**1. Motivate**

What are some of the roles you fill at home, work, and in your community?

* parent, spouse, grandparent
* neighbor
* boss/supervisor
* coach

A video introduction to the lesson is available. View it at <http://tinyurl.com/mvm5ppaa> . If you have no wi-fi where you teach, it is best to download the video file to your computer from <http://tinyurl.com/42r26pvu>

* Bible study leader
* club officer
* sports teammate
* mentor
* inspector
* dish washer, cook
* gardener

**2. Transition**

We often identify who we are by what we do.

* Actually “who I am” is connected to someone else.
* It is Jesus’ identity that is foundational to who I am.

**3. Bible Study**

3.1 Perceptions of Jesus’ Identity

Listen for a survey.

Luke 9:18-19 (NIV) Once when Jesus was praying in private and his disciples were with him, he asked them, "Who do the crowds say I am?" 19 They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, that one of the prophets of long ago has come back to life."

Why might Luke have considered it important to introduce this event in the context of Jesus engaging in private prayer?

* this is a key teaching moment for the disciples
* Jesus wants to make sure he gets this right
* this is a moment of revelation
* He wants them to think it through for themselves and figure it out
* people understand better if they conclude it on their own rather than just being given an announcement

What were some popular ideas the people held about who Jesus was?

* John the Baptist (come back to life)
* Elijah
* one of the ancient prophets

Why did Jesus first ask the disciples who others thought He was instead of immediately asking them who they thought He was?

* it wasn’t to find out what was popular opinion
* He had probably heard the talk, much the same as they had
* He was setting them up for the next question
* an excellent teaching strategy is to use a sequence of questions
* it takes the learners step by step through the logic of the concept they need to learn
* (that’s why these lessons are a sequence of discussion lessons!!)
* ask a question that gets people’s attention and gets the group thinking in the right direction

What are some common misconceptions about Jesus in our world? How would you answer Jesus today if He asked, "Who do crowds say I am?"

* a great teacher
* a moralist
* a religious leader
* a martyr for His cause – got crosswise with Jewish religious leaders
* just someone who *claimed* to be the Son of God – either confused or a liar
* a baby celebrated at Christmas

Why do you think people have so many misunderstandings about Jesus?

* ignorance – have not read or studied scripture
* rejection of who He is because they don’t want to believe His teachings
* they have other “deities” in their lives
* they think what Jesus said and did has nothing to do with their lives

3.2 Identity in Death and Resurrection

Listen for *another* survey.

Luke 9:20-22 (NIV) "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?" Peter answered, "The Christ of God." 21 Jesus strictly warned them not to tell this to anyone. 22 And he said, "The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life."

Consider Peter’s answer. What did it mean to call Jesus The Christ of God? What significance does this declaration hold in understanding Peter's perception of Jesus and his mission?

* the Messiah – “Christ” is the Greek word for “Messiah”
* the Sent One
* the Anointed One
* the person that Jews had been anticipating for centuries

What was it that convinced Peter (and probably at least some of the others) that this rabbi they followed was the Messiah?

* miracles they had seen
* Jesus’ teachings
* Jesus’ line of questioning here in this teaching moment
* God’s Holy Spirit at work in their hearts – convicting, convincing them, revealing Truth

What was it that convinced *you* that Jesus is who He claims to be?

* preaching/teachings from Scripture
* the convicting/convincing work of God’s Holy Spirit
* hearing Bible stories
* seeing how a salvation experience changed lives of others

What kind of future did Jesus predict for Himself?

* He would suffer many things
* he would be rejected by religious leaders
* elders, chief priests, teachers of the law would be against Him
* He *must* be killed
* on the third day He would be raised to life

How would you have felt if you had heard Jesus’ instructions as one of his disciples?

* confused
* discouraged
* dumbfounded
* how can this be
* He’s got power … how could He allow this to happen?
* sounds like He’s almost giving up
* this doesn’t fit the concept of who the Messiah is, what He will do

3.3 Who Is Jesus to You ?

Listen for a seeming paradox.

Luke 9:23-26 (NIV) Then he said to them all: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. 24 For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will save it. 25 What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit his very self? 26 If anyone is ashamed of me and my words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in his glory and in the glory of the Father and of the holy angels.

What are the demands Jesus makes of any who would be His disciple?

* deny yourself
* take up your “cross” daily
* follow me

What does this mean in a practical sense, to deny oneself?

* I don’t take charge of my own life
* I let Jesus be the boss
* I deny myself of and give up any right to run my own life
* I will submit to Jesus commands
* I will live by the principles established in His Word

What do you think Jesus meant by trying to “save your life”?

* pursue financial gain
* try to make it big in business
* try to gain power in business or politics
* work hard at being popular

What then did he mean by losing your life for Him? Is it martyrdom or more? In what ways can you do this?

* give up your life in surrender to Jesus
* follow Him
* forsake the pursuit of power, popularity, material gain and serve the Lord
* set aside your resources for use towards serving God
* give of your time, talents, treasure for spiritual ministries
* give up a job which violates biblical principles

Why do you think Jesus didn’t make it easier and more attractive to follow Him? Wouldn’t this type of approach keep people away?

* you cannot “straddle the fence” concerning how you respond to Jesus
* you either decide to follow Him wholeheartedly or you are really not following Him
* people must know up front what they are “signing on” for
* to soft pedal it would be dishonest

So in what sense do people who do this “save” their lives?

* it is a spiritual joy and fullness of life they acquire
* they gain a relationship with the very God of the Universe, that is worth more than any tangible resources
* Jim Elliot, missionary martyr in Ecuador said it … "He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain that which he cannot lose."

⇨ Be aware that showing you are *not* ashamed of Jesus is more than wearing a “Jesus T-shirt.”

* It will mean your attitudes and actions reflect God’s rule in your life.
* People will see in you the abundant life that God provides.

Use the last page as a handout so your learners can take home the application points of this week’s lesson.

Application

Your Thoughts.

* In your own words, write out the answer to life’s most important question: “Who do you say that I am?”

Research Opinions.

* Perform an internet search for “identity of Jesus” and note the varying opinions you find there.
* How do those opinions match up to the various answers the disciples gave to Jesus?

Opinions of Others.

* Consider the people in your inner circle.
* Make it a point to ask them their thoughts of who Jesus is.
* You might be surprised at some of the answers you receive.

Double Puzzle



I smuggled this message into your embassy in Isnionswasiacos. Spiros the Spy took it home with him in the diplomatic bag and is sharing it with you. The message is in two parts. First, the scrambled words (from your Bible study). Unscramble them, then use the numbers to decrypt the message below. Technical help and other Fun Family Activities are available at <http://tinyurl.com/42r26pvu>