

Jesus Includes All People in His Life

FOR THE TEACHER:

This week's lesson uses the traditional manger scene and the story of the magi to help the kids understand that Jesus includes all people in his life and all people will always exist with him. Jesus is God the Son, the second person of the Trinity, living in permanent union with all of humanity and all of creation. A background text you may want to study is Ephesians 2:11-18. In the Old Testament all humanity is in one of two groups: either Israelite or Gentile. Paul explains in Ephesians 2 that Christ has made one new humanity by uniting all people (Jew and Gentile) in himself.

Questions marked with an asterisk (*) are part of the Trinitarian Catechism.

FIRST ACTIVITY: Picking Favorites Game. Depending on the age group, pick one of two activities below:

- For younger kids, play Duck, Duck, Goose. Have the kids sit in a circle. Have one kid be "it". Have the "it" kid get up and walk on the outside of the circle tapping each kid softly on the head saying "duck, duck, duck . . ." until they get to the one they choose to name "goose". The person that gets tapped gets up and chases the other person around the circle until they get to an open spot and sits down. Then the "goose" person becomes the leader and repeats the process. After the game ask - As the leader, how did you choose who would be "goose"? (I chose my friend; I chose my brother.)
- For older kids, pick at least 2 people to be leaders. In private, help them come up with one or two things that are unique to them that one or two other kids might also have in common. For example, they could pick their unique trait as someone with glasses or someone with short brown hair or someone who is wearing tennis shoes, etc. Each of the two leaders should pick different traits but still something that is unique to them. Have the two kids stand away from each other. Next have each of the remaining kids one by one go up to the first leader and ask if they can be in their group. The first time around, have each leader reject each person by saying "No". Then have each child go up to each leader and ask again if they could be in their group. This time the leader can say "Yes" to that person if they fit their same unique quality that they thought of earlier. For example, if they pick their unique quality as having glasses, they can only pick other kids that also have glasses. Once a child is chosen, they can stay with that leader. Once everyone has gone to each person for the 2nd time, anyone who is left should go to the middle as their own group. Now ask the kids why they think they were or were not chosen.

After the game of your choice, ask the kids - How did it feel to be picked? (It felt good. It made me feel included.) How did it feel to be left out and not picked? (It made me sad.) Do you think Jesus came to adopt some of us or all of us? (Jesus came to include all people.)

SCRIPTURE LESSON: Ask for a helper to pass out a bible to each child. Have them all turn to Matthew 2:1-12. For older kids, have them take turns reading.

1After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem 2and asked, "Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him."

*What nationality is Jesus? (Jewish, from the tribe of Judah in the nation of Israel). Were the Magi Jewish? (No. We don't know exactly where the Magi came from but most likely they were from modern day Iraq or Iran.) Do you think Jesus came just to make Jewish people children of the Father or did he come to make everyone children of the Father? (Everyone)

3When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. 4When he had called together all the people's chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Christ^l was to be born. 5"In Bethlehem in Judea," they replied, "for this is what the prophet has written:

*6" 'But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;
for out of you will come a ruler
who will be the shepherd of my people Israel. '"*

These words are from the book of Micah in the Old Testament. *What does the Old Testament tell us about? (The story of how the Father called the people of Israel to be a place where Jesus could be born.)

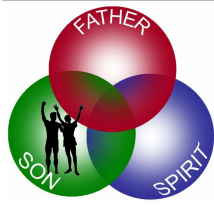
7Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. 8He sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and make a careful search for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him."

9After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen in the east went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. 10When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. 11On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold and of incense and of myrrh. 12And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.

The magi were very happy when they saw Jesus and they worshiped him. The magi symbolize everyone in the world who is not Jewish. This shows us that Jesus includes all people in his life and all people will always exist with him.

PRIMARY LESSON: Jesus includes all people in his life and all people will always exist with him.

SECOND ACTIVITY: Trinity - You're included.



Give each child a piece of paper and have them draw three circles that intersect. Label one circle as Father, one circle as Holy Spirit and one circle as Son. Have the kids draw a picture of themselves in the circle with the son.

PRAYER: For older kids, have one of them pray this prayer (or come up with their own). For younger kids, have them repeat after you as you read the prayer.

Father in heaven, thank you for sending your Son to become the man Jesus so that we can live with you forever. Thank you, Jesus, for including everyone in your life and making sure that we can all live with you and our Father and the Holy Spirit forever. Holy Spirit, help us to believe that we are all included in Jesus' life and to share this good news with everyone we know. In Jesus' name, Amen.