

CONFIRMATION

Sponsor Session

What makes Christianity so special?

GOD IS INCARNATE

Instructions

Dear Confirmation Candidate and Sponsor, thank you for committing to growing closer to Christ together! These sponsor sessions are a great time for you to strengthen your relationship with each other and with God. Each session, you'll read some content, watch a short video, and engage in lots of discussion. For the reading portions, you can switch off reading each paragraph. Additionally, the discussion questions are for both of you to answer. I pray that these sponsor sessions will be transformative and fun for you both!

Overview

Read:

Jesus loves you. These are words we have heard many times before, but we must pause and ask ourselves if we have really heard them. Do we simply hear these words as a cliché at this point? This session is meant to give us time to pause and really let this truth sink in. We are infinitely loved by God. God became a man out of love for us. He knows our experiences as humans and is not just some far-off deity that cannot relate to our suffering.

The love Jesus has for us is the foundation of His every action. He acts out of love for you. He humbled himself to become a man, to walk this earth, and willingly gave His life out of love for you. The Incarnation sets Christianity apart from any other religion. God became man and desires for us to be one with Him.

Theme Scripture

JOHN 1:14 "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father. "

CONNECT

1. Check-In

Discuss:

- What are your "highs and lows" of this week? (High - best part of your week; Low - worst part)
- How are you? How is your heart? (Are you happy, sad, depressed, anxious, excited, etc., and why?)
- What are you looking forward to doing? What are you excited about?
- What have you been frustrated with lately? What are you anxious about? What are you sad about?
- How have you been spiritually? Do you feel on fire for God... distant from Him... somewhere in between? Why do you think you feel this way?
- Where have you seen God at work in the world and/or your life lately?
- How can I pray for you this week?

2. Opening Prayer

Read the theme verse again, share prayer requests, and then use this prayer or your own prayer:

"We love because he first loved us." Jesus, thank you for loving us without the condition that we love you first. We are grateful that we do not have to earn this love. Guide us to let the truth of your love be heard deep in our hearts.

DISCOVER

3. Video

Jot down 3 questions or things that stand out to you while watching the video.

Watch the "What makes Christianity so special?" video. You can find it on the Confirmation page on mystelizabeth.com.

4. Reflection

Discuss:

- What is your first impression of the video? Did you like it or not? Was it clear or confusing? Why?
- What words or feelings come to mind?

Read:

Jesus loves you. We take in so much information in the course of a day and "Jesus loves me" is something we've likely heard so many times before. We need to pause and hear this truth deep in our hearts. "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1:14). Jesus loves us and calls us to love one another.

Christianity is the only religion in which God became man. He did not become a king, but first as a baby born into poverty who then lived as a humble carpenter. This act of God becoming man is called the Incarnation.

Jesus was not 50% God, 50% human. He was fully human and fully divine. If you like fancy theological terms, this is known as the "hypostatic union." He lived His life, walked the earth and willingly suffered and died out of love for you. He is fully God and fully man. If you were the only person on the planet, Jesus still would have come to earth to sacrifice His life so that you could have eternal life with Him.

This belief we have that God became man is unique to Christianity. Every other founder of a religion claimed to have special messages from the divine

or "special access" to God, but no one claimed to actually be Him. It has been said that religion is the long story of humanity's search for God, but Christianity is the long story of God's search for humanity. God became man to bring us back into union with Him.

God didn't just become man 2,000 years ago, die, then rise and go back to heaven to leave us to our own devices. *He is still with us.* He is active in all of our lives through the Holy Spirit. He is still physically present to us through the Holy Eucharist!

Christians have been martyred throughout the centuries and yet the fruit of their death has been more Christians. It would be a stretch to believe that they all died to preserve a lie. There has to be more to it.

Just as Jesus loves us, we are called to live with His love. Christianity is unique in that God has called us to love every person as if it were Jesus Himself before us. We are called to love as He has loved us.

Jesus became man so that we might come to be one with Him. Jesus loves you, right now and forever.

Consider this quote from St. Theresa Benedicta of the Cross (A.K.A. Edith Stein): "God is love, and love is goodness giving itself away. It is a fulness of being that does not want to remain enclosed in itself, but rather to share itself with others, to give itself to them, and to make them happy. All of creation exists thanks to this divine love spending itself."

Discuss:

- What 3 things did you write down during the video and why did you write these things down?
- If someone asks you why you are Christian, how would you answer?
- Why do you think it is important to remind yourself that "Jesus loves you" when you have already heard it so many times before?
- When and where have you experienced Jesus' love in your life?

- Think of an example from the Gospels where Jesus interacts with someone and shows them love. Can you relate to the person loved by Jesus in the example? (Example: Luke 7:36-50 [the woman anointing the feet of Jesus] or Matthew 9:1-8 [Jesus forgiving sins and healing the paralyzed man])
- Why do you think it matters to understand that Jesus is both fully God and fully man? What difference does this make?
- How can you come to understand more fully the truth that Jesus loves you?
- How can you reflect Jesus' love to other people?

Read:

In the Catechism, it says "God Himself is an eternal exchange of love, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and He has destined us to share in that exchange." Think about this for a moment and explain why getting to share in this exchange of love is an incredible gift.

Commit

5. Closing

Read:

Christianity is unique in that Jesus has humbled himself to be human like us in all things but sin. He desires us to hear Him speak His words of love to our hearts. Remember, our desire to understand is in itself honoring to Jesus.

This week, your challenge is to write down and pray with the theme verse. Print it and put it somewhere you'll look at it daily. Try to memorize it so that when you need a reminder of how much God loves you, you can recall the verse. Check in with each other in a week to see if you have memorized it yet.

Pray:

End with a closing prayer. You can then pray something like this:
Jesus, You love me. Help me to hear this truth from You in the silence of my heart. Guide me to see this truth in times of prayer and to recognize your love in the little moments of my life. Thank You for taking on flesh and for knowing my heart so fully. Amen.