

Prepare

What's behind all this?

It is clear at the beginning of the Bible, in the very first chapters of Genesis, that the primary curse upon the human race for turning away from God is that we will not be immortal. Only God is immortal. So the main thing that differentiates humans from God is the fact that we die. God does not.

But it's also clear from the beginning of the Bible that, despite our human failings, God desires to have an intimate relationship with us. In fact, God desires that so much that the Second Person of the Trinity (the Son, or *Logos*) became incarnate in Jesus of Nazareth. God embraced the full human experience.

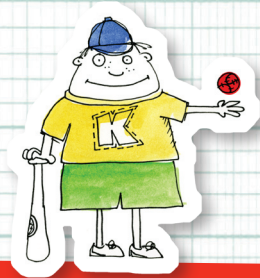
The full human experience includes death. God experienced death when Jesus was crucified. While God surely could have forgiven human sin in many ways, God chose to enter into the deepest and most tragic aspect of human life, thus reuniting us to God in a way we had not been since the Garden of Eden.

Where are kids at?

- Be alert to any kids who may have recently experienced the death of a family member, friend, or member of their faith or school communities. A lesson that deals with death and resurrection may trigger feelings that need reassurance and a listening ear.



Philippians 2:5-11
Romans 8:10-11



Where's this going?

Kids explore why God chose to experience human life and death and consider the purpose of the resurrection.

Consider this . . .

"In the passion of the Son, the Father himself suffers the pains of abandonment. In the death of the Son, death comes upon God himself, and the Father suffers the death of his Son in his love for forsaken man."

Jürgen Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 192

encounter

15 minutes

Video

1. Set up

Provide each student with a piece of smooth beach glass, bark, driftwood, a smooth stone, or a shell collected from your local area. Have each kid write an initial answer to the question, "If Jesus was God, why did he have to die?" on his or her item using a fine-tipped permanent marker. Place the items pieces on the center of a table.

2. Watch

"If Jesus was God, why did he have to die?" DVD 2, Chapter 3

3. Unpack

- What ideas from the video are missing from our pile of ideas?
- If you were going to give a friend a mini movie review about the video, what would you tell him or her?
- What are some human characteristics that Jesus had to have in order to face the life events he had to experience?

What about the Bible?

Divide your group into two teams. Give one group the passage Philippians 2:5-11. Give the other group Romans 8:10-11. Give the groups 3 minutes to read their passage and write down the evidence their passage gives to answer the question, If Jesus was God, why did he have to die? After the 3 minutes, re-read the passages together and have groups share what they found.

Questions for conversation while you work:

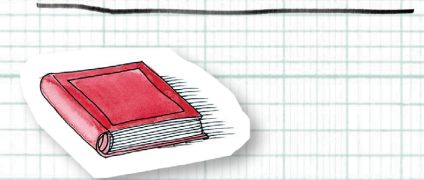
- What evidence did you find?
- Why are these messages important for Christians?
- How does it feel to have Paul say in Philippians 2:5, "Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus"? Why is this so challenging?
- Read Philippians 2:9-11 again together. What is this passage saying about Jesus' experience?
- What questions do you still have about why Jesus had to die?

Make sure you've got the obvious stuff for this session—re:form video (DVD or download), Anti-Workbooks, Bibles, pens or pencils, paper, tape, etc.



Get this stuff . . .

Beach glass, bark, driftwood, smooth stones, or shells. Fine-tipped permanent markers. Paper.



sac·ri·fice

[sak-ruh-fice]

giving up one thing for another thing

Mes·si·ah

[muhs-sigh-uh]

For Jewish people, the one who will come to save the people of Israel. For Christians, Jesus is the Messiah.



Back it up . . .

"Death is a problem. We can't escape it. Nobody can. Not physical death. Not spiritual death. God knew something had to change, here. So God sent Jesus to Earth, somehow being both all God and all man . . . and died for our sins."

re:form DVD

engage

25-30 minutes

Choose 1+ Anti-Workbook (AW) activities to explore the session question. The first 2 are for individual use, while the last 2 involve the whole group.



1. Human vs. God AW p. 106

Take a look through Hebrews 2 together. What particularly Godly characteristics of Jesus are highlighted here? What truly human characteristics does this letter focus on? Then take a moment to reread Hebrews 2:14-18. After kids have completed this Anti-Workbook activity, pass out blank business cards. With Hebrews 2:14-18 in mind, have kids create a business card for Jesus. Ask kids: What special things does Jesus do for you? How does this help you understand why Jesus had to die? (Hint: It's all about the resurrection.)

Questions for conversation while you work:

- What are your favorite human characteristics?
- If God can do all of these things, why do you think God chose to experience death?
- If Jesus died so he could be resurrected, what do you think that means for you after death?

Get this stuff . . .

Punch-out cards from page P11 of the Anti-Workbook. Blank business cards. Markers.

Where's this going?

Kids compare human and divine powers and explore the importance of Jesus living a fully human life.



2. What If? AW p. 107

Have kids think of a person living today whom they would consider a hero. They should limit their choice to a person from the following categories: politics, religion, the arts, humanitarians, and everyday people. Describe why that person is a hero and what they are doing for the world. What gift have they brought to the world that is unique?

Questions for conversation while you work:

- Jesus was a world changer. What was the most important part of his message to us?
- What if Jesus had lived longer? What would he have done next?
- Physical death is one of the hardest things we face as humans. Why didn't God just skip that part of being human?
- Read 1 Corinthians 15:12-19 together. What's Paul's perspective on the question, "What if God figured out some other way to change the world?"?
- If there had been no Jesus, what other way could God have sent his message of love to us?

Where's this going?

Kids imagine a world without Jesus as a way of exploring what Jesus' presence in our world has done for us.

Back It Up . . .

"God could have forgiven human sin in many ways, but God chose to experience death. And through the cross Jesus defeated death and brought us back into life, reuniting us with God."

re:form DVD



3. Anti-Workbook of the Divine Power of Second Guessing AW p. 108

Role play an argument with God for kids. Pull out your cell phone and pretend you're arguing with God about something you think God should do differently. Pick something goofy like making mud less sticky or giving us our own personal control over the weather on important days. Make it clear that you're losing the argument, and then hang up in a huff. Then let kids get started on their activity.

Questions for conversation while you work:

- Why do you think God doesn't just choose the best and easiest outcome for everything?
- What if you had control in this situation? Would you send your child to earth? Would you insist that he suffer and die? Would you raise him again from the dead? Why?
- How does God help us make decisions and survive tough things in our lives?

Get this stuff . . .

Cell phone. Tape.

Where's this going?

Kids apply the divine power of their Anti-Workbooks to re-do some situation, whether it's Biblical or in their lives, and consider why God made things the way they are.



4. Station ANTI-TV AW p. 109

Give kids 15 seconds to name as many TV shows as they can. Discuss the shows kids brought up. Talk about the characters in each show. What do they do? Why do they do it? What can we learn about real life from TV? What isn't so helpful about TV when it comes to real life?

Questions for conversation while you work:

- How does your TV show showcase what Jesus' life might have been like today?
- How is your show useful to viewers? What can they learn about Jesus from it?
- How is the way you are telling Jesus' story today different from how Jesus' story was told 1,000 years ago?
- What would happen in your TV show when Jesus died?
- How would Jesus' resurrection be portrayed in your show? Cliff hanger? Happy ending? Why?

Get this stuff . . .

Cameras that will film video.

Where's this going?

Kids create a TV show that showcases Jesus as fully human and fully God during any part of his life.

respond

15-20 minutes

Gather to share the different points of view kids have discovered and developed during the session.

Regroup

Draw a large, rough jigsaw puzzle on a piece of paper. Ask each kid to write on the puzzle one thing Jesus did that showcased who he was, and whether that thing showed Jesus as God, human, or both. Cut the puzzle apart and have kids put it back together while everyone shares what they wrote down.

Share

Invite kids to share their work and describe how and why they did it. Affirm those things you appreciate or find interesting and ask others to offer helpful observations.

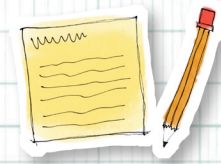
Questions for conversation:

- How was Jesus' life like a puzzle? What do we know about the "final" assembly of the puzzle of his life?
- What parts of the "puzzle" of Jesus' life are most attractive to you?
- What parts are confusing?
- Why do you think it was important for Jesus to experience the most human part of being human—death?

Send

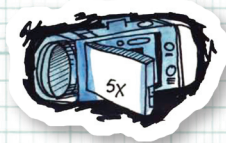
If you haven't already, place a clear vase in the center of a table, and make sure you have enough small clear containers for each kid to have one. For each lesson in the Jesus unit, you will continue to add new sand to the vase.

Fill all of your containers with white sand to represent Jesus' death. Go around the table and give each kid a chance to name a reason he or she feels it was important for Jesus to have experienced death. Give thanks to Jesus for his sacrifice as kids pour their white sand into the large vase.



Get this stuff . . .

Mural paper. Markers. Clear vase with straight sides. Small clear containers. White sand.



Capture it . . .

Use a digital camera, camcorder, scanner, web cam, or audio recorder to capture group conversations and individual pieces of work. Upload them to your online galleries, or ask kids to do so.