hand, the crippled woman, the man with dropsy, the man at the pool of Bethzatha, and so many more.

*CCC 547-548; Luke 17:11-19; Matthew 8:1-4, 9:1-8, 9:20-22, 12:9-3, 20:29-34*

*Read Matthew 9:27-30.*

Two blind men followed Jesus as He passed by. It was a crowded, public street that was likely very loud. Yet, they followed Jesus and were healed.

Jesus' words not only speak of peace; they are also accompanied by actions that bring about peace. What was once broken is made whole. What was once tragic is rejoiced over. Panic and discord are brought to peace and restoration.

### **Jesus Was an Exorcist**

Jesus' miracles were not limited to the physical world as He also cured those suffering from spiritual ailments. One day while preaching in a synagogue, an unclean spirit cried out of a man, “What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us?” Jesus rebuked the demon and set the man free. Later, Jesus delivered a boy who suffered from a demon who was trying to throw him in the fire. Jesus even cast out several demons from the demoniacs and threw them into a herd of swine.

*CCC 549; Mark 1:21-28; Matthew 8:28-32, 17:14-20*

*Read Matthew 8:28-32.*

Jesus not only has the power of the natural world, but also of the supernatural world. This is seen most clearly in the Gospel of Luke when the friends of a paralytic fight to bring him to Jesus and ask for His healing. Jesus then claims and demonstrates the power to forgive sins.

*CCC 547-549*

*Read Luke 5:17-26.*

Only God can forgive sins. Is Jesus God?

### **Jesus Is the Christ**

As news of Jesus' preaching, healings, deliverances, and forgiveness of sins spread, His reputation grew and more and more people began to look for Him and follow Him. However, not everyone was pleased by His actions. People started questioning where He got His power. Did He deliver demons by the power of Beelzebul, the prince of demons? The Roman authorities thought He was causing unrest and threatening the status quo, and thus needed to be destroyed. The religious leaders were threatened by Jesus because He put their authority and security at risk, so they plotted to stop Him as well. There was likely the other extreme as well: people tuning Him out altogether.

*Luke 11:14; Mark 3:6*

In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus wonders if the crowds are understanding His teaching on the Kingdom of God. He asks His disciples who people say He is. His disciples inform Him that some think He is a prophet, teacher, or miracle worker. None of these answers are fully correct. Then He asks, "Who do you say that I am?" Peter declares, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Peter is right. Jesus is the Savior: the one who teaches, heals, delivers, and saves us from the greatest evil of all, sin.

*Matthew 16:13-20*

### **Who Do You Say Jesus Is?**

Jesus asks for a response from each of us to the revelation of His identity as Savior. Who do you say that Jesus is? How would you respond to this question?

Have you tuned Jesus out? Have you heard so many inconsequential facts about Him that you simply pass by the idea that He might be everything you are searching for? That He might be the one you desire to see you, notice you, and make you whole?

Does the idea of Jesus threaten your status quo, security, comfort, and preferences? If Jesus is God, does that mean you will have to change?

Have you been so deeply hurt or ostracized that you do not believe there could be a God who favors you?

Jesus asks for a response to the revelation of His identity as Savior. If we acknowledge that He is God, our lives have to change. We have to deny ourselves, pick up our crosses daily, and follow Him. However, it is not all suffering and sadness. There is also tremendous peace, wholeness, and beauty to be found.

*Luke 9:23*

### **No Room for Misinterpretation**

Jesus' final and definitive action was to die a gruesome death on the cross and save humanity from the bondage of sin. His life leaves no room for misinterpretation of His identity and definitive action: Jesus is God, a God who saves.

*2 Corinthians 5:21; Romans 6:23*

A man died on the cross and said He did it so that we might live. Should not we at least consider who He is? What would you want if your reputation was on the line?

## **BREAK**

### *Small Group Discussion (15 min)*

Divide the teens into their small groups. Begin in prayer and then use the following questions to facilitate a discussion:

- Has someone ever said something about you that was not true or accused you of doing something you did not do? How did that make you feel? Did you defend yourself? Why or why not?
- What is Jesus' reputation today? Is it accurate? How so? What about His reputation is inaccurate?
- Have you ever seen the person of Jesus be misinterpreted? In what way?
- What things in your life need to change in order to truly identify Jesus as Savior? Are you willing to make the change? Why or why not?
- In your own words, describe the Beatitudes that Jesus offers? What about the Beatitudes is appealing to you?

## **SEND**

### *Who Do You Say I Am Video (10 min)*

Play the video "Who Do You Say I Am" as a preface to the closing prayer.

### *Who Do You Say That I Am? (10 min)*

Gather the teens in the main meeting space and instruct them to spread out and find a comfortable spot where they can pray. Create a prayerful environment by dimming the lights and playing instrumental music in the background. Give each teen a Bible, a pen, and a copy of the *Who Do You Say That I Am?* handout. Invite the teens to prayerfully work through the handout. If time allows, have the teens share their reflections with a partner, their small group, or the large group.

**Handout: Who Do You Say That I Am?**

How are you poor in spirit?

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Who or what are you mourning?

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How are you meek?

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What things in your life need to move from panic and discord to peace and restoration?

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Read Matthew 16:13-17. Until now, who did you think Jesus was?

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Who do you say Jesus is now?

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Write a prayer to Jesus communicating how you are poor, mourning, and meek. Surrender to Him the messy, complicated, and wounded areas of your life and ask Him to fill you with His peace.

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