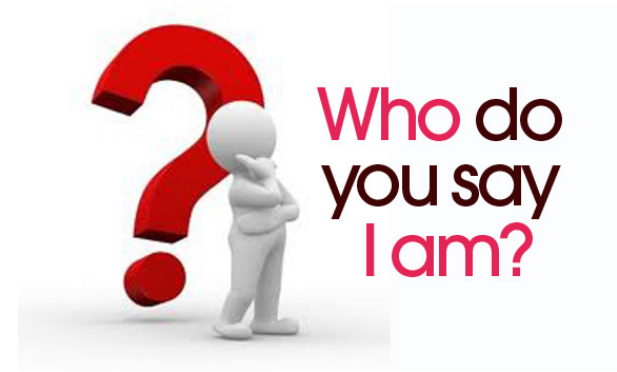
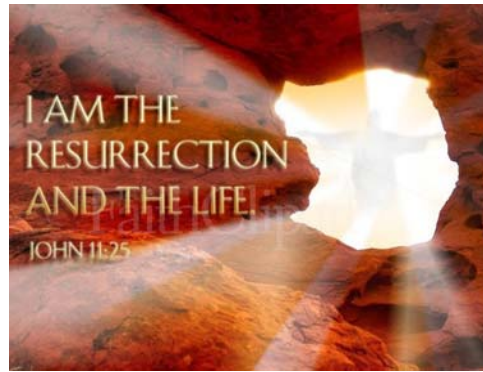


**Who do People say that I AM?
(The “I Am” Sayings in John’s Gospel)
Year Group: Y5 & Y6**

**A Suggested “Christianity School Development” Unit
for Cambridgeshire**



Materials to Support The Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education in Cambridgeshire

Please note there is an Agreed Syllabus Core Unit with the same title, but it covers a different area of Jesus' life and ministry – the two units can together be one term's work.

For the Teacher - The Christian beliefs and teaching in this Unit

This unit looks particularly at the titles of Jesus in John's Gospel which are known as the "I am" sayings.

Jesus is both an historical figure living at the time of the Roman occupation of Palestine and the second person of the Trinity, in other words, both fully human and fully divine - the many titles that Jesus has been given (some by himself, some by his followers) are an attempt to unpack this mystery in an understandable way.

The Jews of Jesus' time were waiting for a promised **Messiah** to bring in the Kingdom of God. They expected this to be a political leader, a military conqueror who would throw the Romans out of the land of Israel and usher in peace. Jesus is seen as that prophesied leader (Messiah is the same title as "Christ") but he tried to teach that the Messiah would not be a political leader in the sense that his fellow Jews were anticipating. In fact Jesus' own peaceful teaching on issues such as wealth and poverty and his obvious concern for the oppressed did appear revolutionary in their context, and ultimately he was brought to execution on the cross for claiming to be the Messiah – a title he had avoided.

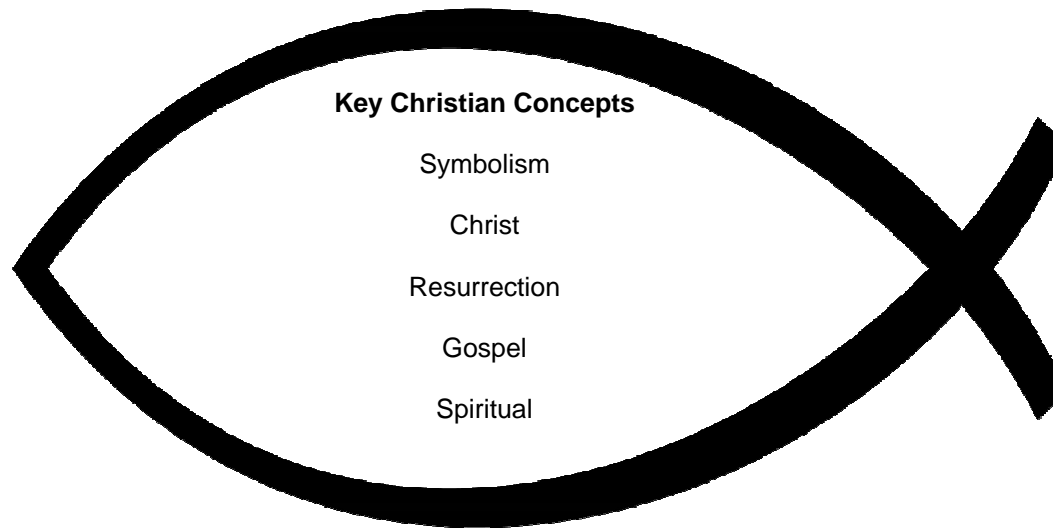
The title Jesus appears to have preferred when speaking of himself is "**Son of Man**", a description which can just mean "man" but also refers back to Biblical passages such as Daniel chp 7 vss 13f : "I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one shall not end." He uses this title particularly when talking with his disciples and when describing how his mission is to serve others and to suffer and die.

The "**I Am**" sayings of John's Gospel are rather different from these two more commonly used titles. To start with, they are an indication that

Jesus is God because “I Am” is the actual meaning of the word “Yahweh” which is the Hebrew name for God. On hearing Jesus use this expression of himself, the listeners would have been reminded of the story in Exodus chp 3 where Moses encounters God through the burning bush and asks Him His name – God’s answer is “I Am who I Am”. This is supported by another statement in John chp 8 vs 58: “Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I Am”. The “I Am” sayings are extremely popular with Christians as the metaphorical titles help them come to grips with different aspects of Jesus’ character. They are also very visual and are motifs which can be seen frequently in Christian art. The seven titles are:

- The bread of life chp 6 vs 35
- The light of the world chp 8 vs 12
- The door chp 10 vs 9f
- The good shepherd chp 10 vs 14
- The resurrection and the life chp 11 vs 25
- The way the truth and the life chp 14 vs 6
- The true vine chp 15 vs 1f.

Each one of the “I Am” sayings shows the importance of Jesus for the believer (e.g. feeding with spiritual teaching; showing the way to God; nurturing; bringing eternal life) and with each description it is important to ask the question “how does this relate to an individual Christian’s life?”



UNIT TITLE: “Who do People Say that I Am?” (The “I Am” sayings in John’s Gospel)

Key Question: How can metaphors help us to understand people better?

Learning Objectives	Suggested Teaching and Learning	Learning Outcomes (Can be written as success criteria)	Points to note
<p>To understand how metaphors can help us understand aspects of people’s characters, including the nature of Jesus</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Enjoy exploring together the concept of a kenning. Think about how kennings say something important about the essential nature or attributes of a person.– write a kenning description of how you would like people to think of you (now or in the future). Alternatively talk about metaphors and have each pupil put three secret personal “I am” sayings on a piece of paper. Put them all in a hat and draw them out in turn to guess who each one is. o Brainstorm kennings for Jesus based on what you have discovered about him so far (plenty of web examples available to act as stimuli). o Consider whether the kenning /metaphor gives a picture of the whole person - is there more to say about Jesus, <i>or you</i>, than you can say in a kenning? How literally should you take the metaphors? How helpful are metaphors in explaining people’s attitudes or character? Remember this discussion as you look at some of the “I Am” sayings from John’s Gospel. o Begin a working wall on attributes of Jesus – continue this as the topic progresses. 	<p>I can use simple metaphors to demonstrate what I already know about Jesus Level 3</p> <p>I can use metaphorical vocabulary to demonstrate what I understand Christians believe about Jesus Level 4</p> <p>I can use a variety of extended metaphors to ask and answer questions about the special nature of Jesus</p>	<p>http://shslboyd.pbworks.com/f/Kennings.pdf for information on kennings</p> <p>Jesus related kennings at: http://www.vision4life.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2011/01/Easter-Kennings.pdf</p> <p>http://stranzblog.blogspot.co.uk/2010/09/kennings-for-fun-for-reflection-for.html</p> <p>http://www.vision4life.org.uk/index.php/bible-year/desserts/kennings-and-cookies/extra-kennings/</p>

What do we want from working with this question?

Pupils to realise the limitations of language when talking about Jesus, but also to begin to engage with religious imagery.

Key Question: If Jesus is the Good Shepherd how does he care for his sheep?

Learning Objectives	Suggested Teaching and Learning	Learning Outcomes (Can be written as success criteria)	Points to note
<p>To understand how Jesus can be seen as a “Good Shepherd” and investigate the Christian shepherd / sheep metaphor</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brainstorm the role of a modern shepherd in Britain and find photographs of other countries where more traditional herding still takes place, e.g. India, Afghanistan, for comparison. Investigate verses from the Bible to deconstruct the role and hard work of a shepherd in Biblical times: Psalm 23; Isaiah chp 40 vs 11; Luke chp15 vss 3-7. In pairs create a set of instructions about how to be a good shepherd, using the Bible readings as a checklist. Read together John chp 10 vs 11 “I am the good shepherd” – brainstorm the question “If Jesus is the good shepherd, who are the sheep?” You may find https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gkzC7lbC5Ns helpful. as it talks about the concept of the Good Shepherd. Read a story about Jesus showing care for people e.g. Feeding of the Five Thousand – Luke chp 9 vss 10-17. Remind each other of stories which similarly show Jesus’ concern for people (e.g. miracles). Is the care limited to physical issues or problems? (no!) Create two comparison pictorials “What makes a good shepherd?” / “Why is Jesus a good shepherd?” making direct contrasts where possible e.g. physical food and spiritual food. You may need to involve a local Christian to help explain the comparisons effectively. 	<p>I can describe the role of a shepherd and link this to some of the things people say about Jesus Level 3</p> <p>I can use the Bible to explain why Jesus is known as a “Good Shepherd” and describe how this is applied by Christians to their relationship with him Level 4</p> <p>I can express my own views about how the description of Jesus as the Good Shepherd supports and inspires Christians Level 5</p>	<p>Each of the following four key questions relates to one of the “I Am” sayings of Jesus in John’s Gospel – there are seven sayings in all - the other three are the Light of the World (chp 8 vs 12), the Gate (chp 10 vs 9) and the Way, the Truth and the Life (chp 14 vs 6)</p> <p>John chp 10 vs 11 is just one verse from a much longer passage (vss1-17) which pupils can work with – but it is complicated.</p> <p>For teachers http://www.gotquestions.org/Good-Shepherd.html</p>

What do we want from working with this question?

Pupils to think about Jesus’ spiritual and physical care for his followers.

Key Question: How does a Christian's relationship with Jesus help them to live their life?

Learning Objectives	Suggested Teaching and Learning	Learning Outcomes (Can be written as success criteria)	Points to note
<p>To understand the importance of a close relationship with Jesus for Christians</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Look together at images / diagrams of vines and remind each other of the anatomy of plants and how once a branch or fruit is separated from the plant it loses its life force and starts to decay. In groups, create posters of a vine and use John chp 15 vss1-2, 4-5, 7-11 to label and explain the imagery of Jesus as the True Vine and Christian believers as branches. Relate to your knowledge of plants and discuss how to describe the "sap" which runs from the rootstock of the vine to the Christian branches. Invite a Christian visitor to examine the posters and talk with pupils about how their relationship to Jesus the True Vine manifests itself in their lives. Complete the posters using the additional information. 	<p>I can describe how a Christian's relationship with Jesus impacts on their life Level 3</p> <p>I can show my understanding of how the picture of Jesus as the True Vine inspires Christians to live their lives Level 4</p> <p>I can pose questions and suggest answers about the relationship between Christians and Jesus, based on the metaphor of the True Vine Level 5</p>	<p>http://swirlingnotions.wordpress.com/2007/06/08/anatomy-of-a-vine/</p> <p>For teachers: http://www.gotquestions.org/true-vine.html</p>

What do we want from working with this question?

Pupils to understand that for Christians it is important to have a permanent ongoing relationship with Jesus, without which they feel "spiritually dead".

Key Question: What does the story of Lazarus (John chp 11) teach us about Jesus?

Learning Objectives	Suggested Teaching and Learning	Learning Outcomes (Can be written as success criteria)	Points to note
<p>To be able to use a Gospel miracle story to understand a key teaching about Jesus</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read the story of the raising of Lazarus; in groups freeze frame key stages of the story and photograph each stage to be used to create a storyboard. (Musical variant at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZS6W-aaOAZE or a ten minute acted version at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DV5pPJsRgV4) Use a conscience alley to ask and answer the question – “Should Jesus bring Lazarus back to life – why / why not?” How do you think Lazarus would feel to be snatched back from death (this could be a creative writing opportunity). Read together John chp 11 vs 25-26 where Jesus says “I am the resurrection and the life.....” – is he just talking about Lazarus (or Lazarus and himself)? What do these verses mean for Christians today? Use your storyboard as the backdrop on which to write comments showing what this story tells us about Jesus (assessment). 	<p>I can describe what happens in the story of Lazarus and can ask questions about people’s responses to the miracle Level 3</p> <p>I can use my understanding of the story of Lazarus to explain beliefs about Jesus and resurrection Level 4</p> <p>I can use my understanding of the story of Lazarus to explain beliefs about Jesus and resurrection and to discuss how this impacts on Christians lives Level 5</p>	<p>http://dramaresource.com/strategies/conscience-alley</p> <p>For teachers http://www.gotquestions.org/resurrection-and-life.html</p> <p>There are a number of poems about the dramatic story of the raising of Lazarus. David Constantine’s poem is probably too complex to use with your class– but if you haven’t read it, look at it for yourself, it could inspire you for the discussion or even to write similar pieces yourselves. http://www.stmaryn16.org/pages/prospect/april02/a7.html</p>

What do we want from working with this question?

Pupils to understand that Christians believe Jesus has power over death.

Key Question: What is the best way to answer Jesus' question: "Who do people say that I am?"

Learning Objectives	Suggested Teaching and Learning	Learning Outcomes (Can be written as success criteria)	Points to note
<p>To understand that nobody can claim to know everything about Jesus</p> <p>To increase your understanding of Jesus from investigating Biblical titles</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read Luke chp 9 vss 18-22, stopping to ask what pupils anticipate the answers to Jesus' two questions will be. What would Jesus' disciples be saying / tweeting today as they tried to work out the answer to his question? Watch https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HAOlyPKYleg together and comment on what you see and hear! <p>So.....Who do YOU say that I am?</p>	<p>I can describe Jesus in different ways using the Bible Level 3</p> <p>I can link together different descriptions of Jesus to try to explain who he is and relate this to Christian beliefs Level 4</p> <p>I can use the titles of Jesus in the Bible to explain who he is in Christian beliefs and how Christians relate to him. Level 5</p>	<p>The general public appear to have believed that Jesus was a reincarnation of a dead spiritual hero (John the Baptist or a prophet) – his disciples, who were close to him, are coming to the conclusion that he is the Messiah or Christ promised by God.</p>

What do we want from working with this question?
Pupils to realise they do not know all there is to know about Jesus but to be able to begin to explain his importance to Christians and that he is more than simply a leader or teacher.