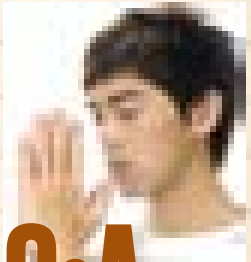


DIVE



WHO

Q&A

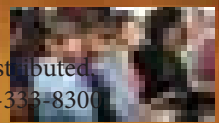
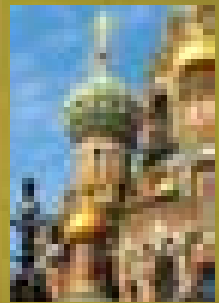
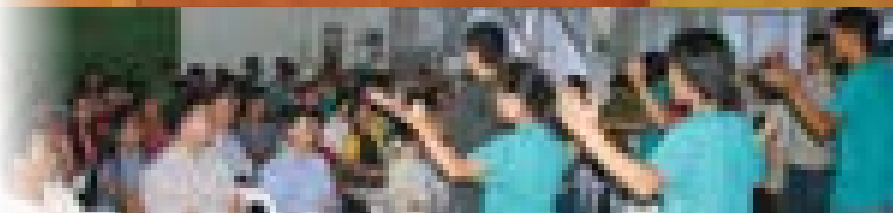
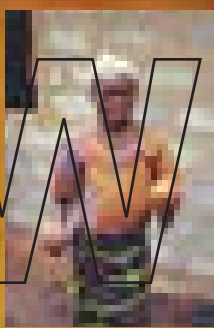
What do you believe about the unity of the church?

The Holy Spirit builds one church united in one Lord, one faith, one hope, and one baptism. This includes believers of every time, place, race, and language.

—Q&A 37

Images (top row): American teenagers; (second row) Sierra Leone, West Africa; (third row) a Korean Mission Team visits the Philippines; (fourth row) Western Kenya, Africa; Church of the Savior on Spilled Blood, St. Petersburg, Russia; (fifth row) American teenagers

is The Church?



Dive
Year 1, Unit 6

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The Church Is:

For the next ten minutes you'll spend time exploring a metaphor that helps us think about the way the church is both unified and diverse.

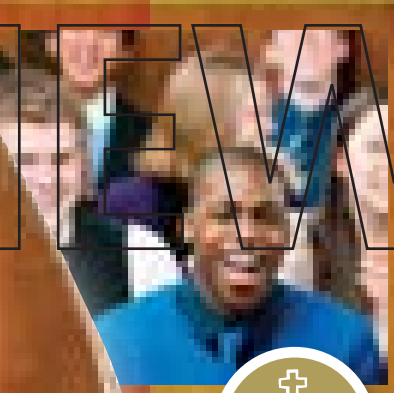
If you grew up in the church, you might remember a song that goes like this: **I am the church, you are the church, we are the church together. All who follow Jesus, all around the world; yes we're the church together!** In today's story we saw the beginnings of the global church—leaders drawn from different countries and cultures, serving in unity and sending out missionaries to tell the rest of the world the good news.

PREVIEW

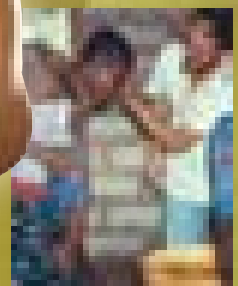
A **metaphor** is a literary figure of speech that uses an image, story, or tangible thing to represent a less tangible thing or some intangible quality or idea. For example:

"Her eyes were glistening jewels." —wikipedia.org

Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. —1 Corinthians 12:27



A believer is baptized in Sierra Leone, West Africa.



The Church Is Like a Body

List ways in which
the church is like
a human body >>



List a few of
the ways the
church is **NOT**
like a body:

PREVIEW

**Tip: Check out
1 Corinthians
12:12-21 for ideas.**

After your group has brainstormed many ways in which the church is like (and unlike) a body, think of a creative way to present your thoughts. Consider using art supplies to build a body for the group—adding each arm, leg, hand, foot, or ear as you describe one of the ways in which the church is or is not like a body!

TEAM

The Church Is Like a Team!

In a lot of ways the church is like a team. Use the spaces on the scoreboard to list some of the similarities you see between the church and a sports team.

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith, let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily trips us up. And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us. We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, the champion who initiates and perfects our faith. —Hebrews 12:1-2a, NLT

PREVIEW

Ways the Church Like a Team:

FOUL!

In other ways, the church is NOT like a team. Fill in the blank ticket with some of these ways.



PREVIEW



Is Not

Game Time

After your group has had time to brainstorm ways in which the church is both like and unlike a team, think of a creative way to present your thoughts to the larger group. Consider announcing a “Team Church” line-up, as though you were a sports announcer. Each member of your team can represent someone on Team Church and describe a few of the ideas your group has come up with.

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The Church Is

Brainstorm ways in which the church is like and unlike a family. Keep in mind that families come in all shapes and sizes.

PREVIEW

The Church Family Tree :

Down here, write ways in which the church is not like a family.

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s Like a Family

See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!
—1 John 3:1, NIV

PREVIEW

on these branches write ways the church is like a family.

Illustration by Micha Archer

When your group has finished brainstorming, think of a creative way to present your ideas to the larger group. Consider drawing a “family portrait” of the church that includes descriptions of what makes the church like a family and unlike a family.

7

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Who is the head of the church?

Jesus is head of the church. He guides and serves his church through its officers: ministers of the Word, evangelists, elders, and deacons. — from Q & A38

Leader: Loving God, guide us today as we learn how you lead your church.

All: Jesus, our leader, hear our prayer.

Leader: Help us, Lord, to value your Word and learn from it.

All: Jesus, our leader, hear our prayer.

Leader: Holy Spirit, be with the leaders of [name of your church] as they do the work you have called them to do.

All: Jesus, our leader, hear our prayer.

Leader: Jesus, head of the church, we pray for each of our leaders, _____

(each person reads the name on his or her card).

All: Jesus, our leader, hear our prayer.

An illustration of several men in traditional, colorful clothing and head coverings, possibly from a biblical or historical setting. They are gathered together, and one man in the foreground is pointing towards the right. The background is a soft, hazy landscape.

PREVIEW

THE CHURCH

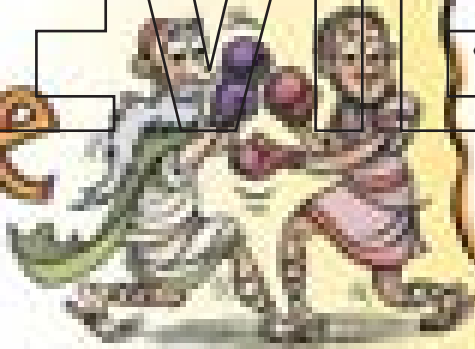
The
PROBLEM



+



THE
DEBATE



Read Acts 15:6-21.

- According to verse 7, what is a good way to solve a problem in the church (or anywhere else)?



The
SOLUTION

Read Acts 15:22-35.

- What decision did the group agree on?
- How did the council in Jerusalem know that this was the right thing to do?
- What do you think might have happened if a different decision had been made?

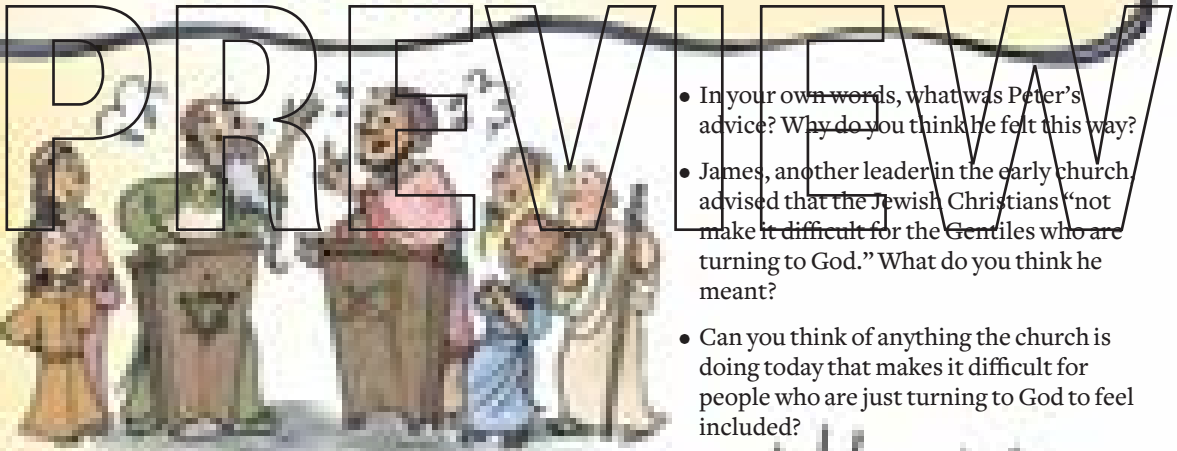


SOLVES A PROBLEM



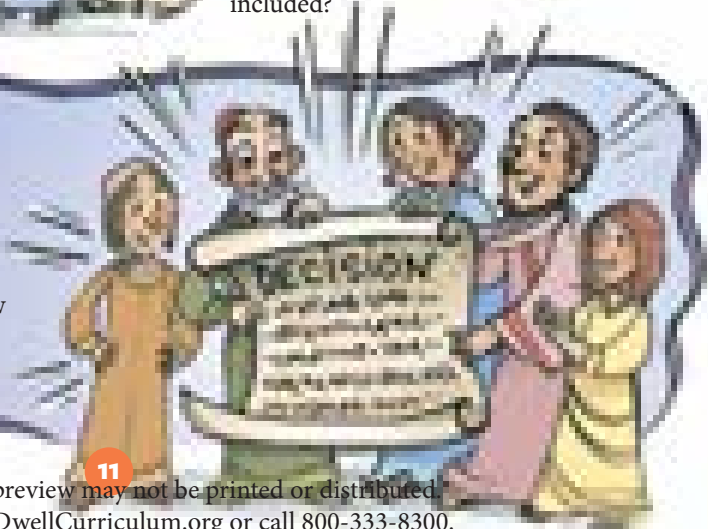
Read Acts 15:1-5.

- What did the people from Judea and the “believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees” want (vv. 1, 5) and why?
- What did Paul and Barnabas want and why?
- How might you have felt if you had been a Gentile believer? A Jewish believer?
- What did the church in Antioch decide to do about the problem?



- In your own words, what was Peter’s advice? Why do you think he felt this way?
- James, another leader in the early church, advised that the Jewish Christians “not make it difficult for the Gentiles who are turning to God.” What do you think he meant?
- Can you think of anything the church is doing today that makes it difficult for people who are just turning to God to feel included?

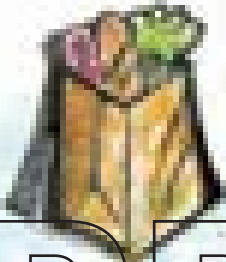
- How did the council in Jerusalem let the church in Antioch know what had been decided?
- Think of one issue that is being discussed in your congregation or denomination right now. How do you think the church will know what to decide?





Pastors / Ministers and Evangelists

- Our pastor(s):
- Some of the things our pastor(s) do to lead and serve our church and community:



Our Deacons

- The name(s) of one or more deacons in our church:
- Some of the things our deacons do to lead and serve our church and community:

PREVIEW



Our Elders

- The name(s) of one or more elders in our church:
- Some of the things our elders do to lead and serve our church and community:

Can you imagine yourself serving in one of these roles someday?



A Litany of Support and Prayer

All: We gather around these leaders in support of all the pastors, elders, and deacons that serve in Christ's church, including each other and the pastor. We make sure that the Word of God is accurately proclaimed and taught, and that the sacraments are faithfully administered. We assist the minister(s) and serve all Christians with advice, consolation, and encouragement.

Reader 1: We are all called by the Holy Spirit to share the good news of Jesus with others and serve them in love.

All: We are part of God's mission to make all things new!

Reader 2: The Spirit of Jesus gives us gifts and calls us to serve in specific ways in the church.

Reader 3: Our deacons, elders, and ministers have special roles to play. We trust them to live their faith, show compassion, and make wise decisions.

Deacon: We do the work of mercy, service, and outreach. We gather and distribute the gifts and offerings of the church to share with people in need and for work that advances God's kingdom. We visit and comfort people, provide for needs that arise, and assist the congregation at worship services.

Elder: We care for the welfare and order of the church. We have oversight of all members,

Pastor: As part of the council/consistory, together with the elders and deacons I lead God's people in sharing the gospel. We work together to care for the church and for the spiritual growth of God's people.

Reader 1: These three types of leaders serve together in unity to see the mission of God's church move forward.

Reader 3: Deacons, thank you for serving faithfully and showing Christ's love and care.

Reader 1: Elders and pastors, thank you serving for faithfully, studying God's Word, overseeing the church, and encouraging spiritual growth in all members.

Reader 2: Let's pray together: Great God, please pour out your Holy Spirit on all of us. Fill us with

grace and power for whatever ministry you've called us to or will call us to in the future.

Please guide these leaders; keep them strong and faithful; and give each of them wisdom, courage, discretion, and kindness so that they can serve you well.

Reader 3: We pray that your whole church will live together in unity, through Jesus Christ our Savior, who taught us to pray, saying:

All: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For yours is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

—adapted from the Reformed Church in America's *Order of Worship for Installation of Elders and Deacons* (2000)

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“Neither Do I Condemn You”

From John 8:2-11, NIV



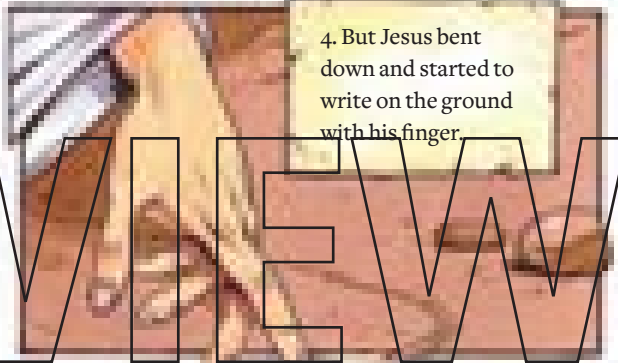
1. At dawn he appeared again in the temple courts, where all the people gathered around him, and he sat down to teach them.

PREVIEW

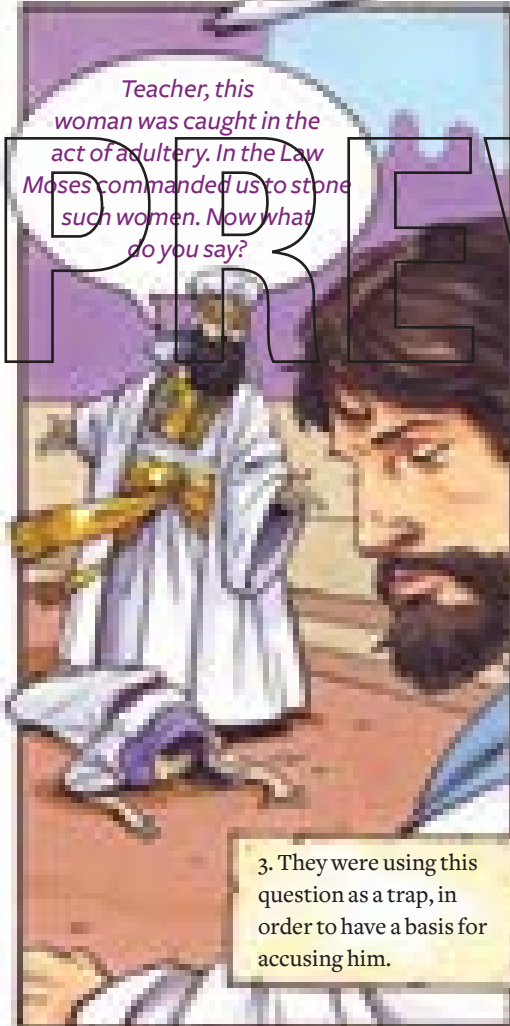
2. The teachers of the law and the Pharisees brought in a woman caught in adultery. They made her stand before the group.



4. But Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground with his finger.

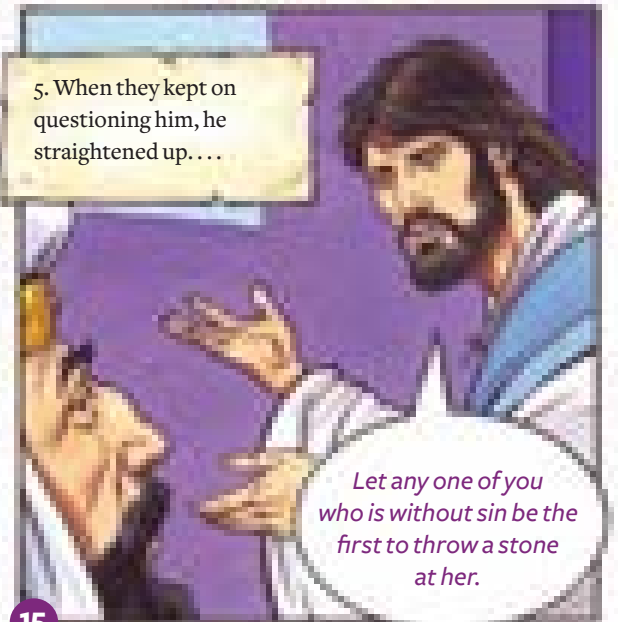


Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery. In the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?



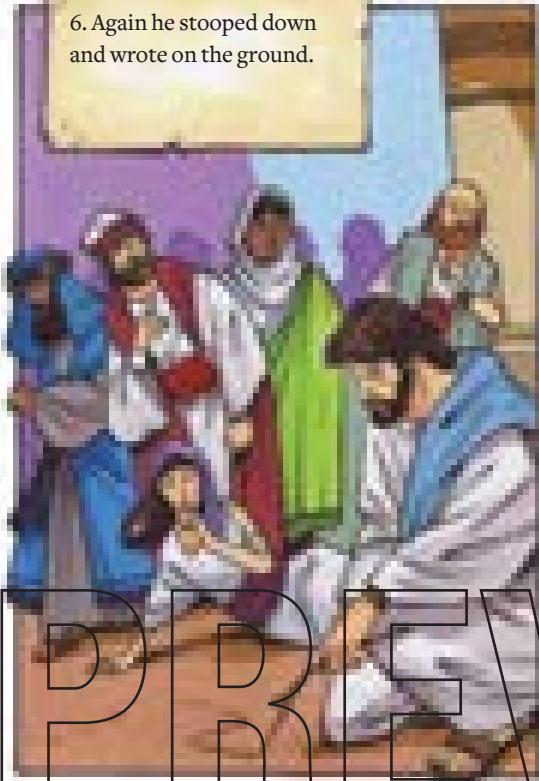
3. They were using this question as a trap, in order to have a basis for accusing him.

5. When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up....

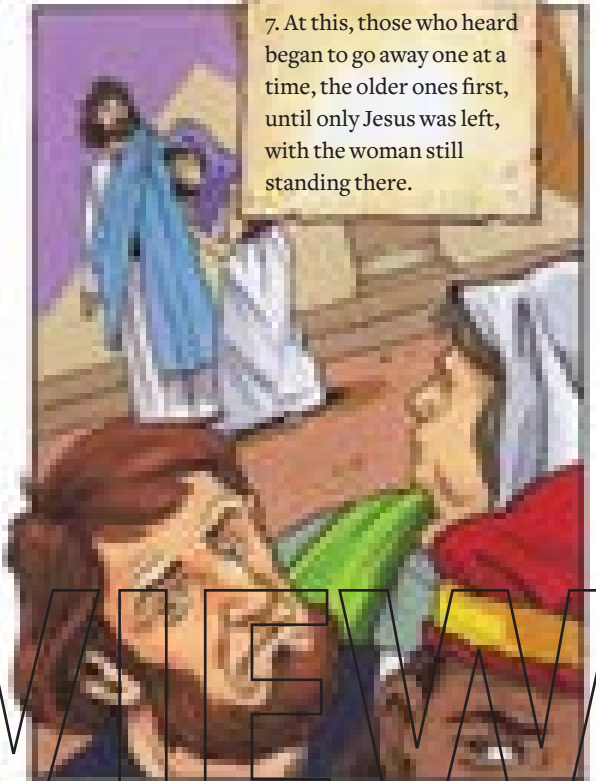


Let any one of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.

6. Again he stooped down and wrote on the ground.



7. At this, those who heard began to go away one at a time, the older ones first, until only Jesus was left, with the woman still standing there.



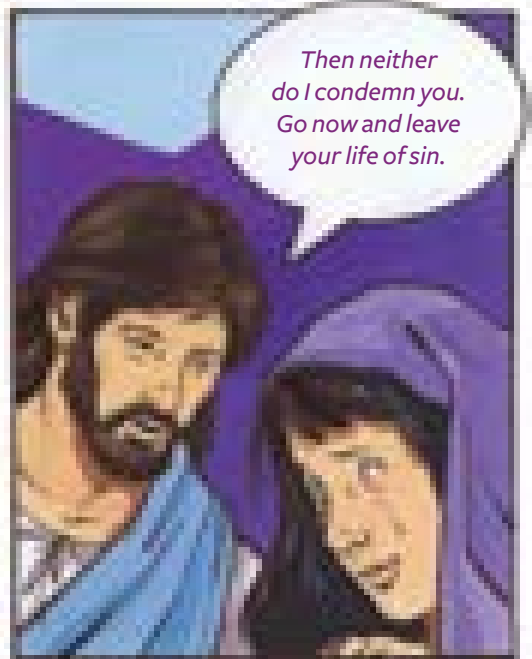
PREVIEW

Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?

No one, sir.



Then neither do I condemn you. Go now and leave your life of sin.



How do you think the woman felt when the Pharisees made her stand before Jesus?

Who accuses us?
Of what?
(See Revelation 12:10-11.)

What does God say to the one who accuses us? Why?

What do you think Jesus might have written on the ground?

What did the Pharisees want to trap Jesus into doing?

Do you think the woman did change her life after this? Why or why not?

Who in this story needs forgiveness?

Q&A

What do you believe about the forgiveness of sin?

Because of Christ's sacrifice, God pardons me from all guilt and punishment for my sins and for my natural tendency to sin.

—Q&A 39

What do you think the people in the crowd were thinking and feeling as they walked away, one by one?

What does this story tell you about Jesus?

What do you think Jesus might write on the ground if he were to see us condemning someone else?



*Today
in the temple courts*

PREVIEW



What Happens after You Die?

What Will Our Lives Be Like in the New Creation?

As you read the statements below, think about what you've already learned about Jesus' return to judge the world and begin our life with him in the new creation. Put a 1 by the first event that happens after we die, a 2 by the second event, and so on.

Mark each statement **True** or **False**.

- Christ returns in glory and immediately our bodies come out of the grave and are joined with our souls.
- Christ judges us and all other people.
- Our souls go immediately to be with Jesus.
- Our bodies are buried or cremated.
- We begin our new lives with Christ in the perfect new heaven and earth.
- The living meet Christ in the air.

- We will be like ghosts or spirits, floating around on clouds "way up there."
- We'll have new, perfect bodies.
- Jesus will be there.

Q&A

What comfort do you find in "the

resurrection of the body" and "life everlasting"?

I trust that the new life I now experience will continue after death. By Christ's power my soul and body will be reunited and made perfect. —Q&A 40

- No one will ever get sick or have any pain or die.
- Most of our time will be spent playing harps or singing in a heavenly choir.
- No one will ever cry or mourn.
- Everything will be totally different from life as we know it today.

The Raising of **Lazarus**

Art can offer insights and raise questions; it can help us wonder about God or about the people in God's story—their intentions, their hopes, or their fears. It can help us relate to the story and respond to it. Spend a few minutes looking at this piece together and talking about what you see.



"The Resurrection of Lazarus" by
Jean Baptiste-Jouvenet (1644-1717)

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- Who can you identify in this painting?
- Which parts of the story are highlighted here?

- What do you like about the painting?
- Is there anything you would change?

- What do you think Lazarus might remember about his death and resurrection?
- How might he tell this story?

PREVIEW



Brothers and sisters, we do not want you to be uninformed about those who sleep in death, so that you do not grieve like the rest of mankind, who have no hope. For we believe that Jesus died and rose again, and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him.

According to the Lord's word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.

After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. Therefore encourage one another with these words.

—1 Thessalonians 4:13-18,
NIV

My Thoughts about Death

The first death that I experienced was the death of . . .

I was _____ years old.

At that time I felt . . .

I was most curious about . . .

The things that frightened me were . . .

What I remember about the funeral was . . .

The feelings I have now as I think of that death are . . .

PREVIEW

Q&A

What good does it do you to learn all the teachings of

this creed? No good at all unless I truly believe in Jesus. Only by true faith in Christ do I become right with God and receive everlasting life.

—Q&A 41



Dear God, PREVIEW

Paul's Letters

FIRST LETTER / PAPYRUS FRAGMENT

I, Paul, am writing this letter. I am an apostle. People have not sent me. No human authority has sent me. No sent by Jesus Christ and by God the Father. God raised Jesus from the dead. . . . We are sending this letter to you (the members of the churches in Galatia). May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and peace. Jesus gave his life for our sins. He set us free from this evil world. That was what our God and Father wanted. Give glory to God forever and ever. Amen. . . .

Brothers and sisters, here is what I want you to know. The good news I preached is not something a human being made up. No one gave it to me. No one taught it to me. Instead, I received it from Jesus Christ. He

showed it to me. You have heard of my earlier way of life as a Jew. With all my strength I attacked the church of God. I tried to destroy it. I was moving ahead in my Jewish way of life. I went beyond many Jews who were my own age. I held firmly to the teachings passed down by my people. But God set me apart from the time I was born. He showed me his grace by appointing me. He was pleased to show his Son in my life. He wanted me to preach about Jesus among those who aren't Jews. . . .

—Galatians 1:1-5, 11-16a, NIV

SECOND LETTER / PAPYRUS FRAGMENT

We know that no one is made right with God by obeying the law. It is by believing in Jesus Christ. So we too have put our faith in Christ. That is so we can be made right with God by believing in Christ, not by obeying the law. No one can be made right with God by obeying the law. . . . I have been crucified with Christ. I don't live any longer. Christ lives in me. My faith in the Son of God led me to live my life in my body. He loved and gave himself for me.

—Galatians 2:16-17, 20, NIV

to the Churches

THIRD LETTER/ PAPYRUS FRAGMENT

Christ died for everyone. He died so that those who live should not live for themselves anymore. They should live for Christ. He died for them and was raised again. So from now on we don't look at anyone the way the world does. At one time we looked at Christ in that way. But we don't anymore. Anyone who believes in Christ is a new creation. The old is gone! The new has come! It is all from God. He brought us back to himself through Christ's death on the cross. And he has given us the task of bringing others back to him through Christ. He did not hold people's sins against them. God has trusted us with the message that people may be brought back to him. So we are Christ's official messengers. It is as if God were making his appeal through us. Here is what Christ wants us to beg you to do. Come back to God! Christ didn't have any sin. But God made him become sin for us. So we can be made right with God because of what Christ has done for us.

—2 Corinthians 5:15-21, NIV

FOURTH LETTER / PAPYRUS FRAGMENT

I, Paul, am writing this letter. I serve Christ Jesus. I have been appointed to be an apostle. God set me apart to tell others his good news. He promised the good news long ago. He announced it through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures. The good news is about God's Son. As a human being, the Son of God belonged to King David's family line. By the power of the Holy Spirit, he was appointed to be the mighty Son of God because he rose from the dead. He is Jesus Christ our Lord. I received God's grace because of what Jesus did so that I could bring glory to him. He made me an apostle to all those who aren't Jews. I must invite them to have faith in God and obey him. You also are among those who are appointed to belong to Jesus Christ. I am sending this letter to all of you (in Rome) who are loved by God and appointed to be his people. May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and peace. . . .

I am not ashamed of the good news. It is God's power. And it will save everyone who believes. It is meant first for the Jews. It is meant also for those who aren't Jews. The good news shows how God makes people right with himself. From beginning to end, becoming right with God depends on a person's faith.

Romans 1:1-7, 16-17a, NIV

FIFTH LETTER / PAPYRUS FRAGMENT

God has shown us how to become right with him. The Law and the Prophets give witness to this. It has nothing to do with obeying the law. We are made right with God by putting our faith in Jesus Christ. That happens to all who believe. It is no different for the Jews than for anyone else. Everyone has sinned. No one measures up to God's glory. The free gift of God's grace makes all of us right with him. Christ Jesus paid the price to set us free.

—Romans 2:21-24, NIV

For it is by **grace** you have been saved, through **faith**—and this is not from yourselves, it is the **gift** of God—not by works, so that no one can boast.
—Ephesians 2:8-9, NIV



The Woman

How do you think the woman knew who Jesus was?

What risks was she taking, entering the Pharisee's house, uninvited?

What do you think she expected Jesus to do or say?

I wonder if she sensed the discomfort of Simon and the Pharisees.

How do you think she felt when Jesus spoke those words to her: "Your sins are forgiven" and "Your faith has saved you, go in peace"?

When have you sensed Jesus speaking those words to you?

How do you express love and gratitude to Jesus for the grace he gives you?



Jesus

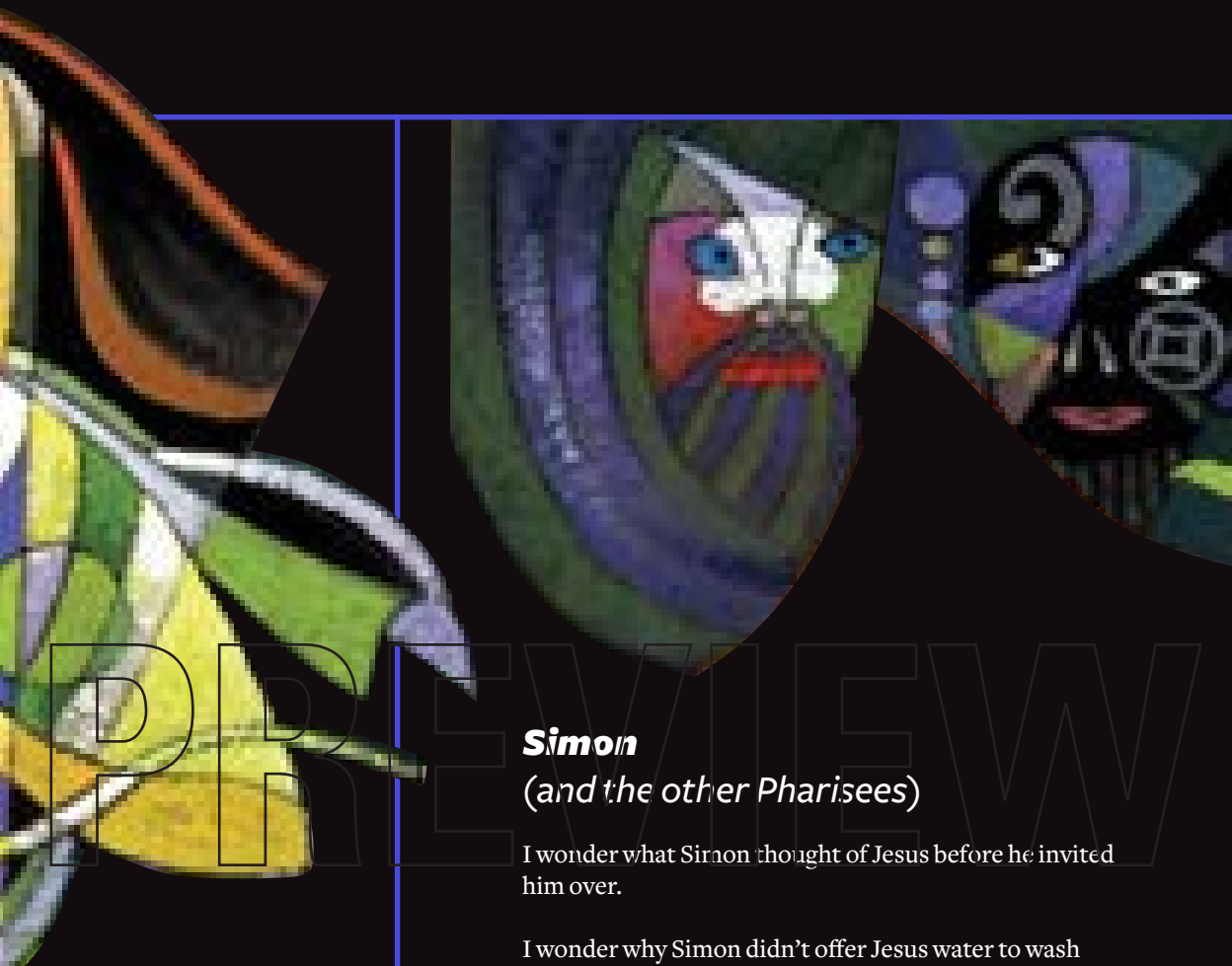
I wonder what Jesus saw when he looked at

Why is Jesus so full of grace for those who kneel hard on those who think of themselves as good?

How do you think it felt to receive such attention?

What does it mean for you that Jesus was not a woman?

How do you express love and gratitude to Jesus?



PREVIEW

Simon (and the other Pharisees)

I wonder what Simon thought of Jesus before he invited him over.

I wonder why Simon didn't offer Jesus water to wash his feet.

Why is it so easy to see the faults in others, and so hard to see them in ourselves?

I wonder how Simon felt about being compared to this woman and coming up short.

I wonder what happened between Simon and Jesus after this scene.

Do you think Simon's attitude changed at all?

What does this story tell you?

this woman.

know they are sinful and so
good people?

ention and affection?

ot embarrassed by the

esus for the grace he gives?

By Grace I BELONG THROUGH

Right with God

Christ's Obedience
Goodness

PREVIEW

Look up the verses below in your Bible. Jot down the words from these verses that describe who we were before Christ came and died for our sins (the first column) and who we are now that we've been made right with God, by grace, through faith (the second column).

Who We Were

Who We Are

Galatians 4:4-7

Romans 5:1-10

Ephesians 2:12-19

1 Peter 2:9-10

Romans 3:21-26

Q&A

Why do you say that you are right with God

(justified) only by

faith? Because I cannot take credit before God for any of the good things I do, not even for my own faith. Only Christ's goodness and obedience can make me right with God. This becomes mine by God's grace through my faith. —Q&A 42

GOD'S FAITH

PREVIEW

WE POUR OUT OUR PRAISE!

Spend a few minutes thinking about God's grace in your life. On the surface of the jar, make a list of things you are grateful for, or compose a prayer of gratitude as you pour out your heart to God.

C
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I BELIEVE IN GOD THE FATHER ALMIGHTY
MAKER OF HEAVEN AND EARTH
AND IN JESUS CHRIST HIS ONLY SON OUR LORD
WHO WAS CONCEIVED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT,
born of the virgin Mary
suffered under Pontius Pilate
was crucified, dead and buried

*the third day he arose from the grave
and ascended into heaven and is seated
at the right hand of the Father
and he will come back to judge the living and the dead
I BELIEVE IN THE HOLY SPIRIT
THE HOLY CHRISTIAN CHURCH*

PREVIEWEW

*of sins
and the life everlasting*

A M E N

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