

DAWN TREADER

EQUIPPING FAMILIES FOR EFFECTIVE DISCIPLESHIP

A KEEPING THE FAITH RESOURCE

ISSUE 2.1



The *Dawn Treader* is sailing into the sunrise with Jesus Christ this month, as we discuss Who Jesus is and why our relationship with Him is so important. Today more than ever, believers in Christ have to be prepared to give an answer (1 Peter 3:15) to the question Jesus asked His disciples: “Who do people say that I am...but who do you say that I am?” (Mark 8:27-29, emphasis added).

Dawn Treader Moments

FOCUS OF THE MONTH: KNOWING JESUS CHRIST

Dawn Treader Moments are purpose-driven opportunities to engage children in important topics. We offer one key question per week, the answers to which parents can then explore with their children throughout the week.

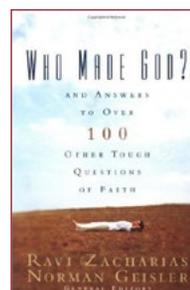
KNOWING JESUS CHRIST

Jesus is the difference between Christianity and every other religion in the world. The pivotal question of life that only the Christian faith can answer is simply this: What are we to make of Jesus Christ? If we are to enable our children to faithfully respond to questions and challenges to their faith, we must ensure that they fully understand Who Jesus is and know what their relationship with Him is. *For week one, ask the first question over an unhurried meal. Let the children think about it and then offer their own answers. The children should talk more than the parents. Throughout the week, offer the different reasons highlighted and let the children discuss them. (Parents, read through the relevant Bible passages in advance.) Challenge the children to look up other verses addressing the question. Do the same for the following questions each week for the month.*

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Resource of the Month

***Who Made God?: And Answers to Over 100 Other Tough Questions of Faith* – Ravi Zacharias and Norman Geisler, general editors**



A good alternate subtitle for this book would be “And Answers to 100 Questions Your Child May Ask You (And Probably Will).” Children start seeking the truth as soon as they are born, and to be able to answer their questions, you need to know what you believe and why you believe it. *Who Made God?* offers accessible answers to over 100 commonly asked apologetic questions. Part one answers tough questions about the Christian faith such as: • Who made God? • How can

FOCUS OF THE MONTH: KNOWING JESUS

Week One: Who is Jesus? (Matthew 16:13-16, John 1:1-14, Colossians 2:9-12)

Jesus is the only begotten Son of God — this means that He is and always was God, unlike us, who are God's adopted children and always and only human
But Jesus was also fully human, God Incarnate, or made flesh, when He came to earth to save us
The Bible also calls Jesus the Word, or God's Wisdom, Who created the world and knows everything
As the Son, Jesus is the second Person of the Trinity, with the Father and the Holy Spirit — three Persons in One God

Week Two: How do we come to know Who Jesus is? (Matthew 6:16-17, 1 Peter 1:8-12)

The Bible is the Story of Jesus — in civilizations where there is still a tradition of detailed oral storytelling, they understand all the other Bible stories such as Noah and the Flood and David and Goliath as leading up to the one main plot of the story: Jesus; and that is the way the writers of the Bible, inspired by the Holy Spirit but writing in their own historical contexts, intended us to understand it, "that the whole universe was made for Christ and that everything is to be gathered together in Him"¹
Jesus lived on earth during a particular time in history — this is very important to understand because it underscores the significance of Jesus as our King; historical facts and contexts about rulers are always important to understand, because they shaped the world we live in today, and what Jesus did here on earth has changed the future for all eternity!
Jesus is now "seated at the right hand of God the Father" (Colossians 3:1) still involved in ruling the world today, and He will come and live in all our hearts and rule our lives too if we will accept Him

Week Three: How can I have a relationship with Jesus like He wants me to? (John 3:16-21, Romans 6:3-23, 2 Corinthians 6:2)

Admit to God that you are a sinner and have done wrong things, and ask for His forgiveness.
Believe that Jesus is God's only Son, and that He died on a cross for you and rose again.
Commit yourself to a life of following and obeying Jesus and serving others.

Week Four: What do I do now that I know Jesus? (Matthew 28:18-20, John 21:15-24, Ephesians 2:13-22)

Tell others about Him — Jesus wants to have the same wonderful relationship He has with you with everybody; and the wonderful thing about that is, that when He brings a new member into His family through you, then you get another wonderful relationship with another member of the family yourself!
Follow Jesus — read what He tells us in the Bible, listen to what He says to you in your heart when you pray (and other times as well — be sure you're paying attention!), try to be like Him in every way: this not only brings you closer to Him, but also helps others to come to Him by understanding what He is like, so you get two blessings in one
Jesus is coming back to earth someday, to take all of His family to live with Him in His Kingdom eternally — be ready and waiting to welcome Him with praise and joy!

Resource of the Month (CONT'D)

***Who Made God?: And Answers to Over 100 Other Tough Questions of Faith* – Ravi Zacharias and Norman Geisler, general editors**

there be three persons in one God? • What is God's ultimate purpose in allowing evil? • Where did the universe come from? • How long are the days of creation in Genesis? • Did Jesus rise from the dead? • Are the records of Jesus' life reliable? • Does the Bible have errors in it? Part two answers tough questions about other faiths, including Islam, Mormonism, Hinduism, Transcendental Meditation, Yoga, Reincarnation, Buddhism, and Black Islam. Relevant stories, questions for reflection and discussion, and a comprehensive list of suggested resources help you dig deeper so you can be prepared to give careful answers that explain the reasons for your faith when your child asks you.

¹ C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, 50th Anniversary ed. (London: HarperCollinsPublishers, 2002), p. 199.

Apologist Polly Conversation Corner (CONT'D)

QUESTION OF THE MONTH: WHO IS JESUS? (AND WHY DOES IT MATTER?)

Agnes: Are you going to be at the fun run Sunday morning, Polly?

Polly: No, I'll be singing in my church choir then.

Agnes: Oh. What kind of church do you go to?

Pol: Well, it's just really a Christian church. We don't have some special denominational identity; any follower of Jesus is welcome there.

Agnes: So that's the most important thing at your church, Polly? Jesus?

Pol: He's the most important Person at any true church, or gathering of believers. That's what the Christian faith is all about: Jesus!

Agnes: But aren't other things important to Christians as well — like doing the right thing and that God created the world and loves us all?

Pol: Yes — but everything a Christian believes is tied up in what he or she believes about Jesus Christ, “the chief cornerstone” (Ephesians 2:20). “For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily” (Colossians 2:9).

Agnes: What does that mean?

Pol: It means that Jesus is God — He did everything that we understand as having been done by God, from the Creation of the world and before: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God” (John 1:1-2) — when “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth” (Genesis 1:1) — “And the Word became flesh, and came to live among us” (John 1:14). And we can only understand Who God is by how He revealed Himself by coming to earth as a human being.



Agnes: But what about those who follow other religions and ways of knowing God? Hasn't God also revealed himself to them, just in a different way?

Pol: That sounds like another version of the old argument: Don't all religions lead to God? However, different religions claim radically opposing ideas as the truth, so they can't possibly be going the same way. Opposites are not different versions of the same thing; only one can be right and the other wrong.

Agnes: But I do think all religions share a similar foundation: of right thinking and virtuous behavior and love of neighbor.

those points; perhaps some do. But even if Christianity does share some principles with those other religions, it does not — cannot — share the foundation with any of them.

Agnes: How so?

QUESTION OF THE MONTH: WHO IS JESUS? (AND WHY DOES IT MATTER?)

Pol: Because the Christian faith is not founded on principles as such. It's founded on a relationship with a Person, Jesus Christ.

Agnes: We keep on coming back to Jesus!

Pol: Well, you can't avoid it if we want to keep on talking about my faith. My faith really is about my relationship with Jesus Christ. There's a reason it's called Christianity, you know. Christ is the basis of our faith.

Agnes: Yes, but what's in a name?

Pol: Names can have great power, and can say a great deal about the person named. Jesus was born to have the names He is known by: "And she shall bring forth a son, and you shall call His name Jesus...and they shall call His name Emmanuel, which is interpreted, God with us" (Matthew 1:21-23). He *is* the "Name which is above every name" (Philippians 2:9).



Agnes: But I still don't understand why this is so important. You seem to be trying to say that without Jesus, no human attempts to be religious and godly will ever succeed.

Pol: That's exactly what I am trying to say! "There is none that does good, no, not one" (Psalm 53:3) and "there is none good but one, that is, God" (Matthew 19:17). God lives in an atmosphere of perfect goodness — holiness and righteousness and justice and mercy and love. He loves all His creation, and wants us to share in His holy life, as He says: "Be ye holy, for I am holy" (1 Peter 1:16). But we can't, not on our own, for if all holiness comes from God and is part of His Nature, it follows by default that unless we are connected to and able to partake of that Nature, we cannot be holy ourselves. "If you want joy, power, peace, eternal life, you must get close to, or even into, the thing that has them... Once a man is united to God, how could he not live forever? Once a man is separated from God, what can he do but wither and die?"² So, to bring us back to Him, to reunite humanity with God, there had to be a perfect "first example" of God and man united, which is why Jesus is both perfect God and perfect man, "that He might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters" (Romans 8:29). "And here comes the catch. Only a bad person needs to repent: only a good person can repent...The only person who could do it perfectly would be a perfect person —s and he would not need it...we now need God's help in order to do something which God, in His own nature, never does at all...But supposing God became a man — suppose our human nature which can suffer and die was amalgamated with God's nature in one person — then that person could help us... To what will you look for help if you will not look to that which is stronger than yourself?"³ Without Jesus, church — and rules for good living and society and even just living in general — would all be just a big waste of time. There'd be no point to any of it.

Agnes: That does make Jesus sound like a pretty important Person to know, then, if you want to get somewhere in life!

Pol: Eternal life, at that.

Ask your children: What do you think about Polly's answers to Agnes's questions? Do you have any other questions of your own that this dialogue has brought up for you? Challenge them to think up more responses they could give, if someone asked them a question similar to the ones Agnes asked.

² Ibid. p. 176.

³ Ibid. pp. 57-59.

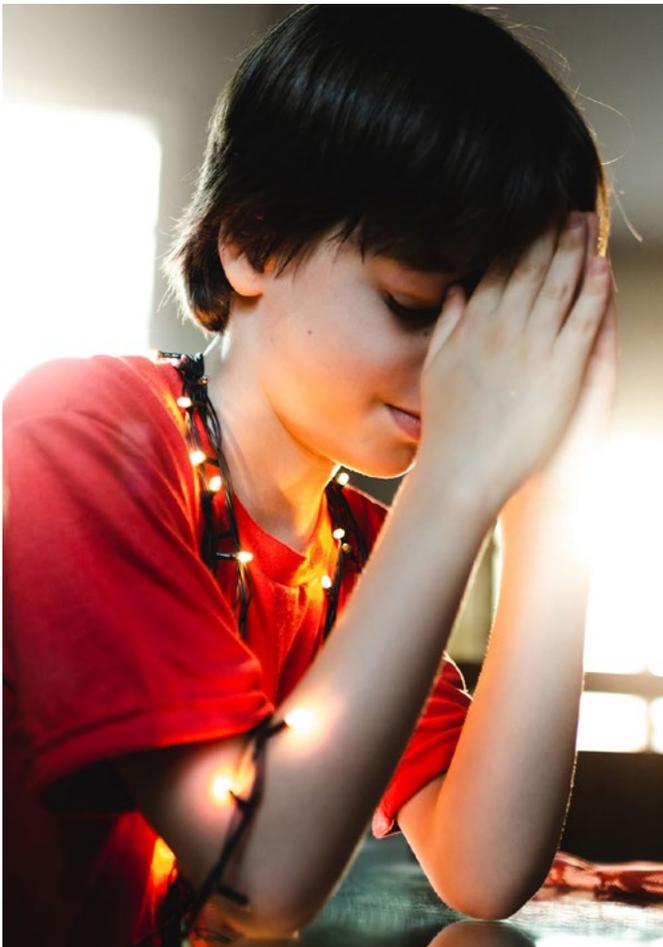
Prayer of the Month

I LOVE YOU LORD JESUS

You may have heard this prayer over Christmastime, since it is used as the third verse to “Away in a Manger.” Some people say it was written by a Methodist Sunday School teacher in the nineteenth century; other people suggest that Martin Luther wrote all the verses when he originally composed the tune. Either way, they are a lovely appeal to Jesus’ love for us.

I love you, Lord Jesus,
I ask You to stay
Close by me forever,
And love me, I pray.

Bless all the dear children
In Your tender care,
And take us to Heaven
To live with You there.



Activity of the Month

“WHAT WOULD JESUS DO” CHALLENGE



Cover this month deeply in prayer. The issues addressed here are often at the center of transformative moments for many people.

Using the Resource of the Month, Who Made God?, or another apologetics resource from the Aslan Academy “Apologetics For Children and Youth” resource list on the Keeping the Faith website (https://www.cslewisinstitute.org/webfm_send/7364), practice asking and answering some of your children’s favorite or most challenging questions about Jesus. Expect to continue these conversations into future months.



KEEPING THE
FAITH

What is Keeping the Faith? The Keeping the Faith program is a unique study-plus-fellowship experience featuring the Aslan Academy Small Group model centered around the Keeping the Faith guidebook. It is designed to equip parents, grandparents and other caring adults for intentional discipleship of their children and teens. Dawn Treader is a monthly newsletter filled with activities and ideas geared to help you to disciple the children in your lives from preschool through the teen years. To learn more about the program, go to: www.cslewisinstitute.org/KTFResources