



**is Jesus really
Divine?**

Study 3.03

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Overview

“Who do you say that I am?” Jesus posed this question to the disciples and received various answers. In the Gospel of Matthew the disciples responded, “Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets.”

Clearly people were confused. Unfortunately, times haven’t changed much. In modern culture, the divinity of Christ is constantly being challenged. A quick search on the Internet reveals movies, blogs, and books that are filled with wild claims about the truth of Jesus’ identity. One of the most common ideas is that “Jesus was a good guy who did nice things.” The majority of these claims are wrong and misguided. How do teens sort through this sea of mixed messages to determine what is truth and what is fiction? It requires God’s grace and our compassionate, consistent guidance. As committed followers of Jesus, we can help teens see the truth about Jesus’ divinity as revealed to us in the Scriptures and evidenced by His presence in our lives.

In today’s study, we’ll guide teens through a careful exploration of who God is, focusing on the person of Jesus and His divinity, and look at several Scripture passages to determine that Jesus’ claim to be God was real and radical. Then we’ll dive into C.S. Lewis’ famous “Lord, Liar, Lunatic Trilemma” to understand that Jesus is either Lord of all or He is not Lord at all. Finally, we’ll consider what it takes to fully commit to a life devoted to Jesus.

These topics address our intellectual and emotional relationship with Jesus. Some of your teens may “know” in their heads that Jesus is Lord, but have not experienced His presence and transformation in their hearts. Be sensitive to their current faith journey by allowing time for questions and doubts during small group discussions. Let your teens know that God isn’t angry when we question. Instead, He’s listening and providing answers through prayer, brothers and sisters in the faith, and the Holy Spirit.

Review the outline for the Bible study below. Use the time allotment as a guideline, as the length of time spent on each section will vary from group to group. Also, be sure not to spend too much time on the first few scenes! The most fruitful discussion will come during later scenes.

Time	Section	Section Overview
10 minutes	Dig In 	Introduce the session by examining popular images of Jesus.
5 minutes	Plant Seeds 	Read and reflect on a quote from H.G. Wells. Lead the opening prayer to set up the theme of this study.
45 minutes	Sink Roots 	In this section, you will: Scene 1—Explore how Jesus’ identity has been confused. Scene 2—Examine Jesus’ own claim that he is God. Scene 3—Consider C.S. Lewis’ logical argument that Jesus is Lord. Scene 4—Discover how Jesus’ divinity is provable.
15 minutes	Live It! 	Scene 5—Wrestle with the question “Who is Jesus?” and what this means for each one of us. Discuss what might prevent us from fully giving our lives to Christ.
5 minutes to review	Take It to Prayer 	Review the prayer application. Encourage your group to reflect on this meditation during the week.
5 minutes	Bear Fruit 	Summarize the main points from the study, and encourage teens to set resolutions for how they can live out what they have learned.



Dig In

10 minutes

Use this opening activity to draw your teens into the study. It should help create an engaging atmosphere for active learning and participation. You'll be setting the tone for the session—so have fun with it!



Supplies: Various images of Jesus

Who Am I?

SAY: In this study, we'll examine who God is by focusing on the person of Jesus and His Divinity. During our time together, we'll explore several Scripture passages to determine that Jesus' claim to be God was real and radical.

Let's get started by examining various popular images of Jesus throughout His life.

Present the images of Jesus to the teens. After giving them a few minutes to review, ask the following questions:

1. Which image do you think is the closest likeness to who Jesus really was? Why?
2. What different aspects do these images convey about the person of Christ?
3. What image do you identify with the most? What is it about the image that attracts you?

SAY: We all identify with Jesus in different ways. Some of us may see Him as a loving brother or as a strong Savior, while others wrestle with His claim to be God. It's normal to have questions about God, and we're not alone in our doubts. Even some of Jesus' closest followers struggled to see Him as Lord. Today we'll explore how we can answer the question Jesus posed to His disciples years ago: "Who do you say that I am?"

Before your group meets, gather about a dozen images of Jesus for teens to view. Look for images from Jesus' birth, ministry, miracles, and Passion to include all stages of His life. If you do not have images readily available, a quick search online will give you several options that you can print or bookmark on your computer. Then create a simple PowerPoint presentation with a soundtrack.

To get teens thinking about the concept of divinity, serve divinity fudge as a snack during your group time. Have teens brainstorm why this sweet treat would be named “divinity.” What makes it divine? How do most people understand the word “divine,” and what does it really mean?

Remember to check in with your teens about the Bear Fruit activities from the previous week. Did they try any of the suggested activities? Were any particularly challenging or did any questions come up?



Plant Seeds

10 minutes



READ: Matthew 16:13-15



Opening Prayer

PRAY: Jesus, we ask that you be with us today as we begin to look more deeply at who you are and how you have impacted the world. May our hearts be open to understanding the amazing gift of your divinity and love for us. Thank you for the gift of that love and for humbling yourself to become one of us, so that through you we may know how to live. Amen.

“I am a historian, I am not a believer, but I must confess as a historian that this penniless preacher from Nazareth is irrevocably the very center of history. Jesus Christ is easily the most dominant figure in all history.”—H.G. Wells, historian and author



Sink Roots

45 minutes

Scene 1

This clip will last about 1½ minutes.



The following is a summary of the video segment:

- Christ has left many varied impressions on humanity over time.
- Popular culture offers thousands of different images and interpretations of who Jesus is.
- Among believers and non-believers, much confusion exists about Jesus' true identity.
- Some people say Jesus is the same as any other religious leader.



When the video pauses, discuss the question on the screen.

1. What makes Jesus unique or different from other religious leaders out there?

Start the video to begin the next scene.

As a follow-up to this scene and study, have your group videotape man-on-the-street interviews and ask random people, "Who is Jesus?" Compare and contrast people's responses. Discuss why you think people have such varied responses to this question.

In Matthew 16:13-14, Jesus asks His disciples, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?" The disciples' responses are just as varied as the responses we hear today. The disciples responded to Jesus, "Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets."

Scene 2

This clip will last about 3 minutes.



The following is a summary of the video segment:

- Christianity, unlike other religions, is based on the person of Jesus.
- In no other religion in history did the messenger claim to be God.
- We know Jesus is God because of what He says about Himself in Scripture (e.g. John 11:25; John 8:58). Jesus tells us He is God and to believe in Him is to believe in God.
- Jesus' divinity claims were scandalous violations of Jewish Law.
- We can trust the Bible as the most reliable text in all of history.



When the video pauses, have teens discuss the questions on the screen:

1. What do you find most convincing about Jesus' claim to be God?
2. What's most challenging for you about Jesus' claim?

Start the video to begin the next scene.

There will be a future YDisciple Bundle that specifically addresses the reliability of the Scriptures.

“God said to Moses, ‘I AM WHO I AM’. And he said, ‘Say this to the people of Israel, I AM has sent me to you’” (Exodus 3:14). Jesus is claiming to be the same “I AM” (God) in John 8:58. “I am” was the most holy name for God. It reminded the Israelites of God’s absolute supremacy.

In John 10:30, Jesus’ claim of divinity is quite specific. Here He claims to be one with the Father, equal to the Father in His divine nature.

In John 14:6 and Matthew 11:27, Jesus claims to be the only way to God. No other religious leader, including Buddha, Mohammed or Confucius, made this claim.

If time allows, have teens discuss the filters they use to judge the reliability of modern day claims. On what basis do they accept or question people’s claims about themselves or various issues? How could these filters be used to argue the case for Christ?

Scene 3

This clip will last about 4 minutes.



The following is a summary of the video segment:

- Is Jesus' claim to be God true? C.S. Lewis said we have three options: Jesus is Lord, Liar, or Lunatic.
- The Liar scenario is flawed because telling lies didn't benefit Jesus. He could have lied when He was asked if He was King of the Jews; instead, he told the truth, resulting in His death on the cross.
- The Lunatic scenario is implausible because Jesus was kind and compassionate. He also had consistent and lucid answers to his followers' and enemies' questions.
- The Lord option is plausible because liar and lunatic are implausible.



READ: John 20:24–29

Have teens read the Scripture passage. Take time to discuss the passage briefly.

1. Are there situations where you've refused to believe something until you saw it with your own eyes? How do you relate most to Thomas' doubts?
2. Have you ever experienced a sudden change from a lack of faith to a strong sense of belief? If so, what brought about this change?

Tell teens they will explore C.S. Lewis' "Lord, Liar, Lunatic Argument" in this next segment. As teens listen to each argument, have them rate the plausibility of each argument using a scale of 1–5, with 1 being completely implausible and 5 completely plausible. Then have them discuss their ratings and explain the rationale for each one.

C.S. Lewis was a famous writer, poet, scholar of English literature, and Christian apologist. Lewis' argument of liar, lunatic, or lord refuted the claim that Jesus was a great moral teacher, but not God.



If you are not familiar with C.S. Lewis' Trilemma argument, there is more information available online in the supplemental resources for this study.

Start the video to begin the next scene.

In his book, Mere Christianity (p.55), Lewis writes, "I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: 'I'm ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don't accept His claim to be God.' That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic—on a level with the man who says he is a poached egg—or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God: or else a madman or something worse. You can shut Him up for a fool, you can spit at Him and kill Him as a demon; or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God. But let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to."

Scene 4

This clip will last about 4 minutes.



The following is a summary of the video segment:

- Jesus proved He is God by His actions—He performed numerous miracles. These acts aren't just recorded in the Bible; historical documents also speak about Jesus performing miracles.
- The Resurrection is the greatest proof of Jesus' divinity.
- When the disciples saw the risen Jesus, they were looking at God Himself.
- The story of Jesus' Crucifixion and Resurrection is amazing and unbelievable. Even the disciples doubted it, especially Thomas.
- Thomas needed to personally encounter the risen Jesus before recognizing Him as Lord and God.



Give teens a few minutes to write their answers to the following questions on their Teen Sheet. Then invite volunteers to share their answers.

1. **What do you think about the claims that Christ made? How can you know that Jesus' miracles are real?**
2. **Describe a time when you had a "Thomas moment"—when you knew Christ was God? What stands out most about that experience?**

Start the video to begin the next scene.

In John 14:11, Jesus tells His believers to believe in Him, based on the evidence of the miracles they have seen. Think about the miracles Jesus has performed in your life or in the world around you. How do they help you believe in Him?

“The truth of Jesus' divinity is confirmed by his Resurrection. He had said: ‘When you have lifted up the Son of man, then you will know that I am he.’ The Resurrection of the crucified one shows that he was truly ‘I AM’, the Son of God and God himself. So St. Paul could declare to the Jews: ‘What God promised to the fathers, this he has fulfilled to us their children by raising Jesus; as also it is written in the second psalm, ‘You are my Son, today I have begotten you.’ Christ’s Resurrection is closely linked to the Incarnation of God’s Son, and is its fulfillment in accordance with God’s eternal plan.” —CCC 653



Live It!

15 minutes

Scene 5

This final clip will last about 3 minutes.



The following is a summary of the video segment:

- Jesus wants each of us to decide “who He is” in our lives. He posed this question to the disciples and he poses it to us today.
- “Lord” expresses the recognition of the Divine Mystery of Jesus.
- We come to the same point in our lives as Thomas did—we know that Jesus is Divine, but what does that mean? We have a choice to make.
- When Jesus is Lord of your life, you’re called to something higher. It’s a hard choice, but when you make it, it will change your life.



Give teens a few minutes to answer the following questions, and then have them share and discuss their answers.

- 1. What prevents you from taking your relationship with Jesus seriously and truly giving your life to Him? Why is this an obstacle between you and Jesus?**
- 2. What concrete things can you do this week to more fully give your life to Christ?**
- 3. How can the members of this group hold you accountable to do the things you just mentioned?**

“The title ‘Son of God’ signifies the unique and eternal relationship of Jesus Christ to God his Father: He is the only Son of the Father (John 1:14, 18; 3:16, 18); he is God himself (John 1:1). To be a Christian, one must believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God (Acts 8:37; 1 John 2:23).”—CCC 454

Some teens may not be ready to choose Jesus as their Lord and Savior. Be sensitive to this delicate situation, and create a safe space for teens to discuss where they are at this moment in their faith journey. The grace you extend to them now will help form their future decision to become part of the Body of Christ.



Take It to Prayer

5 Minutes

This is an activity Teens can do during the coming week to draw all that they have discussed in this session into an experience of prayer for themselves. Encourage them to take time during the next week to do this prayer experience.



Say: Find a quiet spot to reflect on all that you learned about the divinity of Jesus. Then pray St. Francis of Assisi's prayer in praise of God, given to Brother Leo. Brother Leo was St. Francis' confessor and faithful friend, who supported Francis through times of anxiety, insomnia, doubt, and fear. This prayer is St. Francis' only prayer of true thanksgiving, worship, and praise. It has no mention of sin or its outcomes. As you pray this prayer, rejoice with St. Francis. Celebrate your belief in a God that possesses all these attributes — the God you call Lord and Savior.

Be sure to take time before this study to try the exercise yourself. Your personal reflection will inspire the teens to experience the prayer on their own.

“By natural reason man can know God with certainty, on the basis of his works. But there is another order of knowledge, which man cannot possibly arrive at by his own powers: the order of divine Revelation. Through an utterly free decision, God has revealed himself and given himself to man. This he does by revealing the mystery, his plan of loving goodness, formed from all eternity in Christ, for the benefit of all men. God has fully revealed this plan by sending us his beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit.”—CCC 50

St. Francis of Assisi’s prayer in praise of God, given to Brother Leo

*You are holy, Lord, the only God,
and your deeds are wonderful.
You are strong.
You are great.
You are the Most High.
You are Almighty.
You, Holy Father, are King of heaven and earth.
You are Three and One, Lord God, all Good.
You are Good, all Good, supreme Good.*

*Lord God, living and true.
You are love. You are wisdom.
You are humility. You are endurance.
You are rest. You are peace.
You are joy and gladness.
You are justice and moderation.
You are all our riches, and you suffice for us.
You are beauty.
You are gentleness.
You are our protector.
You are our guardian and defender.
You are our courage. You are our haven and our hope.
You are our faith, our great consolation.
You are our eternal life, Great and Wonderful Lord,
God Almighty, Merciful Savior.*



Bear Fruit

5 Minutes



Supplies: 1-gallon glass jar, 10 to 12 fist-sized rocks, 1-gallon resealable bag of sand, and a pan

SAY: When we make a decision to seek Jesus as Lord of our lives, it changes our lives. Sometimes we find that it isn't always easy to put Jesus first.

Think of a list of things that are important in your lives right now. Such as a sport, a girlfriend/boyfriend, a job, or getting good grades.

Allow one minute for teens to come up with a list.

SAY: We're going to do a little experiment. I want you to call out some of the things that are important in your lives today. As you name things, I'm going to pour sand into this jar to represent your lists.

(Take answers until all of the sand is in the jar.)

Wow! You all have a lot of things going on in your lives that are important. Now I'd like you to take another minute and think about the things you need to do every day to make sure you're following Jesus and putting Him first in your lives, such as prayer, Bible reading, serving others, or attending Mass.

Allow one minute.

SAY: Okay, as you say the things you came up with, I'm going to place these rocks in the jar.

(For every idea, place a rock in the jar, they won't all fit into the jar.)

If we're not careful, the things that are important in our lives quickly take up our time and energy, and then it appears our lives don't have time or space to put Jesus first.

(Take out the rocks and pour out the sand into the pan. Then start placing the rocks back in the jar until they're all in the jar. Pour the sand in afterward. Do this as you talk.)

But if we make a decision to have Jesus be Lord of our life and we put Him first every day, our lives fill with Jesus first, and the other stuff that's important will quickly and easily fall into place. As Jules said in our video today, when Jesus is Lord of your life, you're called to something higher. It's a hard choice, but when you make it, it will change your life.

Practice this ahead of time to determine the exact amount of sand to use.

READ: “The title ‘Son of God’ signifies the unique and eternal relationship of Jesus Christ to God His Father: He is the only Son of the Father; He is God Himself. To be Christian, one must believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God” (CCC 454).



Take a few minutes to see what the teens need prayers for this week. As you close the study with a time of prayer, lift up their personal needs and intentions.

PRAY: Heavenly Father, thank you for Your Son, Jesus, and the eternal relationship we can have with Him. Help us to choose Him as our “Lord and our God” today and from this day forward. Guide us as we grow stronger in our faith and live as devoted examples of your peace, strength, and grace in this world. Amen.

Remind teens about the Bear Fruit ideas on their Teen Sheet. Encourage them to try the activities during the upcoming week.



Bonus Activity

Mural of Miracles

READ: Jesus says, “Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father in me; or else believe me for the sake of the works themselves.” (John 14:11)

Create a group mural that depicts the miracles Jesus performed in the Bible. Check out a few of these passages for ideas:

John 2:1–11

Matthew 14:15–21; Mark 6:35–44; Luke 9:12–17; John 6:5–13

Matthew 15:32–38; Mark 8:1–9

Matthew 14:22–33; Mark 6:45–52; John 6:16–21

Matthew 8:23–27; Mark 4:37–41; Luke 8:22–25

Matthew 21:18–20; Mark 11:12–14, 20–24

As you draw and paint, talk with your group about this quote from Jesus: “You believe because you can see me. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe.” (John 20:29)

Then talk about these questions:

- 1. Why do some people have to see to believe, while others believe without seeing?**
- 2. Which type of person are you and why?**
- 3. How can the members of this group help you believe more completely?**



Bear Fruit



Here are some extra activities for your group to do later in the week. You may want to try these activities so that you can discuss them with teens next time you are together.

ADDITIONAL BEAR FRUIT IDEAS

A Letter to Jesus

In *Reflections on the Psalms*, C.S. Lewis wrote, “It is in the process of being worshipped that God communicates His presence to men.”

Listen to the worship song “Jesus Messiah” by Chris Tomlin or “We Love You Jesus” by Shane and Shane. Reflect on the lyrics and images that come to mind as you hear the song. After the music stops, allow a few seconds of silence for contemplation.

Then write a letter to a friend explaining who Jesus is to you. Consider your intellectual beliefs about Jesus (what’s in your head) and your spiritual affirmations and experiences of Jesus (what’s in your heart) as you write the letter.

When you finish, mail the letter to your friend, or keep it in your Bible to read periodically. Make note of how your relationship with Jesus changes over time.

Who Do You Say I Am?

Read the “I Am” statements of Jesus as found in the Gospel of John.

- “I am the bread of life.” (John 6:35)
- “I am the light of the world.” (John 8:12)
- “I am the door.” (John 10:9)
- “I am the good shepherd.” (John 10:11)
- “I am the Resurrection.” (John 11:25)
- “I am the way, and the truth, and the life.” (John 14:6)
- “I am the true vine.” (John 15:1)

Now read Mother Teresa’s quote below. In this quote, Mother Teresa proclaims who the “I Am” is to her.

“I follow Christ: Jesus is my God. Jesus is my Spouse. Jesus is my Life. Jesus is my only Love. Jesus is my All in All. Jesus is my Everything. Because of this I am never afraid.”—Mother Teresa

Now write or draw your responses to Jesus’ “I Am” statements. For extra impact, go to Wordle.net and create a graphic poster using your words. (Wordle creates images out of words.) Post your graphic on your Facebook page, email it to the members of your group, or print it and use it as a bookmark for your Bible.