

WEEK 5 - Incarnation - The Word Made Flesh

Fall Focus 2024 // Canopy Guide

The Big Story

CONVERSATION STARTERS

Use the questions below to kickstart a community building, all-play conversation that connects to our weekly topic. If your group meets for dinner, these might be great questions to share around a table.

- Do you have a favorite word? Share if you feel like it.
- If you could sit down and have a meal with Jesus, what do you think he would talk about? What would you want to ask him?
- What is one of your favorite stories that Jesus told?

VIDEO INTRO | STUDY GUIDE

The Gospel of John begins like this, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it” (John 1:1-5). It’s quite an introduction to Jesus and it parallels the creation account of Genesis 1. Just as the Word was spoken at the beginning of creation to bring light, order, and beauty into a dark, chaotic void, Christ came to breathe new, true life over all creation and illuminate and overcome the chaotic darkness of sin. It’s a poetic parallel describing a powerful Word, and it is the promised arrival of hope for our Big Story.

The Word, Jesus, enters the scene in a way that Israel did not expect. They weren’t looking for a baby or a carpenter from Nazareth. Israel expected a military leader who would deliver them from political oppression - a man of might and dominance. Yet this Word taught the ways of peace, right relationships, and love. He possessed humility and directed glory not to himself, but to the Father. While he was regarded as a Rabbi, he taught in unconventional ways: healing on the Sabbath, using parables, and explaining Scripture in ways they hadn’t heard before.

He did many unusual things - he touched and healed the sick; he welcomed children, restored dignity to women, dined with sinners and tax collectors, forever extending care,

healing, and love to the people on the social margins. As he taught, he frequently used parables and the power of story to help the listener understand deep truths about the character of God, and how we are to respond in his love to the hurting world around us. He flipped the narrative on how power was to be used, and even as he chose his disciples, he chose a hodge podge, diverse mix of characters that included, among other things, fishermen (not your typical educated apprentice) and as you read closely you'll often find women there, too.

Why did he do these things? Because this is what it looks like for the Kingdom of God to come near. In fact, that is the good news - the Gospel - that Jesus preached: the Kingdom of God has come near. The Kingdom came in him and through him, the true King (Mark 1:14-15). As Jesus went around Israel healing people, ministering to the 'lowly', raising the dead, teaching that true power comes through sacrificial love - all was meant to demonstrate what the Kingdom of God is like. It is a counter cultural Kingdom where power isn't used for personal gain, but for the good of creation.

Christ did not wield his power for his own benefit, fame, or even protection. He loved God with his whole being and loved his neighbor as himself. His life was the new script for how we are to look at life in the way we were meant to live and for what it means to be *truly* human.

Scripture to Read

- John 1:1-18
- Matthew 20:28; Mark 10:45
- John 13:12-17

Scripture to Memorize

- John 1:1 or 1:14


Deeper Discussion Questions

1. It could be easy to fast forward through Jesus' narrative and summate that his role was to redeem humanity, but when you focus on his life, what does it mean to you that Jesus came to really dwell among us?
2. Do you find it easier to identify Jesus as fully human or fully God? Why is it so important that he is fully both?
3. After reading John 1 what do you think about the entry of the Word in our Big Story?
4. What is something you've learned from Jesus that you try to live out even though it seems countercultural?

PRAYER

Consider the beauty of the Word made flesh in Jesus and how he chose to dwell among us and show us how to be truly human. Make sure to claim some time as a group each week to pray specifically for each other.

EXTRA RESOURCES/ARTICLES/RESEARCH

1. Check out this Crossway article by James Hamilton Jr. adapted from the ESV Expository Commentary on [What Did John Mean When He Called Jesus the “Word”? \(John 1\)](#). It’s a great introduction to the challenging wording of John 1 and its connection to the creation narrative.
2. Check out this resource from the Bible Project on John 1 and what it means for Jesus to be the Word of God - [John 1 - Creation Series Visual Bible Commentary](#)
3. This linked YouTube video is from an excerpt from “the Chosen” and depicts a creative parallel of the characters of Jesus and John interacting and reading the texts of Genesis 1 and John 1 together:

4. If you want to dig deeper into the John 1 text & explore the Greek etymology of Jesus as “Word”, check out the interlinear resource from [blueletterbible.org](#) and the [connected entry on the Greek word, “logos.”](#)