

# WHO IS GOD?

LEADER'S GUIDE **WEEK 1**



## STUFF YOU NEED

- Bibles
- Our Faith Student Books*
- Week 1 What's Your Answer? Video*
- Device to play video
- Colored pencils, pens, highlighters
- Dry erase board and markers

\*If you've chosen to do one of the *Extra Activities*, make sure to gather those supplies too.

## LOOK IT UP

Use *Stick It!*, *Write It!*, or *Display It!* (See *Leader's Guide Introduction*) to have your students get these scriptures cued up and ready to explore throughout class.

- John 1:18
- Philippians 2:7-8
- Psalm 145:16
- Mark 1:11
- Psalm 94:19
- Acts 2:42
- Exodus 13:21
- John 17:21

As students are working, challenge them to start looking for one scripture that looks interesting or meaningful to them. At the end of the lesson, they'll be asked to write one scripture in their *Student Book* that they want to remember.

## WHAT ARE WE DOING HERE?

- READ** the *Introduction* in the *Student Book* (pages 3-4) to get students acquainted with the major components of each lesson.
- DISCUSS:** Now that you've read what the book has to say, how would you explain catechism to a friend? Why do you think catechism can be helpful for someone? What sorts of things are you hoping to get out of this catechism?
- PLAY VIDEO** ▶ Play *Week 1 What's Your Answer? Game & Lesson Graphics* video. Follow the on-screen prompt and pause the video on the *Belong* title screen. Leave this screen on while leading the *Belong* activities.

## For the Leader

### WHY THIS QUESTION?

It is through the lens of Jesus that the entirety of Scripture is meant to be read and understood. It's what we call systematic theology—a system of interpreting all revelations of God's self (in Scripture, in tradition, even in our own experiences today) through the ultimate revelation of God: Jesus Christ. Everything we read, from Creation to Revelation, has Jesus at the center of the story.

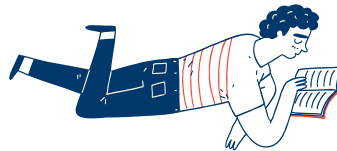
So, when taking time to help kids know who God is, it starts with Jesus. He is the image of the invisible God, the Word made flesh. If we want to know God's nature, if we want to know God's plan for how to live a Christian life, we need look no further than Jesus.





# BELONG

- READ** the opening paragraph of the *Who Is God?* chapter (page 5) and the facts about Jesus on page 6 (below his picture).
- DISCUSS:** If you had one sentence (20 words or less) to add something to this *Belong Bunch* info about Jesus, what would you want to say about Jesus? Why do you think Jesus was chosen as the *Belong Bunch* person to help us answer the question, *Who Is God?*
- READ** John 1:18.
- DISCUSS:** What's this verse say about God?
- READ** the rest of the *Belong* section.
- DISCUSS:** Why do you think Jesus is called our King? How is Jesus different than earthly kings? What are your top three favorite stories about Jesus or teachings from Jesus? What do those stories or teachings also show us about God? How did Jesus show compassion, love, patience, friendship, wisdom, and guidance?
- STUDENT BOOK ACTIVITY:** *Mark It Up.* Encourage the kids to look back through the *Belong Bunch* section and highlight three sentences from the section they think are important or want to remember.
- PLAY VIDEO** ▶ Play the *What's Your Answer?* game. After the game, follow the on-screen prompt to pause the video on the *Believe* title screen. Leave this screen on while leading the *Believe* activities.



# BELIEVE

- READ** the first two paragraphs of the *Believe* section (page 7).
- DISCUSS:** Before today, had you ever heard the word *Trinity*? What have you heard said about the *Trinity*?
- READ** Philippians 2:7-8.
- DISCUSS:** Who do you think this passage is describing?
- JOURNAL:** Allow 5-10 minutes for students to complete the journal activity in their *Student Books*. Encourage students to read the small section titled *Journaling* on page 7 before they begin.
- DISCUSS:** What have you found so far that helps you answer the question, *Who Is God?*
- READ** the *Triquetra* section and activity instructions (page 8).
- STUDENT BOOK ACTIVITY:** *Triquetra.* Give students a few minutes to complete the *Triquetra* activity. This activity can be completed individually or the group can brainstorm possible symbols to use.
- READ** the *Three Words. One God.* section (page 8). Ask a student to read each scripture passage you encounter on your way through the section.
- STUDENT BOOK ACTIVITY:** *More Words. One God.* This activity (page 9) is best done as a group. Brainstorm words that describe each person of the Trinity, and write these words on a dry erase board. When finished, have the students copy down the ones they feel drawn to or want to remember inside the triquetra in their books.

## For the Leader

### NO METAPHORS

There's really no metaphor we can use to accurately describe our Trinitarian God. While that might feel overwhelming, it is also a good teaching point. Our God is so beyond our human brains that we cannot fully describe God, no matter how hard we try. And we do try. Most analogies we often try to use for the Trinity miss the mark. God is not like an egg (shell, white, yolk), or like water (vapor, liquid, ice), or like a clover (three leaves). Each of these, while well-intentioned, offers an incomplete picture of the Trinity.

Instead it's best to steer clear of a metaphor to describe the Trinity, and lean into imagining together. Imagine one being and three persons. Imagine the vastness of God, beyond what we can comprehend. That doesn't make sense to all students, we know, but it is our theology, and it is a foundational piece to learn. As students begin to think in more abstract ways, this "non-metaphor" language will guide them.

## For the Leader

### WHERE ARE THE ANSWERS?

It's okay to not have all the answers. The mission is discovery and growth. Learning to think through scriptures this way is an important practice. Let students wrestle with questions during the week, or point them to additional information you think could help them. Revisit the question in future lessons and see if they've had any new insight.



- EXTRA ACTIVITY:** To help kids learn the three words given to describe each person of the Trinity, let them create something together. They could write a poem or song (you could even choose a familiar tune like the alphabet song). They could create a separate symbol for each word and draw it in a communal space like on a poster board or dry erase board. Or they could create a motion for each word and do it all together.
- STUDENT BOOK ACTIVITY:** *Mark It Up.* Encourage the kids to look back through the *Believe* section and draw boxes around four sentences from the section they want to remember.

## LEARN-A-WORD--MATIC

- READ** the *Learn-A-Word-O-Matic* word and definition.
- EXTRA ACTIVITY:** Break the kids into groups of three and have them create a short step-dance or choreographed motions that they all do together. Try to get in sync and not step on each other's toes! Imagine the Father, Son, and Spirit all working as one in a beautiful expression of movement and unity.
- DISCUSS:** How does *perichoresis* help us answer the question, *Who Is God?* What else from the *Believe* section has helped you answer that question?
- PLAY VIDEO ▶** Play the *What's Your Answer?* game. After the game, follow the on-screen prompt to pause the video on the *Become* title screen. Leave this screen on while leading the *Become* activities.

## BECOME

- READ** the opening two paragraphs of the *Become* section (page 10).
- READ** John 17:21.
- READ** the final two paragraphs of the *Become* section.
- STUDENT BOOK ACTIVITY:** Choose one or both of the *Become* experiences from the *Student Book* (page 11) to do in class. Only do them if time allows to do them *and* to journal. If you don't have time to complete the activities in class, then read through the experiences together and invite kids to take their books home to do them this week.
- JOURNAL:** Give time to reflect and answer questions. Allow students to choose between the two sets of journal questions on pages 10 and 11.

## OUR FAITH. MY VERSE.

- STUDENT BOOK ACTIVITY:** Provide time for students to choose the one scripture passage from the week that they really want to remember. Allow 5-10 minutes for them to write the scripture (not just the reference, but the whole thing) on the lines provided in the *Student Book*.



### For the Leader

#### PERICHORESIS

If the idea of *perichoresis* is new to you, you might be interested to learn that it is one of the oldest orthodox analogies of the Trinity. It was developed by early church leaders we know as the Cappadocian Fathers, especially Gregory of Nazianzus (he died around 390 AD). Rather than focusing on the work of each member of the Trinity, this way of thinking focuses on the ongoing relationship of the Trinity, and the way each one sustains and flows out of the other. It is powerful to recognize that at the core of God's being is relationship—knowing and being known, trusting, and loving one another. You and your students can imagine together what this must be like. What do we understand about God just by knowing that God is relationship? (e.g., God knows how to listen, God cares about others, God knows how to give and to receive, etc.)

## Q's and A's

- READ** the *Q's and A's* instructions on page 12.
- STUDENT BOOK ACTIVITY:** Allow 5 minutes for students to complete the activity.
- DISCUSS:** Go over the activity and let a student answer each question out loud, giving students a chance to correct their answer if they got it wrong. The questions and answers are here:

- Q.** Why is it important to look at Jesus in order to understand God?
- A.** Jesus helps us understand who God is and how God makes decisions.
- Q.** Who is the central person to the whole biblical story?
- A.** Jesus
- Q.** What are three words that describe God the Father?
- A.** Creator, Provider, Parent
- Q.** What are three words that describe God the Son?
- A.** Savior, King, Friend
- Q.** What are three words that describe God the Holy Spirit?
- A.** Helper, Teacher, Guide
- Q.** What does the Greek word *perichoresis* mean?
- A.** God the Father, Son, and Spirit moving together in perfect harmony.
- Q.** Do we know everything there is to know about God?
- A.** Nope. Sorry. Plenty of mystery left.

- PLAY VIDEO ►** Play the *What's Your Answer?* game. After the game, follow the on-screen prompt to pause the video on *The One Big Question* title screen. Leave this screen on while you lead the final activities.

## THE ONE BIG QUESTION

- STUDENT BOOK ACTIVITY:** If there's time in class, allow 5 minutes for students to journal about the one big question from this lesson: *Who Is God?* If there's not time in class, send the book home with students and encourage them to do this activity at home.

## PRAYER

- Offer to let a student lead in prayer. Remind them to consider what they learned and experienced about the Three-In-One God today, and include these things in their prayer. (Example: "Thank you for being our provider, our Savior, and our Guide.") Pray for God's leadership as you all seek to understand who God is more and more.

