

THE 7 BIG QUESTIONS DISCUSSION GROUP GUIDE

5

Session Five: Is Jesus Really God?

Social Time

Take ten minutes for the group to catch up and reconnect over snacks and refreshments. Then, after gathering everyone into a comfortable circle, share something like the following Introduction.

Introduction

Is Jesus really God? The implications of this question are clearly enormous. Every aspect of society would be impacted by the confirmation that Jesus was literally God in the flesh. Also, if Jesus were God, then his words take on much greater meaning. They're more than simply wise words of an influential prophet or philosopher. On the other hand, if he's not God, then the entire Christian faith is undermined. As Paul said, if Jesus didn't rise from the dead (i.e., do something that only God could do), then faith in him is in vain (1 Corinthians 5:14). Let's take a look at what some people have to say about Jesus.

Video 1: *Pulse of the World on Jesus*

This video is a 2.5-minute survey of many people's responses to this question.

Questions for Discussion

- Did you identify with anyone's expressed views in the film? If so, who and what resonated with you?
- Does it seem consistent with your experience that "67 percent of US adults . . . have a personal relationship with Jesus"? Why or why not?

Video 2: *The Curiosity Collective: Is Jesus Really God?*

This is a 10-minute collection of subject matter experts discussing the question "Is Jesus really God?" It displays the various questions, struggles, and perspectives of these individuals regarding this week's topic. See what they have to say and then discuss it.

Questions for Discussion

After watching the video, choose from this list of questions or ask some of your own to facilitate discussion. There's no need to limit your discussion to these questions or to feel pressured to cover all of them in the time you have.

- In what ways can you identify with any of the stories in *The Curiosity Collective*? What did you find intriguing or compelling?
- Was Jesus a historical figure, in your opinion? Why or why not?
- What did Leonce mean when he said, "Religion says 'I do, therefore I'm loved.' Jesus says, 'You're loved, therefore you do'"?
- Christians believe that sin separates humanity from God. Yet Jesus, through his death, bridges that gap. Why do you think Jesus had to die in order to accomplish this?
- In the video, Bryan says "[Jesus] was resurrected—rose up from the dead—with over five hundred witnesses. They saw him and, based on that encounter, were willing to die in order to testify as to what they saw." What do you think about his claim?
- What do you think about Jesus's claim to be God?

Wrap-Up

Thoughts to Share with the Group

To the best of your ability, summarize the main points of your group's discussion. Or, if you are more comfortable, use the text below as a launching pad for concluding the session.

It's fashionable to suggest that Jesus was a good teacher, a man with an important message of love, and that's all. He wasn't God; that's impossible. However, the problem with that perspective is that he claimed to be God. (In John 10:30, Jesus said, "I and the Father are one.") Consequently, in C. S. Lewis's words, Jesus was either a liar, a lunatic, or the Lord. Furthermore, assuming that he lived, he also predicted his death and resurrection. Then hundreds of witnesses claimed he fulfilled that prediction and indeed rose from the dead. What do we do with that?

You may be curious about what Christians believe about Jesus. To explain that, let me start here: It probably wouldn't shock anyone if I declared that things are not as they should be. And no matter how hard we might try to change that reality, the world continues on in its brokenness. Lying, cheating, stealing, envy, greed, anxiety . . . well, you get the picture. It's a mess. The Bible, which we'll discuss next week, says that this mess was created when humanity chose to go their own way and live outside God's generous parameters. And we've been reaping the consequences since. Unfortunately, no amount of kissing up is going to make up for our waywardness. Our relationship with God has been so fractured that only he can repair it. And he does.

Simply put, in order to right the wrongs of the world, God entered his creation in the person of Jesus Christ. "The Bible says that Jesus died on the cross for our sins. He bore the burden of our shortcomings for us. And then he rose from the grave to defeat the power of sin, brokenness, and death in the world. This was done so that when we abandon our own efforts—which always fall short—and simply accept Jesus as our Savior and Lord, our relationship with God is restored. And we, like Jesus, are given a new life in order to become all that God made us to be."¹

This is the gospel; this is the good news. God loves each of us so much that he gave us the gift of his son. And if we believe in him, we receive the gift of eternal life.

God loves; God gave; we believe; we receive.²

¹ Norton Herbst, "What Is the Gospel?" *ExploreGod*, <http://www.exploregod.com/what-is-the-gospel>.

² Summarized from Andy Stanley's sermon "Go Fish, Part Five: Muddy Water."

Follow-Up Resources

As you wrap up this session, share or summarize these bullets:

- Acknowledge that with a topic as big as this, there is no way to answer the question comprehensively.
- Inform the group that you'll be sending some follow-up resources so people can continue to explore God.
- Thank people for joining the discussion, and invite them to stick around if they want to continue the conversation.

Explore More on Jesus

The following resources are designed for deeper exploration into the topic of Jesus. If you are doing this series offline, you can e-mail these to your group after the session. Simply copy this section and paste it into an e-mail.

Videos

- How Is Jesus Different?
(<http://www.exploreGod.com/video-how-is-jesus-different>)
- Can You Like Jesus But Hate Religion?
(<http://www.exploreGod.com/can-you-like-jesus-but-hate-religion-video>)

Articles

- Who Is Jesus?
(<http://www.exploreGod.com/who-is-jesus>)
- What Does It Mean to Follow Jesus?
(<http://www.exploreGod.com/what-does-it-mean-to-follow-jesus>)

Daily Stream of Inspiration

- Jesus Said What?
(<http://www.exploreGod.com/jesus-said-what>)

White Paper

- A Deeper Look at What the Bible Says about Jesus
(<http://www.exploreGod.com/what-the-bible-says-about-jesus-paper>)

Recommended Books

- *Jesus Among Other Gods*, Ravi Zaccharias
(<http://amzn.to/19Xd4hh>)
- *Simply Jesus*, N. T. Wright
(<http://amzn.to/13X1pwe>)

Additional Content on Jesus

- “Jesus,” Explore God
(<http://www.exploreGod.com/jesus>)

Scripture Focus

In Mark 8:29, Jesus asks Peter a heavy question. “But what about you?” he asked. “Who do you say I am?” Peter answered, “You are the Messiah.”

Based on the evidence you’ve heard, who do you say Jesus is? If you keep a journal, take some time to note your responses to these questions there.