

January 9, 2023

Dear CRE student,

We missed you at CRE on January 8th! So that you keep up with the other people in your group, we ask that you complete the following:

1. Introduction – Who is Jesus?

Hi everyone and welcome back to Equipped for Life. We have done a lot up to this point. We have made covenant promises to each other. We talked about us and we have talked about God. We are beginning a new section with this session. Perhaps we can say that Jesus is the least known, most famous person to have ever lived.

Most of us have gone through religious education and have most likely heard about Jesus all of our lives. Of course, this is a good thing. But it is not without its pitfalls. For example, we can be around someone our entire life and think that we know all there is to know about a classmate, a family member, or even a friend. This can certainly happen with Jesus, too. It may be hard to do because we are so familiar with the stories of Jesus, but I going to ask all of us, myself included, to allow ourselves to be re-introduced to Jesus. As best we can, let's pretend like we haven't heard of him before and we coming together to learn about an interesting new religion that follows someone named "Jesus".

2. Memory and Relationships

The purpose of the next activity is to emphasize the link between memory and relationship. In Jesus Christ, we see God's eternal son. He is 100% God who has become 100% human. In him we see God's plan for humanity which is for each human to be adopted as a daughter or son of God. Being adopted as daughters and sons, Jesus shares his relationship with the Father with us. The plan, from the very beginning was for God to share his divine life with us and this is the very definition of salvation. Heaven isn't a place we go to. It is an eternal relationship we are invited into.

In order to truly know and love the Lord, we rely on memory. We rely on the memory of the apostles and the generations of Christians that have gone before us that is held and preserved in the Church. It's our collective memory as sons and daughters of God that is reflected in the Scriptures, sacred Tradition, and in the liturgy. We rely on this memory of the Church and we also rely on our personal memories, the memories that are made in our personal encounters with the Lord. We are a people of memory and it is through reflection upon this memory that our love for God grows.

Look at a picture of someone you care about – a friend, a family member etc. and reflect on that relationship by answering the questions below:

1. How did you meet this person? What is a really good memory you have about this person?
2. What emotions does the memory invoke? How did you feel at the time? How do you feel now, recounting the memory?
3. What is something that brings the person joy, or something that he or she enjoys doing? 4. What is something that the person does not like? Why doesn't he or she like it?
5. What is important to this person?
6. What is this person's hope for the future?
7. What part of this person do you carry with you? Is there something he or she says or does that you catch yourself doing? Is there a memory that you share that you remember out of the blue?

We cannot know someone just by seeing a picture of them. We really can't even know someone by hearing someone else talk about them. If someone talks about another person and how great they are, we may think: "They sound great. I'd like to meet them." To know someone is to have a first-hand interaction with them. There is danger in the Church and even in society. The danger is being saturated with information about Jesus. All of this information about Jesus can lead us to think that we know all about him. Knowing a lot about him can make us think that we actually know him.

Yet, there is a difference between learning about a person from history and knowing someone who is alive. Christians believe that Jesus is alive and that he is able to be met and to be known. When we walk into a church building, we often see Jesus depicted in stained glass windows, sacred art, or on the cross. From these images, we can gather certain pieces of information about him, but seeing artistic depictions of him is still not fully know who he is. We grow in knowledge of a living person through a relationship. In a relationship with Jesus, we reveal who we are to him and he reveals himself to us because that's what friends do. We tell him what brings joy to us; we tell him what brings us sadness. We tell him what is on our mind; we tell him what we are excited about. And we tell him what we are worried about. In turn, he will show what brings him joy, what brings him sadness, what is thoughts are about us, and what his hope for us is. We know him as a living person.

3. Jesus in the Bible

Read the following passages from your Bible (you can also access the Bible online at <https://bible.usccb.org/bible>)

- Mark 1:11
- Hebrews 1:5
- Matthew 17:5
- Romans 8:14-17
- Galatians 3:26
- 1 John 3:1-2

Write a brief summary about what these passages are trying to teach us.

Based on the passages above, answer the following questions:

- Who is Jesus?
- What does Jesus want?

Jesus is the God the son. Throughout his life, he demonstrated his sonship through his teaching, through his preaching, and through his healing. His love of God the Father, whom he called “Abba”, was seen in everything he did. This title, “Abba” is not a formal title. “Abba” is intimate. It is comparable to “dad” or even “daddy” in modern English. More than that, he taught others to approach God as “Abba” just as he did. This would have been a very different way to understand God than had been previously understood; yet, that’s what he did.

To call God “Abba” invoked ideas of tenderness, the tenderness of a parent who deeply loves and cares for their child.

Jealousy is pretty common human experience. Many people who have a relationship with someone can feel jealousy when someone or something threatens the relationship. Very simply, we don’t want to share.

Jesus has a relationship with God the Father that is unique to him because he is the Son. Yet, he has no jealousy. Instead, Jesus wants to share his relationship with God the Father with us. The New Testament was written in the Greek language and word that the Bible uses for “share” is “koinonia” (coin-oh-NEE- ah).

Read 2 Peter 1:3-4 from the Bible.

Koinonia (coin-oh-NEE-ah) - to share, to have fellowship with, to have communion with.

When someone is baptized, that person is brought into communion with Jesus and made to be an adopted child of God. This is what “koinonia” is and it is what salvation is. It is sharing in Jesus’s experience. It is being an adopted daughter or son of God and an heirs with Christ. A part of Christ lives in us and a part of us lives in Christ.

A simple understanding of “koinonia” means fellowship. However, it means much greater than that. It is a shared participation.

When we think of our relationship with Christ as a shared participation in his life, we can see what it means that we are joint heirs with him.

Answer the questions on the handout “Is it in the Cards” below.

4. Closing prayer

Christ told us to call God “abba,” meaning “father.” This title invokes images of the tender of the love between a parent and child. However, calling God father also indicates an authority that God has. Imagine your parents for a moment, how much they love and care for you. This love comes with authority, because your parents love you and have your best interest at heart.

A reading from the Gospel of Luke.

He was praying in a certain place, and when he had finished, one of his disciples said to him, “Lord, teach us to pray just as John taught his disciples.” He said to them, “When you pray, say: Father, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come. Give us each day our daily bread and forgive us our sins for we ourselves forgive everyone in debt to us, and do not subject us to the final test.”

In his letter to the Romans, Saint Paul says:

For those who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you received a spirit of adoption, through which we cry, “Abba, Father!” The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if only we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him.

We discussed a lot today. We discussed what it means that God is our Father and what it means that we are his adopted sons and daughters. We have heard a personal witness about a personal relationship with Christ.

Take a few minutes to reflect on our own personal relationship with God. If you have not experienced knowing God as our Father, take a moment of quiet and allow God to love you.

As we end this evening with the “Our Father,” a prayer that we have prayed many times before, think about what it means that we call God “Father,” as his adopted sons and daughters, as sharers in the life of Christ through our baptism. Our Father ...

Challenge for the next two weeks: take 5 minutes each day to pray the “Our Father,” and reflect on the words that you are reciting as you pray each line. Continue to ask God to show you what it means to know God as “Father”.

Please complete and submit by our next class. You may email it to rotramel@stjohn23rd.org or turn it in to your catechist/small group leader.

Peace and Blessings,

Maureen Rotramel
Director of Faith Formation



EQSAINTS

Is It in the Cards?

For each question below, lay down a card that corresponds to your answer.

♥ = Strongly Agree ♦ = Agree ♣ = Disagree ♠ = Strongly Disagree

- 1) I feel that I am familiar with most of the Bible stories about Jesus.

- 2) I tend to think of Jesus more as a historical figure than as a living person.

- 3) A relationship with Jesus isn't something that most teenagers think about.

- 4) I would like to better understand why a relationship with Jesus is important.