

YEAR LEVEL	7 & 8
TITLE	Jesus of Nazareth, Jesus the Christ
STRAND	TRINITY
SUGGESTED DURATION	8 - 10 weeks (20-25 hours)
ENDURING QUESTIONS	Who is Jesus Christ? How does knowing Jesus affect my life?



Unit Focus

Students will examine how Jesus, Word made Flesh, reveals to us the human face of God. Jesus shows us what it means to be in a loving relationship with God and with each other. Jesus shows us who God is and what it means to be human.

Achievement Standards

By the end of **Year 8** students should be able to:

Articulate an understanding and appreciation of God, revealed in Jesus, as entering into a relationship with humankind and calling each of us to a personal response.

Unit Outcomes

By the end of this unit students should be able to:

1. Understand that Jesus was a historical figure i.e. Jesus was of his time and in his time.
2. Determine what Jesus' words and actions tell us about God.
3. Investigate and describe the different images of Jesus presented by the writers of the Gospels in terms of Christology.
4. Reflect on these images of Jesus in the light of our contemporary world and their personal significance.

Key Understandings for Students

- Jesus was a Jewish man of his time and in his time.
- Jesus was faithful to his Judaic faith.
- The Gospels present us with different aspects of Jesus and his life. The writers of the Gospels give us a portrait of a very human Jesus whilst also illuminating christological teachings. Christology is the study of Jesus Christ.

- Jesus lived and acted in total harmony with what it means to be fully human, showing us what it means to be truly human and a child of God.
- Through the life, actions and words of Jesus in the New Testament, we witness the God of love and compassion.
- The life of Jesus models the way in which we live in covenant relationship with God and each other.
- After the Resurrection, Jesus of Nazareth is called Jesus Christ. The title “Christ” means “Messiah” or “the Anointed One”.
- The Resurrection shows us Jesus’ triumph over death.

Student Context

The commencement of Year 7 coincides with the beginning of secondary school and the beginning of adolescence, a time of great change and uncertainty.

Students at this level are developing more abstract rather than concrete forms of thinking, assisting them to form judgements based on facts, creating their own viewpoint. Students at this level also have the capacity to reason and reflect upon themselves and others. Utilising this capacity, students may therefore come to an increased understanding of the complexity of who God is and who they are.

Through this unit, students learn to recognise and nurture the relationship they have with God as a constant in their lives.

It is important to acknowledge the students’ past experience, or lack thereof, of family, school and parish community, and to help them own their personal experience and be able to build on it.

Theological Background for Teachers

- Jesus Christ is a sacrament of God (a pre-eminent expression of all God is for us and who God is for us) because he made God visible in the world. Through him God touched people’s lives, and through Jesus’ visible presence people came in contact with an aspect of the mystery of God. The person of Jesus in the flesh is the sacrament of God’s presence among His people.
- Jesus speaks familiarly about God in his teaching and parables. Because he is divine he knows exactly how God sees things and what it is that God wants of us.
- In Jesus we see God’s love enfleshed, a love which is utterly inexhaustible and extravagant, constantly assuring all of the promise of healing, forgiveness and newness of life.
- The gospels portray Jesus as a person with a mission – he is always looking to do the will of the one who sent him, working to accomplish God’s kingdom (Jn 4:34).
- The *reign of God* (kingdom) is God’s saving activity in history. It is near, it is at hand, it is in progress (Mk.4:26- 29). This reality was used by Jesus as the keynote of his mission, the central unifying theme of his life.
- The Jewish culture of Jesus is an essential context for understanding Jesus’ life, message and mission. Few people in the ancient world questioned the existence of God. The vast majority of Jews were faithfully

observant of the basic practices and expressions of Jewish faith: daily prayer; Sabbath rest; kosher diet; fidelity to the purity code; participation in festivals and pilgrimages. Jesus too was a strict and devout Jew. Jesus also sought a renewal of the covenant of Israel (Lk 10:25-28; 18:18-25).

- Jesus' relationship with God was intensely personal and intimate. The gospels show Jesus as a man of prayer. It is not only at critical times that he prays. He prays whenever he can get away from the crowds (Mk 1:35). Jesus invites us to live in the same way.
- Jesus frequently refers to God as "my Father", not just "our Father" (Jn 20:17), and even goes as far as calling God "Abba" (a diminutive comparable to "daddy").
- Jesus experienced and told of a God who is merciful, holy, good, gracious, loving and compassionate. Jesus' life and teaching flows from this relationship with a God he experienced as compassionate love, as one wanting to forgive and gather a broken and scattered people. Faith in such a God calls for a conversion of heart to a life lived according to God's values as Jesus' life was (Lk 11:1-13). In this total faithfulness to God, his Father, Jesus opens for us a new possibility of living – living for God and living with God. The Holy Spirit is given to us to enable us to be drawn into this life pattern of Jesus.
- Jesus teaches that we are all children of God – that God has counted the number of hairs on our heads; that God knows what we need before we can even think to ask for it; and that God will answer our needs if we focus on doing what is right (Mt 6:33). He cares for us because we belong to his family.
- One outstanding human quality possessed by Jesus is his concern for others. He feels their pain and looks to ease it (Mt 9:36). Jesus was sought out by some of the rich and the powerful but preferred the company of those at the bottom of the social ladder. He shared meals with these people on such a regular basis that he earned the reputation of being "a glutton and a drunkard" (Mt 11:19). He showed interest in and appreciation of women in a culture in which women were not greatly valued. As he walked around the countryside preaching, he dealt publicly with people who were blind, deaf, crippled or suffering from leprosy. He healed them both physically and spiritually. Jesus was a person who tried to help people deal with the difficulties of life.
- Jesus' baptism symbolises the presence of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
- Jesus is the Word of God. (See "Introduction to the Gospel According to John" in The Catholic Youth Bible)
- The incarnation of God's Son reveals that God is the eternal Father, and that the Son is consubstantial with the Father, which means that, in the Father and with the Father, the Son is one and the same God. (CCC:262)
- The reason for the Incarnation is that humankind might come to know the love of God more fully and in a tangible way.
- The concept of Trinity as loving relationship is a way that we can come to an understanding of the complex mystery of God. God is at one and the same time Creator, eternal Word and life-giving Spirit.
- The Trinity shows us that we, who are made in God's image and likeness, are also made for loving relationship - with God, one another and the whole of creation.
- The Holy Spirit guides people to lives of 'love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, fidelity, gentleness and self control' (Gal. 5:22). The gifts of the Spirit are to be used for the growth of the Church and the wellbeing of humanity, as well as to realise our full potential as people created by God.

Scripture

John 1:29

The next day he (John the Baptist) saw Jesus coming towards him and declared, “Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!”

John 1:49

Nathanael replied, “Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!”

John 8:12

Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life.”

John 10:11

(Jesus said) “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.”

John 10:14

“I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me.”

John 14:6

Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”

John 15:1

(Jesus said) “I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine-grower.”

Major Assessment Task

Students will create a **PORTFOLIO OF LEARNING** for this Unit, which will be an ongoing formative and summative assessment of their knowledge acquisition and reflections.

The Portfolio of Learning inclusions will be highlighted throughout the unit. Students need to have the concept explained before the unit is taught.

It is expected that students and teachers will co-construct an assessment rubric for this task. Teachers are encouraged to assess skills and knowledge from other learning areas that may be included in this task.

Suggested Teaching & Learning Experiences

- Using any mode of presentation, students create their own mini Graffiti Wall in response to the question, “What do I know about Jesus?” They can use words, images, photos, quotes, etc. Discuss their creation with a partner. This work needs to be kept as students will refer back to it during the unit. **(Portfolio of Learning)**
- View the YouTube clip of Ben Harper singing “Picture of Jesus” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vFeFFZrAH60>. Discuss the lyrics and ask students to choose any particular words or phrases that resonate with them and write why this is so. Does this song remind you of any other song or story about Jesus that you’ve heard? Using the information from your graffiti wall, write or draw your picture of Jesus. **(Portfolio of Learning)**. Share with a partner.
- Display the Timeline in **Appendix 1**. Using the **Starburst** Strategy in **Appendices 2 & 3**, students form groups of 4 to research and record their key findings on Life in 1st Century Palestine. Students repeat

the strategy to research and record their key findings on a particular aspect of the life of Jesus of Nazareth. Each group will present their section of the timeline.

- Provide each group with Scripture texts (**Appendix 4**) that will help depth their understanding of the historical figure of Jesus of Nazareth. Students should be able to more fully describe the attributes of Jesus – thoughts, feelings, qualities, etc.
- Students create a Facebook profile for Jesus of Nazareth.
- Students revisit their Graffiti Wall. What do I know about Jesus now? Has my image of Jesus changed? How has it changed? Add to your Graffiti Wall. (**Portfolio of Learning**)
- After the Resurrection, his followers refer to Jesus as the Messiah or the Christ. The early Christian communities believed that Jesus of Nazareth was the awaited Messiah, and that his presence would usher in the ideal society of true justice and peace to which they had looked forward.
- Read the following quotes from John’s Gospel and note the titles the author gives to the risen Christ: John 1:29, 1:49, 8:12, 10:11, 10:14, 14:6, 15:1. What images do they give us of Christ? From these images which one do you connect with and why? (**Portfolio of Learning**)
- View the first 43 seconds of the film clip from a scene in the movie ‘Jesus of Nazareth’ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oSJ6dcE_dtl. What does this small clip show us about Jesus? How did he relate to the children? How did the mothers and children relate to Jesus? What words could describe Jesus in this small glimpse?
- Look at the images of Jesus in **Appendix 5** and imagine the thoughts of the artist behind each picture. Which image has the greatest impact on you and why? Does it reflect Jesus of Nazareth or Jesus the Christ?
- What titles would you give to Jesus? Why? As a class write a prayer litany using the titles of Jesus students have offered. Pray the litany as a class with students praying the titles individually. e.g. Jesus the voice of the poor ... pray for us , Christ our light in dark times ... pray for us.
- Students draw, paint, sketch, sculpt an image of Jesus to reflect one title. Display the titles and images of Jesus as a montage.
- Reread the lyrics from Ben Harper’s ‘Picture of Jesus’. Who do you think was the man he refers to in our time who was crucified with a gun? Why does Ben Harper liken him to Jesus? What do the lyrics make you think of now? What would you add to the song?
- Write your own personal quote about Jesus and who he is for you. (**Portfolio of Learning**)

Appendices

Appendix 1: Timeline

Appendix 2: Starburst activity 1st Century Palestine

Appendix 3: Starburst activity Jesus of Nazareth

Appendix 4: Scripture references

Appendix 5: Images of Jesus