

I Believe in Jesus Christ: Incarnation, Life, Death, and Resurrection

SESSION TWO LEADER GUIDE

This leader guide is designed to follow each page of the second session: “I Believe in Jesus Christ: Incarnation, Life, Death, and Resurrection” with background for the leader and helpful references for expanding the learning. This second lesson may be taught as one longer continuous session, such as at a retreat setting, or as separate sessions (approximately one hour) that cover each page of the session. You may wish to have youth view the website, or individual pages, on their own, then gather as a group to discuss and explore the learning. The website is also useful within the classroom as a teaching tool to introduce the material, then youth may revisit it later to reinforce learning at home. While the curriculum offers prompts for guiding conversation and offers direction for teaching the material, it is important to prepare your own answers for questions and notes for discussion. Sharing your personal experience and insight with the group is a valuable resource for these lessons.

OBJECTIVES

At the end of this session, the students will be better able to:

Recognize the differing methods for scientific and theological inquiry

Differentiate between the theological and scientific claims of birth, life, and death

THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

The conversation between faith/religion and science can be difficult to navigate with youth who live in a world where they are bombarded by a great amount of information and opinions. It is important to first set a safe learning environment where differing opinions are respected and confidentiality is secured.

You may also want to consult with parents/guardians prior to beginning this session to alert them to the concepts taught in this session, and invite them to preview the website. Many adults are unfamiliar with ways to talk about both science and religion, or may have beliefs that are challenged by this learning.

Within any group of youth you will find a wide range of maturity and development levels. In general, adolescent-aged students (12-14) are able to engage in more complex thinking, reason deductively, and are better able to form concepts about the past, present, and future than their elementary counterparts. As adolescence is achieved, they can synthesize values and beliefs with their own experiences to create meaning and understanding for life. This is also a time when a sense of personal identity is being formed, and this extends to their identity as it relates to the concepts of science and faith.

SUPPLIES FOR SESSION ONE:

- **Copies of NRSV* Bible – 1/pair of youth**
- **Computer and access to Internet**

- **Poster board, markers in various colors**

*** Note: If an alternate version of the Bible is preferred, then the references listed below will need to be adapted to accommodate another version.**

TO BEGIN:

Gather youth and provide an overview of lesson(s) to be covered in I BELIEVE IN JESUS CHRIST: INCARNATION, LIFE, DEATH, AND RESURRECTION session(s). If this lesson is held separately from the previous lesson, review the need for a safe and confidential environment. Ask youth to recall ways for their group to honor one another's opinions and to keep shared ideas in the group. If possible, review these ideas previously listed on a white board, or a computer document and read the completed list. Ask all present, youth and adults, to agree to follow these guidelines for the duration of the learning time together.

PAGE ONE – I BELIEVE IN JESUS CHRIST: INCARNATION, LIFE, DEATH, AND RESURRECTION

Begin the lesson by reviewing the definition of a statement of faith or a creed: A statement or set of formal beliefs, usually Christian, or a set of guidelines that define how you live.

Ask: How would you summarize the story of Jesus' life beginning before birth and ending with death? *Allow all answers. Note that the Apostle's Creed states that Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit, which is different than human conception understood*

scientifically.

Ask: How would you summarize the story of your own life beginning before birth to when you will finally die. What are the key differences between your story and the story of Jesus? *Allow all answers.*

Next: Review the information on the first page of lesson two: I BELIEVE IN JESUS CHRIST: INCARNATION, LIFE, DEATH, AND RESURRECTION.

Read aloud the statement in the picture entitled “LIFE” and discuss how this statement might or might not challenge the Christian viewpoint of life beyond death. Note the portion of the statement that says that life is, “the sole responsibility of the recipient.” Discuss how this statement might challenge a belief in a loving God who cares for us.

Have the group watch the video link to the skit. Discuss the following with the group:

While the video does, literally, poke fun at the issues of life and death, it raises some important questions. Is the body just a wrapper or medium for a soul, which is left behind as the soul exits after death? Most Christians believe in a full body resurrection, so this would dispute that claim.

What about the idea that you can only believe what you see, as with the body but not the soul?

Is resurrection like reincarnation? Page two of the lesson covers this issue in greater detail, but in general the two are not the same. To be reincarnated is to return to earth as a different being, resurrection is

about transformation.

Discuss with the group why they feel that some Christians and some scientists disagree about the claims of Jesus' incarnation, life, death, resurrection, and the scientific claims of how life begins and ends. Be attentive to the need for each group member to honor the thoughts, feelings, and opinions of each other. Allow the discussion to continue for as long as interest is maintained. You may continue on with the lesson to PAGE TWO - THE TWO LENSES, or bring the session to a close. If the session will end, encourage students to do research, on their own, to find news related items that address both the understanding of the life of Jesus and scientific views of life and death. Encourage students to bring this information back to future sessions.