



Why Jesus?

Answering tough questions about our
Savior...

(a 4 week video-driven bible study created by Bluefish TV)

“I am the way the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me”
- Jesus (John 14:6)

“What we say about Jesus, who we believe Jesus really is, determines which side of the
battle we’ll be on in the Day of Judgment.”

- David Nasser

Why Jesus?: An Introduction to this Series...

A series created by BlueFishTV with David Nasser (speaker and author of *Glory Revealed*)
Edited and expounded by Sara Norton (Small Groups Director, Woodridge Church)

At Woodridge, we recently did a 12-week “World Religions” series in our junior and senior high Sunday morning programming. Each week we taught the students about a different world religion by highlighting the central components of that religion and seeing how that religion does and does not align with the truth of Jesus. It was amazing to see the way this series was received by our students with eagerness and interest.

Students have begun asking more and more questions about other religions. On a daily basis, they hear about other belief systems and brush shoulders with students and friends who believe different things than they do, and they have started to ask the question: “**Why Jesus?**”

Many students wonder: “What is it about this Jesus I have grown up knowing that is so different from the gods other people worship? What makes Jesus right and all the other religions wrong? Can I say that Jesus is the ‘Only Way,’ and is it important that I believe He is the ‘Only Way?’”

In this 4-week series, author and speaker, David Nasser, will address the following 4 questions: *What’s the big deal about Jesus? Was Jesus God, or Just a Good Man? Were Jesus Miracles Just an Illusion? Is Jesus the Only Way to Heaven?*

Take your students on a journey through these questions. Help them see that Jesus is who He says He is, has done what He has said He has done, and will do what he says He is yet to do. Encourage your students to ask questions...and don’t feel like you have to have all the answers! If they ask questions that leave you surprised, simply say, “That is a great question! What do you think?” or “I am so glad you asked that. Why don’t I do a little research this week and we’ll address that next week at group.” (Then call Drew and I to help you find an answer for them!).

Getting answers to their questions is a critical piece of building a firm foundation for their faith. But remember that your students will understand Jesus the most as they experience Him through the love, care, time, and attention you give them. Thanks again for all you do to reveal our Savior to them! Enjoy this series with them.

Why Jesus?: What's the Big Deal about Jesus?

Sara Norton's Blog (some thoughts to help you lead this conversation with your students)

Have you ever had something happen in your life that has left you dumbfounded?... Something that was so coincidental, it seemed almost eerie? Perhaps it was the way you met your spouse, the way you met your best friend, how you ended up at the college you attended, or the way someone met a need you had.

In my life, I have had many of these "can't just be coincidence" moments. In fact, one of them happened as I was writing this blog! Every Thursday morning I go to the Caribou in Wayzata to work on Life Group Curriculum. However, this morning I felt led to go to the Dunn Brother's in Plymouth. I had never been there before, and didn't particularly want to change my plans, but the leading was so strong that I felt like I couldn't not go there!

Much to my surprise, one of the students who went to the DR this past summer came walking up to me as I was plugging away at this blog. She had a quick break from school, was craving a malt, and decided to make a quick run to Smashburger. Once she got there, however, she realized Smashburger was closed (9:30am is a little early for a burger joint!). She decided to settle for a frappicino and swung into the neighboring Dunn Brothers. After she ordered her drink, she saw me sitting at a nearby table and came to say "hello." I was elated to see her, and we got to have a phenomenal conversation about who God has made her to be, the desires she has for her future, and what it is like for her to hear God's voice. I got to pray for her before she left, and she kept saying that our conversation was just what she needed that day. As I watched her walk out to her car, I couldn't help but wonder....was that all just a coincidence?

Without understanding the power of God, I think we're powerless to chalk these experiences up to anything apart from coincidence. Likewise, without understanding the power of God, I think we're powerless to trust that the prophecies in the Bible are anything but coincidence.

A prophecy is something that God foretold. It isn't a prediction that might come true. It is a stated fact that will come true. Prophecies serve as the perfection of scripture and give us the certainty we need to know Jesus is the Messiah. Over the course of 4,000 years, over 400 prophecies were made about the One who would come and save humanity from its sin. The way Jesus came to earth, the way He lived His life, the way He died on the cross, and the way He rose from death wasn't a coincidence; it was the fulfillment of all God said would happen.

Jesus wasn't just a "a man with a good philosophy," or "a dude with a beard." He was the One that fulfilled every prophecy about the Savior of the World that God had ever spoken...and that is a big deal! You're going to go through a lot of Scripture with your students tonight. Read the passages beforehand, so you know where you're going and how to show your students that God's great plan isn't one big coincidence., but rather a powerful display that God is who He says He is and is in control of all things.

GOAL: (everyone's will be a little different, write yours here to remind you of what you are leading your group toward)

INTRODUCTION: Over the next 4 weeks, we're going to take a look at some of the tough questions people ask about Jesus. Everyone seems to have a different answer about who Jesus is. But Jesus said He was the Son of God and the ONLY Savior of the world. Tonight we're going to talk about the way Jesus came to earth. We're going to look at how Jesus' coming to earth wasn't a string of coincidences, but it was a precise, detailed plan that God had been preparing for thousands of years.

PRAYER: God, we're at Life Group because we want to know you more. We want to see You for who You really are. Tonight, show us who You are, and help us understand that who we say You are is the most important decision of our life.

VIDEO/DISCUSSION: Watch Video (20 Minutes): What's the Big Deal about Jesus?, then discuss...

1. Has anyone been to Israel? Or any other important historical site? How did it feel to be in a place where a significant moment in history happened?
2. As you saw the actual places in Israel where the Old and New Testament took place, what surprised you about the places around the birth of Jesus?
3. David Nasser read Luke's account of Jesus' birth, where the angel came to Mary to tell her she would be the virgin to give birth to the Savior of the World, just as the prophecies had said. Why is it a big deal that Luke, the author of the book of Luke, was a doctor? (*A doctor certainly knows where babies come from. Luke understands science and it's no coincidence that God allowed a doctor to be the writer of Jesus' birth.*)
4. David explained the criteria of prophecy. He said, "A weatherman predicts the weather. A prophet tells the truth. If it's 99% accurate, it's not prophecy." So why are prophecies important? (*Prophecy proves that the Bible is true. That God is a God who keeps his promises. Most importantly, they help validate the claims and teachings about Jesus. They prove Jesus is the Messiah and that His virgin birth makes him different than anyone else in history. Jesus is the ONLY ONE to completely fulfill everyone prophecy about the Messiah.*)

TRANSITION: Jesus is the only figure of any major religion whose birth, life, and death was prophesied over a 4,000-year period by different people. We're going to look at the Old Testament to explore some of the prophecies about the Messiah and then flip to the New Testament to see what it says about Jesus. Get ready because we're going to drill through a lot of Scripture!

SCRIPTURE:

1. Someone read: Isaiah 7:14. What's the promise Isaiah made about the Messiah's mother? (The Messiah would be born of a virgin.)
Now read: Luke 1:26-28 and Matthew 1:20-23.
2. Someone read Isaiah 16:5. Who will the Messiah descend from? (The house of David). Now read: Mt. 1:1-2
3. Read Micah 5:2, 4. Where would the Messiah come from? (Bethlehem). Read Mt. 2:1.
4. It was prophesied that someone would prepare the way for the Messiah. Read Is. 40:3 & Mt. 3:1-3.
5. It was prophesied that the Messiah would ride in on a donkey. Read Zechariah 9:9 & Luke 19:28, 35-38
6. It was prophesied that the Messiah would be betrayed by a friend, and that friend would be paid 30 pieces of silver and throw them into the temple. Read Psalm 41:9 & Mt. 26:49-50. Then read Zechariah 11:12-13 & Mt. 27:5-7.
7. It was prophesied that lots (dice) would be cast for Jesus' clothing and that Jesus would be crucified. Read Psalm 22:18 & John 19:23-24. Then read Ps. 22:16 & Luke 23:33.
8. It was prophesied that not one of Jesus' bones would be broken. Read Ex. 12:24, Ps. 34:20 & John 19:32-36.
9. It was prophesied that Jesus would be buried in the tomb of a rich man and rise from the dead. Read Is. 53:9 & Mt. 27:57-60, and Ps. 16:10, Isaiah 53:10-11 & Acts 2:25-32

TAKE AWAY: Jesus is the only figure of any major religion whose birth, life and death was prophesied over a 4,000 year period by different people. God's plan for our salvation isn't a series of coincidences. As we saw in each of the prophecies we looked at tonight, God's plan for our salvation is perfect, precise, and pre-meditated.

1. How did going through all these prophecies affect how you see the Bible?
2. How did the prophecies affect your faith in who Jesus is?

CLOSING PRAYER: God, you are amazing and all you do is perfect and awesome! Show us more of Yourself this week, so that we trust you and surrender our lives to you more and more.

Why Jesus?: Was Jesus God, or Just a Good Man?

Sara Norton's Blog, *adapted from David Nasser's teaching*

Everyone has an opinion about who Jesus is. If you asked a million people, you would probably get 1,000 different answers. Was Jesus God, or was He just a good man? If He is God, how can so many people who put their faith in other gods be wrong? Are we wrong? Is everyone right?

Jesus never traveled more than 200 miles away from where he was born. He never had a Myspace account. He never had a Facebook page, or a best-selling novel. Yet somehow, Jesus has become the central figure in all of history. Jesus is the most controversial, the most worshiped, the most hated, the most revered, and the most misunderstood person who ever walked the earth.

The people of Jesus' day saw Him as a prophet, a good teacher, a man whose power came from Satan, a miracle worker, a man favored by God, and a person who blasphemed against God. Yet in the midst of all these different opinions, Jesus asked His disciples, "Who do you say I am?" It was then that Peter spoke up. "You are the Christ! You are the Messiah! You are the one all the prophecies were written about. You are the God of this universe."

Everywhere Jesus went, He made it clear that He was God. He constantly made "I AM" statements, and everytime He did so, He was claiming to be the God of the universe. Jesus said, "I AM the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to God except through me" (Jn. 14:6). Jesus said, "I AM the bread of life" (Jn. 6:51). He said, "I AM living water" (Jn. 4:14); "I AM the light of the world" (Jn. 8:12). He called himself "the Son of God," (Mt. 27:43) and said, "The Father and I are one" (Jn. 10:40).

No one made these kind of "I AM" statements in Jesus' day. If they did, they would have been stoned. However, Jesus makes the claims that He is God because He knows He is!

A whole lot hasn't changed in 2,000 years. In Jesus' day, there were people who followed Him, who saw the miracles He did, who listened to His teachings, followed His ways, and believed He was God. There were also people who would have just been passing by when He was teaching, or were skeptical of His miracles, and simply thought He was a good man. However, when you open up the Bible, you can't just call Jesus a "good man." C.S. Lewis said that when you look at the claims of Jesus, you have to come to the conclusion that He was either a Liar (he wasn't God, but lied that He was), a Lunatic (he was a crazy man who whole-heartedly thought he was God, but he wasn't), or that everything He said was true and He is LORD.

That is the line in the sand. There is no way to call Jesus a good teacher. He is either God, or he is a liar. He is either God, or he is a lunatic. He is either your God, or He is nothing at all. Which one do you believe? Who do you say Jesus is? Who do your students say He is? Dive deep into this question tonight, and know that Jesus will show Himself to be the God He is!

GOAL: (everyone's will be a little different, write yours here to remind you of what you are leading your group toward)

INTRODUCTION: Different people have different opinions of who Jesus is. Was He God, or just a good man? Was He just a good teacher, or a liar, or a lunatic? Or was Jesus God?! Tonight we'll take a look at who Jesus said He was.

PRAYER: Jesus, thank you for coming to earth to show us who You are. Open our eyes, hearts, and minds to know You more and see You as the God You said You are.

VIDEO/DISCUSSION: Watch Video (12 Minutes): Was Jesus God, or just a good man?, then discuss...

1. There are a lot of famous and influential people alive today in politics, sports, and entertainment.

- Tiger Woods is a famous golfer today, but can you tell me who won the Masters in 1942? (*Craig Wood*)
- Brad Pitt is a famous movie star today, but who won the Oscar for Best Actor in 1942? (*James Cagney for Yankee Doodle Dandy.*)
- Who can name our current President? Who can name our 21st President? (*Chester Arthur*)

Celebrities, sports figures and politicians come and go, but for thousands of years, Jesus has remained the most famous and influential figure in all of history.

2. Why is believing that Jesus is the Son of God an important decision for each of us to make? *(To think of Jesus as anything other than the Son of God is to not take seriously what Jesus said about Himself. To call Jesus a "good man," or a "moral teacher" is to disagree with Jesus about who He claims to be.)*

TRANSITION: Some question C.S. Lewis' *Liar, Lunatic, or Lord* line of reasoning by saying that Jesus never claimed to be God. It is true that no where in the Bible will you find Jesus saying the exact sentence, "I am God." But it is just as true that Jesus made it crystal clear, over and over again, that He is God. We must each draw our own conclusion. Is Jesus a liar, a lunatic, or is He Lord?

SCRIPTURE:

Turn to Luke 2. Let's begin our study with Jesus' first claim of his identity. Someone read Luke 2:41-51.

1. How old was Jesus at this point? (*12 years old*).
2. How would your parents react if you were missing for 3 days?! (*fear, panic, 911, never let you out of the house again.*)
3. How did Mary react? What did she ask Jesus? (*Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you.*)
4. How did Jesus react and answer? (*He was surprised that they would be worried. He said they should have known where he was and why. "I had to be in my Father's house."*)
5. The word Father is used by both Mary and Jesus. What is the difference? (*Mary is referring to Joseph. Jesus is referring to God. At 12 years old, Jesus is saying that He is God's Son. NOTE: In Jewish culture, people weren't even allowed to utter the name of God out of fear and reverence. To call the temple of God, "his father's house," was NEVER done in Jesus' day. The term "father" was an intimate term used only by a son who shared the same bloodline as his father. The son inherited what belongs to the father, so Jesus was calling the temple of God, "his" house.*)

Throughout his ministry as an adult, Jesus constantly made "I AM" statements. Everytime He did so, He was claiming to be the God of the universe. Look at the following verses and discuss what Jesus was claiming in each "I AM" statement. (Feel free to print off copies of the handout on the following page for this part): Jn. 6:51; Jn. 8:23, Jn. 8:12, Jn. 10:9, Jn. 10:11, Jn. 10:36, Jn. 11:25, Jn. 14:6, Jn. 15:1.

- What is it like for you to hear all these statements Jesus made about Himself?

TAKE AWAY: Ultimately, how we view Jesus defines our entire life.

- Who is Jesus to you personally? Do you find yourself convinced or in disagreement that Jesus claims to be God? If you're not convinced Jesus is God, why? What can you do to search deeper into who Jesus says He is?
- Do you know someone who believes Jesus is just a good man? How can you share about your belief in God and C.S. Lewis': Liar, Lunatic, or Lord trilemma to help them develop their faith?

CLOSING PRAYER: Jesus, thank you for who You are. Thank you for being the Way, Truth, and Life. We want You to be the Lord of our lives and the reason we live. Help us to believe in You, trust in You, and surrender our lives to You more and more each day.

John 6:51: "I AM _____, which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever."

John 8:23: And He said to them, "You are from beneath; I AM _____. You are of this world; I AM _____."

John 8:12: Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, "I AM _____. He who follows me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life."

John 10:9: "I AM _____. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture."

John 10:11: "I AM _____. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep."

John 10:36: "Do you say of Him whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, 'You are blaspheming,' because I said, 'I AM _____?'"

John 11:25: Jesus said to her, "I AM _____ and _____. He who believes in me, though he may die, he shall live."

John 14:6: Jesus said to him, "I AM _____, _____, and _____. No one comes to the Father except through me."

John 15:1: "I AM _____, and My Father is the gardener."

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Why Jesus?: Where Jesus' Miracles Just an Illusion?

Sara Norton's Blog, *with parts adapted from David Nasser's teaching*

As a child, I was convinced Santa Clause was real. Every Christmas Eve around bedtime, my parents would look at each other with a surprised glance and engage in the following dialogue: Mom: "Mark, did you just hear that?!" Dad: "Yes! Did you hear it?!" Mom: "Yes!" Dad: "Kids, did you hear that?!" (kids staring at parents with eyes wide-open and hearts beating fast with anticipation). Dad: "You know what that was?" Kids: "WHAT?!!!!" Mom: "That was the sound of Santa's reindeer...I think their on the neighbors roof!!" Dad: "Quick, you've got to get to bed!" My brothers and I would scream with fear, anticipation, delight, and excitement, and run off to our rooms. Mom and dad would follow close behind, quick to help us under the covers, tuck us in, and kiss us goodnight. For the first 8 years of my life, I thought the sight I saw when I opened my eyes the next morning was a Santa Clause miracle: full lego sets and Barbie playhouses perfectly put together, presents wrapped and piled high, and stockings stuffed and hanging decoratively on the fireplace. Little did I know, it was all just an illusion. Christmas morning wasn't a Santa Clause miracle, it was the result of a sleepless night's work on behalf of my parents.

Many of us grew up believing in Santa Clause, the Tooth Fairy, and the Easter Bunny and believing that everything we received from them was miraculous. Out of nowhere, things just appeared. The people of Jesus' experienced the same thing. How did this man just produce enough food to feed 5,000 men (not to mention women and children)? How did dead people come back to life after Jesus touched them? How did Jesus make a raging storm stop in an instant? Undoubtedly, the onlookers of Jesus' day were left wondering: did I just see a miracle, or was it just an illusion?

David Cooperfield, and other magicians that have studied the miracles of Jesus on the Sea of Galilee, have said that in order for Jesus to have pulled off what he pulled off, if he was just a magician, he would have needed three 18-wheelers filled with equipment and crews of hundreds of people to help Him out. Many of the things Jesus did seemed impossible. However, they weren't impossible. They were miraculous.

A miracle is an uncommon act of God where God gets attention brought to Himself to help us believe more in him by doing something that brings us to awe and worship. The claims Jesus made about being God were undeniable because His miraculous actions backed up what He claimed. He said He was the "Bread of Life," and then He supplied bread for thousands of people. He said He was with the Father since the beginning of creation, and then He calmed storms to show He was in control of creation. Many people of Jesus' day saw his miracles, yet still disbelieved He was God. What about us? What is your response when we read about the miracles Jesus did? Do they bring you to awe and worship? Do they cause you to believe the claim that He is God? Or are you skeptical? Or doubtful?

What is your explanation for Jesus' miraculous power? What is your explanation if it was all just an illusion? Challenge your students with these questions tonight.

GOAL: (everyone's will be a little different, write yours here to remind you of what you are leading your group toward)

INTRODUCTION: Where Jesus' miracles just an illusion? What would it mean if they were? What would it mean if they were real?

PRAYER: God, sometimes your power is so great that it almost seems impossible. But don't let us limit You. Help us to have faith great enough to believe in your ability to do everything...especially things that are miraculous.

VIDEO/DISCUSSION: Watch Video (13 Minutes): Were Jesus' miracles yet an illusion?, then discuss...

1. Have any of you seen a miracle?
2. In explaining miracles, David Nasser said, "A miracle is an uncommon act of God. It's where God gets the attention, to help us believe more in Him by doing something that brings us to awe and brings us to worship...so that we would believe. Why are Jesus' miracles important in showing who Jesus really was? (*Miracles show that Jesus has control over the weather, over the natural laws of the universe, over the fish and therefore all other creation, over other people. They prove Jesus is the God of the universe.*)"
3. Why do you think people try to disprove or deny that Jesus' miracles were real? (*It goes back to the question we talked about last week - "who do you say that I am?" If people admit that the miracles are genuine miracles, they would have to take his claims about being God seriously. The miracles of Jesus validate the claims He made about His identity.*)

TRANSITION: Now is our chance to explore the miracles of Jesus. Many people have tried to discredit Jesus by saying His miracles were just an illusion that tricked people. Let's use the evidence found in Scripture, as well as our collective brainpower, to see how Jesus' miracles were real.

SCRIPTURE: (Let your students voice "what they say" after reading each passage, but here are some points to guide you.)

Jesus Walks on Water: Mt. 14:22-32, Mk. 6:45-52, Jn. 6:16-21

What the critics say: 1) Jesus never walked on water. Instead, he tip-toed on the shallow shore or sandbar. 2) Jesus used props: floating shoes, plywood, and underwater pier. 3) Jesus walked on ice.

What do you say? 1) Even walking on shallow parts of the sandbar would not look like walking but wading because the mud is sticky; the boat was far from shore (Mt. 14:24 & Mk. 6:47); if it was a sandbar, the boat would have gotten stuck. 2) Magicians need lots of practice to pull off a trick of this magnitude. If it was a pier or props, when did Jesus have time to build the pier or practice the trick...especially since the disciples were always with him? How did he pay for expensive props as a poor carpenter? 3) The disciples would have noticed that the sea had iced over; if Jesus walked on ice, the boat could not have navigated; John 6:18 says the water was rough. Rough water is not ice.

Jesus Feeds 5,000: Mt. 14:13-21; Mk. 6:30-44; Lk. 9:10-17; Jn. 6:1-14

What the critics say: 1) Jesus hid all the bread and the fish in the field the day before he fed the crowd so it would look like he was multiplying it. 2) No one was really hungry, so the 5 loaves and 2 fish was plenty. 3) The disciples lied about many of his miracles in what they wrote and they aided him in pulling off these "tricks".

What do you say? 1) Where would Jesus get the money to buy all that food as a poor carpenter? How could Jesus hide enough food in the grass for 5,000 men? What about ants, food rotting? Wouldn't the people have seen the food? 2) Even if no one took any at all, how did they come up with 12 baskets of leftovers? Even the original 5 loaves and 2 fish couldn't fill 12 baskets. 3) If the disciples were lying, why would they give up everything, live in poverty and even die for a lie?

- What was it like to read through all these miracles? How did it affect your understanding of Jesus?

TAKE AWAY: Jesus wants nothing less than our all. Notice how in the story the young boy didn't hold back one fish, or even one loaf for himself. He offered it all.

- What about you? Will you offer all you have and all you are to Jesus? What will that look like? What do you expect God to do with it? Something miraculous?!

CLOSING PRAYER: God, thank you for telling us you're God and backing that up with your actions. Help us give all we have to you, and use it in a miraculous way. Amen.

Why Jesus?: Is Jesus the Only Way to Heaven?

Sara Norton's Blog, *with parts adapted from David Nasser's teaching*

If you're anything like me, you've experienced how easy it is to lie instead of tell the truth and receive the possible consequences. Kids as young as 3 years old attempt to deceive their parents, and I am amazed at how quickly I can become my 3 year old self – believing that I am doing a good job covering something up when all the while my Father in heaven sees everything perfectly clear.

It is safe to say that none of my little, white lies were ever told to save me from death. (A possible grounding from mom and dad, perhaps, but certainly not death!) Yet the weakness of my morality is what makes me so astounded at the strength of Jesus' character and the depth of certainty He had about His identity. When He was arrested and brought to trial, the chief priest gave him an "out". The only thing Jesus had to do to save His life – to avoid the horrific fate of being crucified – was to say that He was not God. Yet in the face of unfathomable consequences for telling the truth, Jesus simply could not lie. He knew He was God; He could not deny it; and He was crucified because of it.

Even though Jesus' death was necessary for our salvation, His crucifixion and death isn't what sets us apart as Christians among the sea of other world religions.. In Jesus' day, dying a death on a cross was nothing unusual. Crucifixion was a common death sentence for criminals, and it had been for 500 years prior to Jesus. What sets us apart as Christians, and changes the whole course of history, is what happened next....

Although many people have died, only One has conquered death and rose to life. Because Jesus is alive, because death could not defeat him, because sin could not hold him, because the grave could not keep him, we too we can die to our old self and rise with resurrection life. We can have eternal life because we serve a risen Savior who has conquered the grave.

Jesus Christ ascended into heaven and is seated (alive and in all perfection and power!) at the right had of the Father. Among the plethora of promises He has given us, He has promised that one day He will return to lead His followers into victory in the final battle between God and Satan. Our answer to "who we say Jesus is" during this intermittent time determines which side of the battle we will be on when He returns again.

The statement "Jesus is the only way to heaven" can seem intolerant or judgmental. It can seem like we are trying to exclude every person who doesn't believe what we believe. However, Jesus' invitation to heaven is the most inclusive invitation that has ever been extended. He died for the sins of each and ever person, and His invitation to eternal life is open to ANY one. Tonight, help your students understand Jesus' invitation to them, their friends and family, and every person in the whole world.

GOAL: (everyone's will be a little different, write yours here to remind you of what you are leading your group toward)

INTRODUCTION: The statement: Jesus is the only way to heaven can seem harsh. But if it's true, it has big implications for our lives, our faith, and how we share our faith with others. We're going to dig into that statement tonight.

PRAYER: God, we want to be loving to everyone. We also want our lives and faith in You to be centered on Your truth. Show us how You are the way to everlasting life, and how You offer everlasting life to each and every person.

VIDEO/DISCUSSION: Watch Video (13 Minutes): Is Jesus the only way to heaven?, then discuss...

1. What is your reaction to David Nasser's teaching? (*Jesus prayer in Gethsemane, Place of the empty tomb, Road to Jesus' crucifixion, Battle of Armageddon*)
2. What is your reaction to the statement: "Jesus is the only way to heaven"? (*Students are surrounded by people of different faith backgrounds and religions. This statement might seem exclusive and intolerant, but Jesus' life, death, and resurrection was for each person in all of the world. His invitation to eternal salvation is for everyone!*)

TRANSITION: Tonight's video teaching from David Nasser was pretty heavy. Let's take some time to unpack what he said by reading through Scripture to see if Jesus is the only way to heaven.

SCRIPTURE:

1. In the video, David Nasser talked about the end of Jesus' life on earth – His arrest and trial, the torture and humiliation before his death, and his death on the cross. What was Jesus guilty of? (*Nothing!*)
2. During His mock trial, Jesus had the opportunity to avoid crucifixion. What would He have had to do to avoid the death penalty? (*Deny that He was God.*)
3. In the video, David spoke from the Garden of Gethsemane (which was filled with olive trees) where Jesus prayed before he was arrested. He said, "It's a place where they take the olives off these branches and put them in an olive press, and they crush them and beat them, so that the sweet oil can be poured out. Jesus Christ was beaten. He was crushed so that the blood could flow and that by His wounds, we could be healed."

Read **Isaiah 53:5**

- This prophecy was written 700 years before Jesus. How does David's description of an olive press reflect why Jesus had to die? (*Just as a heavy weight is put on an olive, puncturing, bruising, and crushing it in order for the oil to be poured out, Jesus knew that He too would be pierced and crushed so that the anointed blood would flow out and pay the penalty for our sins.*)

4. **Read 1 Corinthians 15:14-17.** What makes Christianity different than any other religion? (*The Resurrection. Because Jesus conquered the grave himself, He can conquer it for us.*)

5. **Read Revelation 19:10-16.** What do you think about this verse? What was it like to hear David talk about the Battle of Armageddon that will one day happen? Why is it so important that we settle the question "Why Jesus" as it pertains to the Battle of Armageddon?

TAKE AWAY: Over the past 4 weeks, we've talked about some of the tough questions about Jesus: His prophecies, His birth, His miracles, and His death and resurrection.

- At the end of this series, what is your answer to the question, "Why Jesus?"

CLOSING PRAYER: Jesus, you came to take away the sins of the whole world and give each and every person the opportunity to spend eternity with God. Help us receive your incredible gift, and not be shy about sharing what you've done with others who need to know Your truth. Amen.

