

Name _____ Date _____

Questions about Jesus

Use the following questions to help you determine what information about Jesus can be found in the Gospel you were assigned. Add any other information that you think might be supported by sources other than the Gospels.

- What information is given about Jesus' birth?
- Who were his parents?
- Where was he born?
- Were there any special events, historical, political, or astronomical, that occurred at the time of his birth?
- What information might help scholars determine the approximate year of his birth?
- Where did he grow up?
- What information is given about Jesus' life?
- Who were his friends and companions?
- What cities or regions did he visit?
- Where did he live?
- What did his friends call him?
- Did he have enemies? Who were they?
- What information is given about Jesus' Death?
- Who arrested Jesus?
- Of what was he accused?
- Who tried him? Who sentenced him to crucifixion?
- Where was he crucified?
- Who was with him?
- Who buried him? Where?
- Who first discovered that his tomb was empty?
- What explanations are given for the empty tomb?

The Infancy Narratives

Background

Matthew is writing for a largely Jewish Christian audience for whom he presents Jesus as the New Law Giver, the new Moses. Jesus is the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies. Matthew also needs to persuade his audience of the legitimacy of Gentile converts.

Luke is writing for a largely Gentile audience. There is less emphasis on the Law and Jewish ritual and more on Jesus' mercy and compassion for all people, especially women, the poor, the outcast, the sinner, and the afflicted.

Elements of the Gospels

Matthew's narrative includes the following elements:

- Mary and Joseph are Jesus' parents.
- Mary is found to be with child before she and Joseph are living together as husband and wife.
- An angel appears to Joseph in a dream, reassuring him about the holiness of the child and giving him Jesus' name.
- Jesus is born in Bethlehem of Judea.
- The magi come looking for him in Jerusalem, asking King Herod about him, because they have seen his star.
- The magi find Jesus in his parents' house in Bethlehem. They give him expensive gifts.
- Joseph, warned in a dream, takes Mary and Jesus to Egypt to escape Herod.
- Herod slaughters all the young boys in and around Bethlehem.
- The Holy Family returns from Egypt to Nazareth after Joseph has another dream in which he is told that "those who sought the child's life are dead."

Luke's narrative includes these important points:

- Mary and Joseph are Jesus' parents.
- Mary is visited by an angel who announces Jesus' conception, birth, and name to her.
- Jesus is born in a stable in Bethlehem of Judea.
- Angels appear to the shepherds to announce the birth of the Messiah.
- The shepherds find Jesus in the stable.
- Jesus is circumcised and presented in the Temple where both Simeon and Anna recognize him.
- The family returns to Nazareth where Jesus grows up.

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The Kingdom of God

Look up the following passages and match them to the truths about the Kingdom they reveal.

Luke 7:18–23

Matthew 18:1–5

Matthew 13:31–32

Matthew 13:33

Mark 4:26–29

Matthew 18:23–35

The Kingdom may start out small but it will soon grow.

The Kingdom, though small, will eventually transform the world.

The Kingdom exists in the person, deeds, and words of Jesus.

The Kingdom will grow even though we cannot see or explain how it is happening.

Forgiveness is an essential element of the Kingdom: We will be forgiven; therefore, we must be forgiving.

In order to enter the Kingdom, we must recognize our own need for God.

Complete your own analogies for the Kingdom of God.

The Kingdom of God is like _____

The Kingdom of God is like _____

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Intercessory Prayer Service

Invitation to Prayer:

The Lord's mercy is unending,
Filled with hope and trust in his forgiveness and love,
let us ask our merciful Father
to bless us with all that we need.

The students' intercessory prayers may use any one of the following forms:

That *someone* will know God's mercy as they *do something*, let us pray to the Lord.

For example, "That the homeless will know God's mercy as they find shelter and comfort from the winter's cold, let us pray to the Lord."

For *someone*, that God's mercy will *do something good* for them, let us pray to the Lord.

For example, "For people in prison, that God's mercy will grant them a spirit of repentance and hope for their future."

That those who *do something*, will find God's mercy *in something*, we pray to the Lord.

For example, "That those who find themselves unemployed will find God's mercy in words of hope and encouragement and in opportunities for work, we pray to the Lord."

That God's mercy will be a source of *something* for *someone*, let us pray to the Lord.

For example, "That God's mercy will be a source of compassion to those who are terminally ill."

That God, in his mercy, will *do something for someone*, let us pray to the Lord.

For example, "That God, in his mercy, will give comfort and hope to those who are grieving the loss of a loved one, let us pray to the Lord."

Concluding Prayer:

Lord God,
You are ever merciful to your people,
and your love is beyond words to describe.
Look upon your people with compassion,
and grant us the grace of your friendship,
through Jesus Christ, our Lord.
Amen.

(Based on a booklet called "Preparing the General Intercessions" by Michael Kwatera, O.S.B., published in 1996 by Liturgical Press.)

Scriptural Way of the Cross

Jesus prays in the garden.

Matthew 26:36–45; Mark 14:32–41; Luke 22:39–46

Jesus is betrayed and arrested.

Matthew 26:47–56; Mark 14:43–52; Luke 22:47–53; John 18:1–14

Jesus is condemned by the Sanhedrin.

Matthew 26:57–68; Mark 14:53–64; Luke 22:66–71; John 18:19–24

Peter denies knowing Jesus.

Matthew 26:69–75; Mark 14:66–72; Luke 22:54–62; John 18:15–18, 25–27

Jesus is condemned by Pilate.

Matthew 27:11–26; Mark 15:1–15; Luke 23:1–5, 13–25; John 18:33–40, 19:13–16

Jesus is scourged and crowned with thorns.

Matthew 27:27–31; Mark 15:16–19; John 19:1–3

Jesus takes up his cross.

John 19:16b–17

Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus.

Matthew 27:32; Mark 15:21; Luke 23:26

Jesus meets the weeping women.

Luke 23:27–31

Jesus is crucified.

Matthew 27:33–37; Mark 15:22–26; Luke 23:33; John 19:18–19

Jesus promises paradise to the crucified thief.

Luke 23:39–43

Jesus cares for his mother.

John 19:25–27

Jesus dies.

Matthew 27:45–50; Mark 15:33–37; Luke 23:44–46; John 19:28–30

Jesus is buried.

Matthew 27:57–61; Mark 15:42–47; Luke 23:50–53; John 19:38–42