

# RCIA That's Easier to Teach ... Because It Speaks to Them

## New Look, New Name

The ever-popular and long-running RCIA program, *Journey of Faith*, has a fresh, new look and expanded leader materials. Written in the engaging, pastoral style of the Redemptorists, it speaks directly to adults, teens, and Latinos. *Journey of Faith* and *Jornada de Fe* (previously *Camino de Fe*) speak more clearly to people where they are in their faith journey and offer more integration with their daily life. New content more fully addresses relevant life issues, faith topics, and questions in a catechetical approach to the RCIA.

## More of What You Need to Teach With Confidence

The comprehensive *Leader Guide* gives you everything you need to walk into your RCIA class and start leading—whether you're a veteran RCIA instructor or a first-time volunteer. The expanded materials include:

- A new wraparound design that enables you to see what your participants see so you can spend more time teaching and growing in faith alongside your group.
- Complete instructions for how to use *Journey of Faith* with an explanation of the lesson plan components, including schedule options.
- Tips on how to be an effective catechist.
- Practical suggestions for teaching in a group setting.
- Additional discussion points that prepare you for responses and keep the conversation going.
- A complete glossary—available online as well—of all new concepts and terms taught in the lessons.
- Supplemental material suggestions such as *The Word Into Life* scriptural study for RCIA groups and the popular *Catholic Update* newsletters on core RCIA topics.

## Please See the Attached Sample

Adult *Leader Guide* Inquiry Lesson Plan:  
*Who Is Jesus Christ?*

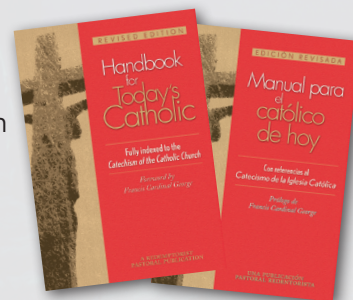
Please note: The actual *Leader Guide* is 9" x 12" spiral bound.

# Journey of Faith



## Making It Even Easier to Teach

*Handbook for Today's Catholic* and *Manual para el católico de hoy* cover the fundamentals of Catholicism in a condensed format and are fully indexed to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. Ever popular, with over one million copies sold, they are great reference companions for *Journey of Faith* and *Jornada de Fe*.





## Q4: Who Is Jesus Christ?

**Catechism:** 422–682

### Objectives

Participants will...

- identify Jesus as fully human and fully divine: as a real, historical being and as the one, true God.
- describe Christ as the way to the Father and salvation, as the truth, and as the fullness and source of life.
- begin or nurture a personal relationship with Jesus.

### Leader Meditation

*John 10:7–18*

Jesus likens himself to a shepherd who lays down his life for his sheep. What do these words tell you about the person of Jesus? Ask Jesus in prayer to be your shepherd and guide as you lead this lesson.

### Related Catholic Updates

- “Finding the Heart of Jesus’ Life: Looking at Jesus in the Gospels” (C0312A)
- “Four Faces of Jesus” (C1305A)
- “Who Is Jesus?” (C8509A)

### Leader Preparation

- Read the lesson handout, this lesson plan, the opening Scripture passage, and the *Catechism* sections.
- Be familiar with the vocabulary terms in this lesson: *ichthys*, Messiah, miracle. Definitions can be found in the lesson and in this guide’s glossary.
- Be prepared to review how to look up Bible verses. This lesson has many, so determine ahead of time whether you can cover them all, divide them up, or have participants reflect on some outside of the session.
- Ask your pastor for guidance on relating Jesus’ life, identity, words, and dual natures to participants. Perhaps he can help to lead the session or recommend some additional material on these subjects.

### Welcome

Welcome the participants and sponsors, especially any new attendees. Check for supplies and immediate needs. Solicit questions about the previous session and/or share new information. Begin promptly.

### Opening Scripture

*John 10:7–18*

Light the candle and read the passage aloud. Ask, “What does this passage tell us about Jesus?” Discuss the meaning of Jesus’ words: “I am the good shepherd, and I know mine and mine know me...” (10:14). Ask, “Who does Jesus call his ‘own?’”

“Taken up to heaven and glorified after he had thus fully accomplished his mission, Christ dwells on earth in his Church.”

CCC 669





# Journey of Faith



Q4

INQUIRY

## In Short:

- Christ is the way to the Father and salvation.
- Jesus is fully human and fully divine.
- You can have a personal relationship with Jesus.



*"Moved by the grace of the Holy Spirit and drawn by the Father, we believe in Jesus and confess: 'You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.'"*

CCC 424

*"To confess that Jesus is Lord is distinctive of Christian faith."*

CCC 202

## Who Is Jesus Christ?

What do you see in the image at right? Early Christians used the fish symbol as a secret code indicating they were followers of Jesus. Sometimes the fish's eye was a tiny cross. You also see the Greek acronym **ichthys**. Each letter (*iota, chi, theta, upsilon, sigma*) begins the words in the title "Jesus Christ, Son of God, Savior." When early Christians saw the fish or ichthys, they knew immediately they had met another Christian and were safe from persecution. They belonged to each other and to the Lord.



While the Catholic faith uses many symbols to illustrate deeper truths, our faith is founded in the living person of Jesus Christ. Jesus binds us to God and to each other. Christ alone gives meaning to our faith, and every belief and practice points to him, interrelating with the others to make up a complete and full expression of the truth.

## Jesus' True Identity

Jesus' earthly existence is undeniable; historical research has established the approximate date and place of his birth, as well as the circumstances surrounding his crucifixion. Those around him felt certain of his origins, calling him "the carpenter, the son of Mary" and "the Nazarene" (Mark 6:3; 14:67; see also Matthew 13:55).

The real question, then, lies in whether Jesus is God—whether his miracles, teachings, death, and resurrection have real and lasting meaning for all humanity. Even in his own time and region, many were skeptical. The Jews were awaiting the Messiah, but they expected a mighty warrior. They never imagined their savior would have such humble beginnings. When Jesus asked his apostles, "Who do people say that I am?" (Mark 8:27), answers varied. Peter replied, "the Messiah." Jesus didn't deny this identification but "warned them not to tell anyone" (8:29–30).

CCC 422–682

ADULTS

Q4

## Who Is Jesus Christ?

Invite the sponsors or candidates to share a personal experience in which God revealed himself as Lord and/or Savior. This could be a moment of conversion, acceptance, profession of faith, or salvific mercy. Their responses serve as a personal answer to the lesson's question, "How has he guided your life so far?"

## Jesus' True Identity

Compare who Jesus was to his contemporaries and who he is to us today. Invite participants to share how they view and feel about Christ now, and what they hope their relationship with him will be like. Encourage them to let Jesus lead the way rather than attempt to force a concept of Jesus into their existing mindset.

Discuss why Jesus didn't deny Peter's identification but "warned them not to tell anyone" (8:29–30).

*Jesus himself tells us, "The works that the Father gave me to accomplish, these works that I perform testify on my behalf that*

*the Father has sent me" (John 5:36).*

Discuss how learning a truth that conflicts with what you believe can be hard to accept or how we determine whether or not something is true. Emphasize that we know Jesus is the truth and that Jesus as truth is the center of our faith.

Complete the Bible activities together. Depending on your group's size and time, you may assign items to pairs or tables or simply read a few aloud.

Share these responses to "How did Jesus describe himself?" as needed:

- John 4:25–26 ("the Messiah...the Anointed") the promised leader and savior of the Israelites
- John 6:48 ("the bread of life") a source of spiritual nourishment and divine communion
- John 8:12 ("the light of the world") a source of revelation and truth
- John 10:14–15 ("the good shepherd") a faithful protector and guide
- John 11:25–27 ("the resurrection and the life...the Messiah, the Son of God")
- John 15:1 ("the true vine") our connection and bond to God
- John 17:1–3 ("your son...the one whom you sent") God's divine agent

## INQUIRY

### JOURNEY OF FAITH

**Messiah:** In Hebrew, "anointed" (Greek, *christos*). The one foretold by prophets who would deliver God's people from their enemies, sin, and evil and establish a kingdom of justice and salvation. Similar to *savior*, this term originally had a clear political sense but later was revealed to have deeper, more supernatural implications.

"Know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Messiah, this Jesus whom you crucified."

Acts 2:36

- If Jesus is God and Savior, what does that mean for your life?



Only Jesus can reveal the secret of his person. If we are to understand him, we must let Jesus speak for himself.

How did Jesus describe himself?

John 4:25–26	John 6:48
John 8:12	John 10:14–15
John 11:25–27	John 15:1
John 17:1–3	

- Which of the verses from John's Gospel has the most meaning for you? Why?



## Jesus Is the Way

"I am the way and the truth and the life."

John 14:6

Jesus' identity and role can be difficult to understand and accept, yet over thousands of years, billions of people around the globe have called themselves followers of Christ. Many have changed or lost their lives because of it.

It's important to realize that Jesus was a faithful Jew. The Jews possessed a deep knowledge of God. Drawing on this background, Jesus shared many sayings that were taught by the prophets and Jewish rabbis. For example, Jesus taught that we should pray in secret (Matthew 6:6). A Jewish saying shares a similar message: "He who prays within his house surrounds it with a wall that is stronger than iron."

What made Jesus unique, then, isn't his teaching. Jesus is unique because *he is the Son of God*. He not only called people to hear and heed his message, but also to believe in him! That was completely new; prophets and teachers had never before demanded belief in themselves. They wanted to kill him, we're told, because he "called God his own Father, making himself equal to God" (John 5:18).

Jesus placed himself above the Jewish religious leaders and practices. He claimed to be the way to God and the complete fulfillment of Jewish teachings and prophecies. He said, "Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets. I have come not to abolish but to fulfill" (Matthew 5:17; see also Luke 24:44).

- To what or where do Jesus' life and teachings lead you?
- How has he guided your life so far?





## Jesus Is the Truth

*"For this I was born and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth."*

John 18:37

Jesus says, "I am the truth," not "I speak the truth" or "I reveal the truth," but "I am the truth." As son of Mary and Son of God, Jesus' human and divine natures cannot be separated. Unlike religious leaders and saints throughout history, he is never "off duty" or subject to sin and flaws. Every word, every action, every gesture, every emotion is full of meaning and truth. Jesus invites us to have a personal relationship with him—and in him and through him, a relationship with the Father.

*"To fall in love with God is the greatest romance; to seek him the greatest adventure; to find him, the greatest human achievement."*

St. Augustine

Jesus came to show us God in human terms—to make the Father present to all.

How does Jesus describe his relationship with the Father in John's Gospel?

John 1:18                      John 5:37–38

John 6:46                     John 8:38

- What would it mean for you to have a personal relationship with Jesus? Does this seem more appealing or uncomfortable? Why?



## Jesus Is the Life

The greatest treasure we have is life itself. Our earthly life is fragile, limited, and temporary, but Christ offers us a full and everlasting life. For many, it takes a close encounter with our own limits or mortality to seek the life Christ offers and true salvation.

How does Jesus show himself to be the life in the following Scripture passages:

Matthew 16:25              Mark 8:35

John 1:3–4                    John 5:21, 24

John 6:53                     John 10:10

John 17:1–2

This life includes being filled with the Holy Spirit, "the Lord, the giver of life" (Nicene Creed). Jesus promised to send the Spirit. When he came upon the apostles at Pentecost, fifty days after Jesus' resurrection at Easter, they were filled with new life—the life of the risen Christ.

*"I live, no longer I, but Christ lives in me."*

Galatians 2:20

Jesus continues to promise his life and Spirit to anyone who wishes to be united to him. Having a personal relationship with Christ, which includes prayer and the sacraments, is how disciples embrace the Trinity and prepare for life after death.

from God.") Jesus possesses full knowledge of the Father.

- John 8:38  
("I tell you what I have seen in the Father's presence; then do what you have heard from the Father.") Jesus manifests the Father. He transmits God's knowledge and truth to the disciples (Church).

## Jesus Is the Life

Emphasize why we should come to know Jesus: so that we may know God (John 14:8–9) and receive freedom from sin and eternal life (John 8:31–32).

Explain that salvation and life with God in heaven comes from faith in Christ alone.

*Share these responses to "How does Jesus show himself to be the life" as needed:*

- Matthew 16:25; Mark 8:35  
("Whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.") By giving our lives to Christ, we receive eternal life.

- John 1:3–4  
("What came to be through him was life...") Christ's life frees us from sin and doubt and is a "light" to the truth.

- John 5:21, 24  
("Just as the Father raises the dead and gives life, so also does the Son give life...") Faith in Christ and knowledge of God's word saves us from sin and death.

- John 6:53  
("Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you do not have life within you.") Christ's life is present and received in the Eucharist.

## Jesus Is the Truth

Clarify the Catholic teaching of Jesus' dual nature: Christ is *fully human and fully divine*. His being or essence is not "half and half"; his divine nature was not diminished by the Incarnation, nor was his humanity reduced by being without sin. This should give us hope in his ability as a redeemer and in our ability to become holy.

Explain that throughout the Gospels, Jesus doesn't claim only to lead others to the Father but to be one with the Father, that is, to be God in the flesh.

*Share these responses to "How does he describe his relationship with the Father...?" as needed:*

- John 1:18  
("No one has ever seen God. The only Son...has revealed him.") Jesus is the image of the Father, the full revelation of God.

- John 5:37–38  
("You have never heard his voice nor seen his form...because you do not believe in the one whom he has sent.") Jesus claims justification by the Father. He is the voice and Word of God.

- John 6:46  
("Not that anyone has seen the Father except the one who is



• John 10:10  
("I came so that they might have life...") Jesus was sent to save all humanity.

• John 17:1–2  
("Give glory to your son...so that he may give eternal life to all you gave him.") The Son has authority to grant us life.

## The Miracles of Jesus

Distinguish the lesson's definition of *miracle* from our everyday use of the term. Invite the group to compare examples of events we commonly refer to as "miracles" with Church-approved miracles (used to declare sainthood). Ask, "How might our everyday definition of *miracle* fall short? How does the Church's definition witness to the reality of God?" Discuss as many of the miracles as possible.

*Suggested responses are below:*

- **Wedding at Cana**  
(John 2:1–11) Sign of his divinity and affirmation of Mary's faith in him.
- **Cleansing of a leper**  
(Matthew 8:1–4) Affirmation of the leper's faith.
- **Healing the centurion's servant**  
(Luke 7:1–10) Affirmation of the centurion's faith (see 7:9).
- **Healing Jairus' daughter and the woman with a hemorrhage**  
(Matthew 9:18–26; Mark 5:21–43; Luke 8:40–56) Affirmation(s).
- **Loaves and Fishes/Feeding 5,000**  
(Matthew 14:13–21; Mark 6:34–44; Luke 9:10–17; John 6:1–15) Sign of his divinity and mission to feed us with spiritual/divine "bread."
- **Walking on water**  
(Mark 6:45–52) Sign of his divinity and to strengthen the disciples' faith.

### INQUIRY

## The Miracles of Jesus

**Miracle:** An event that cannot be explained by natural or scientific laws and is therefore considered the work of a divine agent.

Throughout the Gospels, Jesus cures the sick and injured, commands nature, multiplies food, and even raises the dead. He didn't perform miracles to demonstrate his power, gain authority, or impress anyone. He performed most of them away from the crowds and in the presence of only a few. He frequently told witnesses not to tell anyone what they had seen. Rather, his miracles seem to have two purposes:

1. To serve as signs of his divinity and mission, that God's kingdom has arrived, and that God's love is present and at work (see John 10:24–39 and 14:11).
2. To affirm and strengthen those who already have faith (see Matthew 15:21–28 and Luke 8:40–56).

Read the Gospel passages below, then discuss whether each miracle serves as a sign of Jesus' divinity and mission, an affirmation of faith, or both:

- Wedding at Cana (water into wine; John 2:1–11)
- Cleansing of a leper (Matthew 8:1–4)
- Healing the centurion's servant (Luke 7:1–10)
- Healing Jairus' daughter and the woman with a hemorrhage (Matthew 9:18–26; Mark 5:21–43; Luke 8:40–56)
- Loaves and fish, feeding 5,000 (Matthew 14:13–21)
- Walking on water (Mark 6:45–52)



Write a letter to Jesus. Talk to him as you would to a friend or your spouse.

What would you like to share with Jesus this week?

What difficulties or joys would you discuss with him?

*Journey of Faith for Adults: Inquiry, Q4 (326252)*

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## Journaling

Remind participants to complete this outside of the session.

## Closing Prayer

Teach and pray aloud one of the memorial acclamations below. Explain that these statements summarize our faith and declare who Jesus is. They are so important, they are sung or recited (proclaimed) by the entire assembly at every Mass.

1. *We proclaim your Death, O Lord, and profess your Resurrection until you come again.*
2. *When we eat this Bread and drink this Cup, we proclaim your Death, O Lord, until you come again.*
3. *Save us, Savior of the world, for by your Cross and Resurrection you have set us free.*

## Take-home

Encourage participants to continue observing Jesus in Scripture and to deeply contemplate who Jesus is in their lives. The more they hear the voice of God, the clearer it will become, and the closer he will seem. Invite them to complete any unfinished activities and the journaling and to reread any verses that spoke to them. John 1:1–18 will help them reflect on what it means for Jesus to be God's Word incarnate.



# Journey of Faith Table of Contents

We added new lessons and expanded others, which are in **red**. And, to ensure key topics are addressed early in the RCIA process, we moved other lessons, which are in **blue**.

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## How to Order

*Journey of Faith* is available by individual period packets, or you can purchase the whole program at a reduced rate.

To order call Garratt Publishing on 1800 650 878 and one of our customer service representatives will be happy to assist you.

## Journey of Faith for Children

In addition to a new look and a new name for *Journey of Faith* for adults and teens, Liguori offers a program for children. Coming in Summer 2017, *Journey of Faith for Children* will offer explanations that help children to relate to Jesus and his teachings with activities that enable them to understand the new concepts better. Colorful animated drawings capture children's attention, and the simple language speaks directly to them.