



FAMILY CONNECTIONS

Find time to explore these questions as a family after each session.

Session 1

- Why do we call Jesus *God* if God is Jesus' dad?
- How is Jesus truly human *and* truly divine? How is it possible to be two different things at one time?
- How do you think someone who has never heard of Jesus Christ would respond to the doctrine that Jesus is both truly human and truly God?

Session 2

- How often do you pray? When you pray, do you close your prayer with *in Jesus' name*? Why or why not?
- Are we supposed to always say *in Jesus' name we pray* at the end of our prayers? Why or why not? If we don't say it, are we still praying in Jesus' name?
- If Jesus is truly human and truly God, why don't we just pray to Jesus instead of praying in Jesus' name?
- To whom are we supposed to address our prayers? God? Jesus? the Holy Spirit?

Session 3

- What did Jesus do that motivated his followers to follow him and to start a religion that would eventually spread to the entire world?
- How do we know that the things we read in the Bible are true?
- Why do you choose to learn about Jesus Christ?
- How and why is Jesus important in your life?

Session 4

- Do you consider yourself a disciple of Jesus Christ? Why or why not?
- What level of importance or influence does Jesus Christ have in your life right now?
- What does it mean to follow Jesus as a young person in this town/city at this time?
- What do you know for sure about Jesus?



INTERVIEWS

What Bible story about Jesus best shows his human nature?

What Bible story about Jesus best shows his divine nature?

How can Jesus be truly human *and* truly God at the same time?





SESSION 1 FAITH STATEMENT

Question 35. How can Jesus be truly God and yet also truly human at the same time?

The mystery of Jesus Christ's divine-human unity passes our understanding; only faith given by the Holy Spirit enables us to affirm it. When Holy Scripture depicts Jesus as someone with divine power, status, and authority, it presupposes his humanity. And when it depicts him as someone with human weakness, neediness, and mortality, it presupposes his deity. We cannot understand how this should be, but we can trust that the God who made heaven and earth is free to become God incarnate and thus to be God with us in this wonderful and awe-inspiring way.

—*The Study Catechism: Full Version*

- What does this faith statement teach us about the nature of Jesus Christ?
- If a friend asked you this question, would the answer to catechism question 35 be the best way to respond to him or her? Why or why not? If not, how would you respond?



"BOY LIKE ME/MAN LIKE YOU"

by Rich Mullins

You was a baby like I was once
You was cryin' in the early mornin'
You was born in a stable Lord
Reid Memorial is where I was born
They wrapped You in swaddling clothes
Me they dressed in baby blue
I was twelve years old in the meeting house
Listening to the old men pray
I was tryin' hard to figure out what it was
That they was tryin' to say
There You were in the temple
They said You weren't old enough
To know the things you knew

Did You grow up hungry
Did You grow up fast?
Did the little girls giggle
When You walked past?
Did You wonder what it was
That made them laugh?

Chorus

***Did they tell You stories 'bout the saints of old?
Stories about their faith?
They say stories like that make a boy
grow bold
Stories like that make a man walk straight***

You was a boy like I was once
But was You a boy like me?
I grew up around Indiana
You grew up around Galilee
And if I ever really do grow up
Lord I want to grow up and be just like You

Did You wrestle with a dog and lick his nose?
Did You play beneath the spray of a
water hose?
Did You ever make angels in the winter snow?

Repeat Chorus

Did You ever get scared playing hide
and seek?
Did You try not to cry
When You scraped Your knee?
Did You ever skip a rock across a quiet creek?

Repeat Chorus

And I really may just grow up
And be like You someday¹

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How often do you pray?



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When was the last time you prayed by yourself?



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How do you typically close your prayers before saying “Amen”?





**Do you feel uncomfortable
about praying out loud in front
of a group? Why or why not?**



Do you usually pray before meals? Why or why not?





EXODUS 20:7

New Revised Standard Version:

You shall not make wrongful use of the name of the LORD your God, for the LORD will not acquit anyone who misuses his name.

Today's New International Version:

You shall not misuse the name of the LORD your God, for the LORD will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name.¹

King James Version:

Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.

The Message:

No using the name of GOD, your God, in curses or silly banter; GOD won't put up with the irreverent use of his name.²

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BURNING BUSH SCRIPT

Characters:

God
Narrator
Moses
Sheep
Burning Bush

Narrator (*from offstage*): Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law, Jethro, the priest of Midian. (*Moses and the sheep walk onto the stage.*) He led his flock beyond the wilderness, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. There the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out of a bush. (*The burning bush appears in front of Moses, moving his or her arms like flames throughout the skit.*) Moses looked, and the bush was blazing, yet it was not consumed.

Moses (*reacting to this strange sight*): I must turn aside and look at this great sight, and see why the bush is not burned up.

Narrator: When the Lord saw that he had turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush.

God (*from offstage*): Moses, Moses!

Moses (*turning to the bush*): Here I am.

God: Come no closer! Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground. (*Moses takes off his shoes.*) I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.

Narrator: And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God. (*Moses hides his face.*)

God: I have observed the misery of my people who are in Egypt. I have heard their cry on account of their taskmasters. Indeed, I know their sufferings, and I have come down to deliver them from the Egyptians. So come, I will send you to Pharaoh to bring my people out of Egypt.

Moses: Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?

God: I will be with you, and this shall be the sign for you that it is I who sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall worship God on this mountain.





SESSION 2 FAITH STATEMENT

Q. 99. What is required in the third commandment?

A. That we must not profane or abuse the name of God by cursing, by perjury, or by unnecessary oaths. Nor are we to participate in such horrible sins by keeping quiet and thus giving silent consent. In a word, we must not use the holy name of God except with fear and reverence so that he may be rightly confessed and addressed by us, and be glorified in all our words and works.

—*The Heidelberg Catechism*





***LECTIO DIVINA* GUIDELINES**

Lectio divina (“divine reading”) is an intentional, contemplative way to connect with God’s Word. This ancient spiritual practice involves listening to multiple readings of the same Scripture passage interspersed with short periods of silence.

Relax in God’s Presence

Dim the lights. Light a candle or an oil lamp. Sing a song or play contemplative music. Take a few minutes to relax in God’s presence and to open the group members’ hearts and minds.

Listen for God’s Word

First Reading

Have a group member slowly read the Scripture passage out loud while the rest of the group members listen for a word that “jumps out” at each of them. Give each person an opportunity to share his or her word (without comment or explanation) with the rest of the group. Allow a time of silence before the next reading.

Second Reading

Invite each group member to think about his or her word during the next reading, exploring the question “How does this word and this Scripture passage connect with my life?” Have a second reader slowly read the Scripture passage out loud to the group and allow for a time of silence after the reading. Give each person an opportunity to share his or her response to the question.

Third Reading

Invite each group member to think about the question “What is this passage calling me to do?” or “Who is this passage calling me to be?” during the next reading. Have a third reader slowly read the Scripture passage out loud to the group and end with a time of silence. Give each person an opportunity to respond to the question “What have you heard from God in this Scripture passage?”



SESSION 3 FAITH STATEMENT

God's reconciling act in Jesus Christ is a mystery which the Scriptures describe in various ways. It is called the sacrifice of a lamb, a shepherd's life given for his sheep, atonement by a priest; again it is ransom of a slave, payment of debt, vicarious satisfaction of a legal penalty, and victory over the powers of evil. These are expressions of a truth which remains beyond the reach of all theory in the depth of God's love for humankind. They reveal the gravity, cost, and sure achievement of God's reconciling work.

—*The Confession of 1967* (9.09)
Inclusive Language Text





SECRET IDENTITY NAMES

Adam

Eve

Snake in the Garden of Eden

Moses

Pharaoh

Jesus

Mary, mother of Jesus

One of the Magi from the East

Angel of the Lord

One of the robbers who was crucified with Jesus

The apostle Paul

The donkey that carried Jesus into Jerusalem





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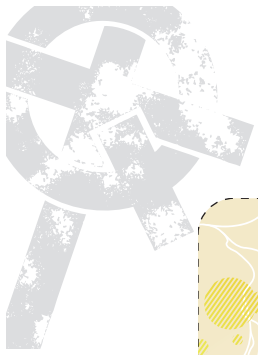


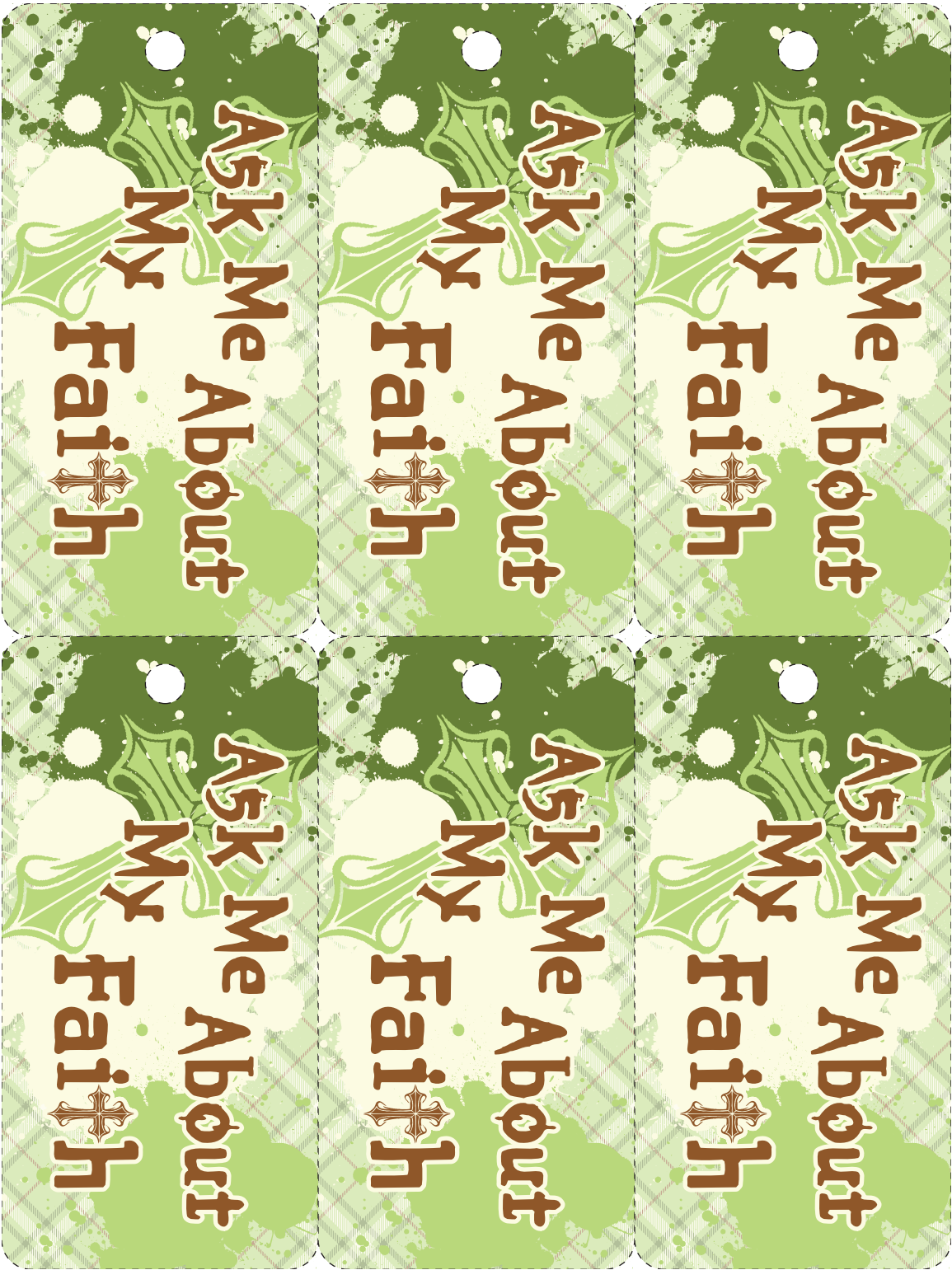
SESSION 4 FAITH STATEMENT

We trust in Jesus Christ, fully human, fully God. Jesus proclaimed the reign of God: preaching good news to the poor and release to the captives, teaching by word and deed and blessing the children, healing the sick, and binding up the brokenhearted, eating with outcasts, forgiving sinners, and calling all to repent and believe the gospel. Unjustly condemned for blasphemy and sedition, Jesus was crucified, suffering the depths of human pain and giving his life for the sins of the world. God raised this Jesus from the dead, vindicating his sinless life, breaking the power of sin and evil, delivering us from death to life eternal.

—*A Brief Statement of Faith (10.2)*

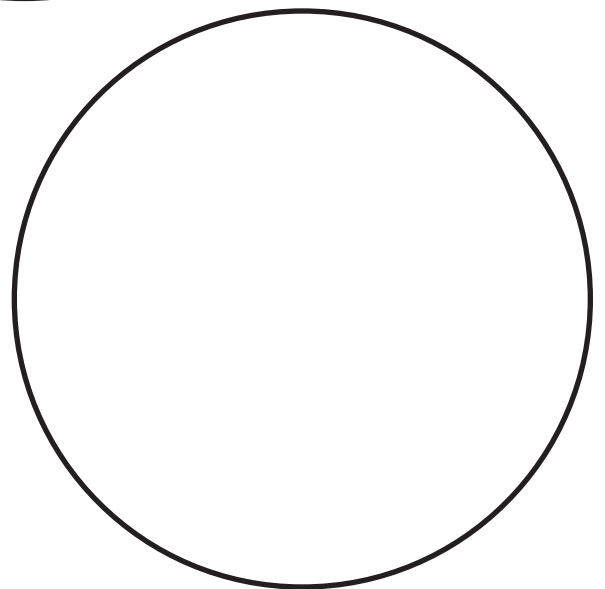
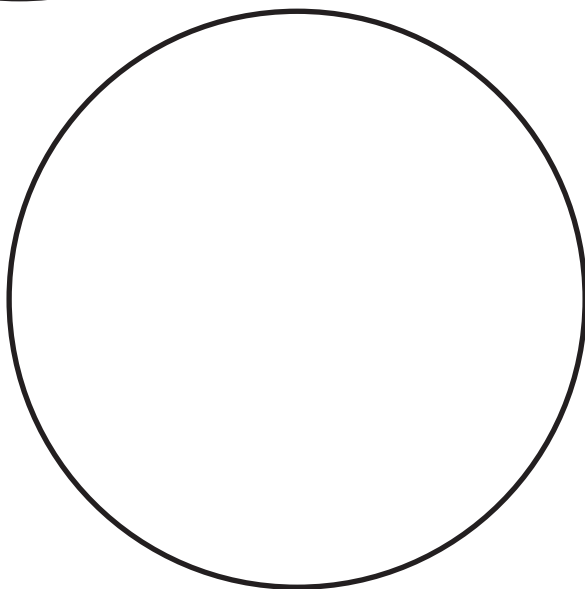
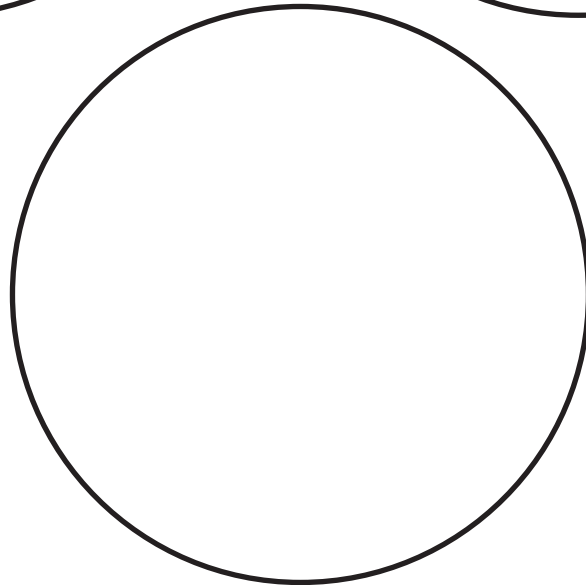
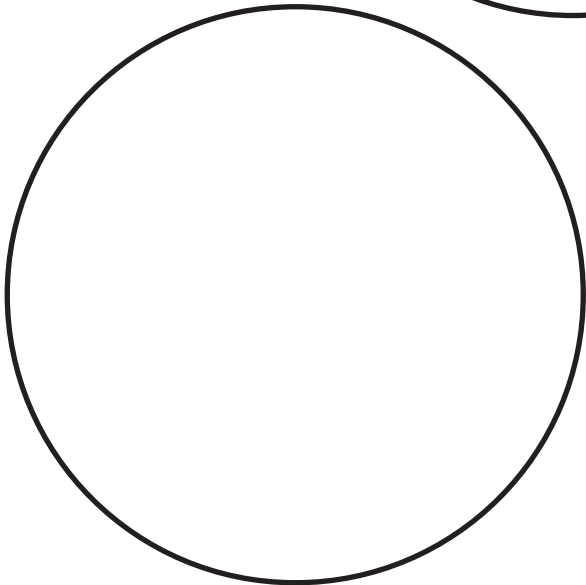
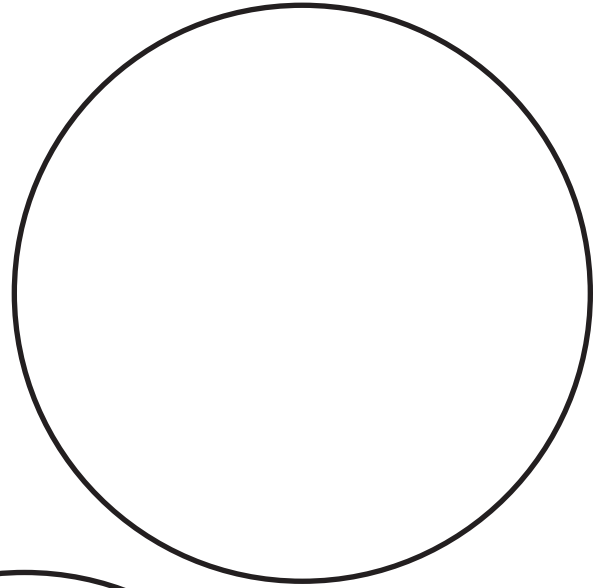
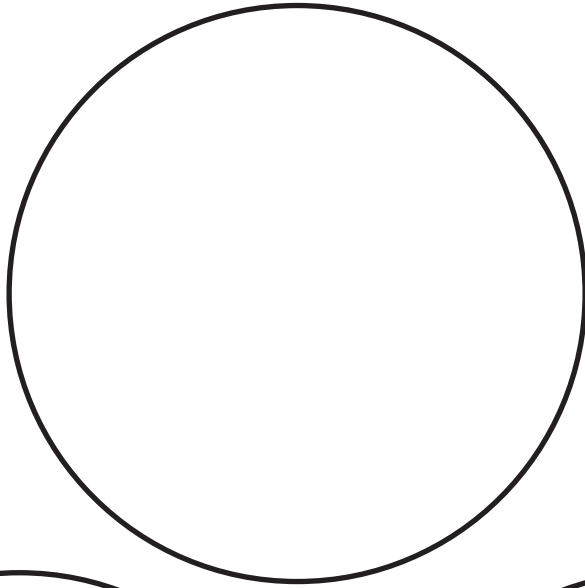














ADVENT WREATH RITUAL.

If you are teaching this mini-course during Advent, consider sharing an Advent wreath ritual with your group at the beginning of each session.

Create a worship area in your meeting space by placing an Advent wreath in the middle of a small table. If possible, cover or decorate the table with purple or blue fabric since purple or blue is the liturgical color for Advent.

At the beginning of each session, gather the group around the Advent wreath and give each participant a copy of the liturgy that corresponds with the session. If your group will be singing together, be sure each group member has a copy of the song.

If possible, gather the participants around the Advent wreath during the closing prayer. After the prayer, invite one of the participants to extinguish candles that are lit.





FIRST WEEK OF ADVENT

Voice 1: We light this candle as a sign of our anticipation of Jesus' coming.
(Light the first purple or blue candle.)

All: We celebrate the mystery of Jesus Christ, who was truly human and truly God.

Voice 2: In the words of Isaiah 7:14: "The Lord will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel," which means "God is with us."

All: We await your coming, O Lord.

Voice 3: God of light, as we await the coming of your Son, Jesus, prepare our hearts to recognize him and to follow him. Amen.

Song: "Once in Royal David's City," *The Presbyterian Hymnal*, no. 49





SECOND WEEK OF ADVENT

Voice 1: We light these candles as a sign of our anticipation of Jesus' coming.
(Light two purple or blue candles.)

All: We worship and sing praises to God!

Voice 2: In the words of Isaiah 9:2: "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness, on them light has shined."

All: We await your coming, O Lord.

Voice 3: God of light, prepare us to see your light and to reflect its brilliance throughout the world.
Amen.

Song: "Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence," *The Presbyterian Hymnal*, no. 5





THIRD WEEK OF ADVENT

Voice 1: We light these candles as a sign of our anticipation of Jesus' coming.
(Light three purple or blue candles.)

All: Jesus brings new life to the world!

Voice 2: In the words of Isaiah 61:1: "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me, and has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners."

All: We await your coming, O Lord.

Voice 3: God of light, prepare our hearts for Jesus' coming so that we can be Jesus' hands and feet in the world. Amen.

Song: "Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus," *The Presbyterian Hymnal*, no. 1 or no. 2





FOURTH WEEK OF ADVENT

Voice 1: We light these candles as a sign of our anticipation of Jesus' coming.
(Light four purple or blue candles.)

All: The countdown is on; the day of Christ's coming is soon!

Voice 2: In the words of Isaiah 40:3: "A voice cries: In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God."

All: We await your coming, O Lord.

Voice 3: God of light, as we anticipate Jesus' coming, prepare our lives to welcome him and to share his love with those around us. Amen.

Song: "Joy to the World," *The Presbyterian Hymnal*, no. 40





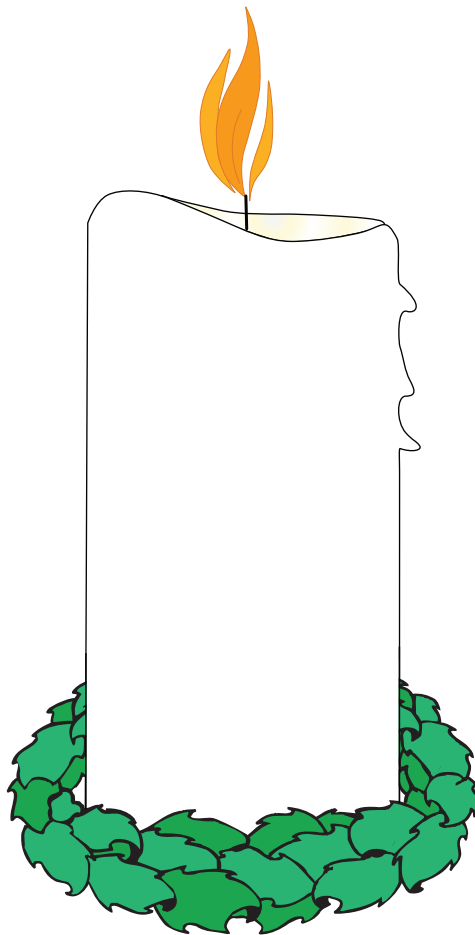
LENTEN RITUAL.

If you are teaching this mini-course during Lent, consider sharing a Lenten ritual with your group at the beginning of each session.

Create a worship area in your meeting space by placing a pillar candle in the middle of a small table. Around the candle, place symbols for Jesus such as a cross, a crown of thorns, and so on. If possible, cover or decorate the table with purple fabric since purple is the liturgical color for Lent.

At the beginning of each session, gather the group around the Christ-candle and give each participant a copy of the liturgy that corresponds with the session. If your group will be singing together, be sure each group member has a copy of the song.

If possible, gather the participants around the candle during the closing prayer. After the prayer, invite one of the participants to extinguish the candle.





SESSION 1 LENTEN RITUAL

Voice 1: We light this candle as a reminder that Jesus is always with us.
(*Light the Christ-candle.*)

Voice 2: We come into your presence with questions, O Lord.

All: Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on us.

Voice 1: We celebrate the mystery of Jesus Christ, who was truly human and truly God.

All: Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on us.

Voice 2: As we learn in the fourteenth chapter of the book of John: Thomas said to Jesus, "Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?" Jesus said, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. . . . If you know me, you will know my Father also. . . . Whoever has seen me has seen the Father."

All: Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on us.

Voice 3: God of light, prepare our hearts to recognize you and to follow you down unfamiliar paths. Amen.

Song: "I Danced in the Morning," *The Presbyterian Hymnal*, no. 302, or "Amen, Amen,"
The Presbyterian Hymnal, no. 299





SESSION 2 LENTEN RITUAL

Voice 1: We light this candle as a reminder that Jesus is always with us.
(*Light the Christ-candle.*)

Voice 2: We come into your presence with questions, O Lord.

All: Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on us.

Voice 1: We celebrate Jesus Christ, the Son of God, whose love for us knows no boundaries.

All: Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on us.

Voice 2: As we learn in John 8:12: "Jesus said: 'I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life.' "

All: Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on us.

Voice 3: God of light, we wish to walk in the light of your Son. Prepare our spirits to see your light and to reflect its brilliance throughout the world. Amen.

Song: "Of the Father's Love Begotten," *The Presbyterian Hymnal*, no. 309





SESSION 3 LENTEN RITUAL

Voice 1: We light this candle as a reminder that Jesus is always with us.
(*Light the Christ-candle.*)

Voice 2: We come into your presence with questions, O Lord.

All: Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on us.

Voice 1: How can we make sense of Jesus' life and death? How can we understand Jesus' love for us?

All: Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on us.

Voice 2: As we learn in Matthew 11:28: "Jesus said: 'Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest.' "

All: Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on us.

Voice 3: God of light, prepare us to know you better and to be your hands and feet in the world.
Amen.

Song: "O Sing a Song of Bethlehem," *The Presbyterian Hymnal*, no. 308





SESSION 4 LENTEN RITUAL

Voice 1: We light this candle as a reminder that Jesus is always with us.
(*Light the Christ-candle.*)

Voice 2: We come into your presence with questions, O Lord.

All: Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on us.

Voice 1: What are you calling us to do in the world?

All: Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on us.

Voice 2: As we learn in Matthew 28:19–20: Jesus said: “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

All: Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on us.

Voice 3: God of light, our questions are real, as real as our desire to have them answered. Help us love as you have loved us. Amen.

Song: “What Wondrous Love Is This,” *The Presbyterian Hymnal*, no. 85

