
“Who Do You Say That I AM?”

Children’s Sunday School Lesson
Matthew 16:13-20



Who do YOU say I am? Sunday School Suggestions For Identifying Jesus as the Messiah

For kids (and adults) who grow up with a “Jesus is the Sunday School answer” sort of mentality, the awe and wonder of Jesus Christ can unfortunately become, in a sense, mundane or commonplace. Additionally, we are often surrounded by conflicting messages or misplaced attitudes about who Jesus is: just a person? A historical figure? Perhaps even a lunatic? It is critical to communicate to children that Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah and Son of God. We acknowledge and love who He is, and our natural reaction should also be explaining and sharing that with those around us.

Lesson focus: In this lesson, students will discuss who Jesus was on Earth, and who He is now, reigning in our hearts. The emphasis should also feature a Trinitarian focus on Jesus as one with God (as confusing and mind-boggling as that can be for a 6-year-old). The story sees Jesus promising Peter that he will be the “rock” foundation of the church, and we recognize that Christ is our rock! We acknowledge Him as Savior, Messiah, Redeemer, Holy One, Son of God and one with God. This lesson will remind students that we not only understand who Jesus is, we also want to share Him with others.

Passage: Matthew 16:13-20

Target Audience: Kindergarten-6th grade (or whoever you might have around!)

Materials Needed: Construction paper, decorative materials, pictures of celebrities and various jobs, rocks, rock candy or ingredients, popsicle sticks, Bible (all optional, depending which activities you choose to use—except for the Bible, you need that for sure).



Lesson Introduction and Game Activities

Lesson Opening: This lesson involves identifying someone (Jesus), and lends itself to some potential openers that also look for identification clues.

Here are some activities to get kids thinking...(select the best ones for your audience and age group):

- Who am I? Have students identify a specific job or role, based on a uniform or hat that someone in that position might wear.
- “Guess Who?” It’s always a classic game...make your own version with note cards and Bible characters!
- What is it? Look at small pictures of items and try to identify what they are from just a tiny glimpse of a bigger picture.
- Look at a driver’s license, and talk about how it is proof of who someone is.
- Who is that? Look at baby pictures of celebrities or historical figures, and try to identify who they are.
- Who is Jesus? Come up with a list of as many describing words for Jesus as you can think of, and write them down on a white board or large sheet of paper.

Explain that today we’ll look at a Gospel passage that talks about who Jesus is and what He means to us. Jesus asked His disciples who they thought He was, and confirmed that He was the long-awaited Messiah. This must have been wonderful for them, and is something we know, too!

Ask: Who is Jesus? What would you tell someone who asked you this question?



“Who do you say that I AM?” Bible Lesson for Kids from Matthew 16:13-20

Bible Lesson: As always, how you choose to experience the story will vary according to the ages and abilities of your children (and how many are participating). This passage is pretty straight forward, but feel free to share it through a skit or “popcorn reading” if preferred.

When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say the Son of Man is?”

¹⁴ They replied, “Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” -Matthew 16:13-14

When Jesus was alive, people often speculated and sometimes got confused about who He was. In this passage, Jesus asked His disciples who they thought He was. They might have been confused, and answered that they had heard some different stories of who He might be. Even now, some people have varying thoughts on who Jesus is.

Ask: Have you ever heard people say things about Jesus that didn’t sound true? What kinds of ideas do some people have about who He was and what He did on earth?

Remind children that people had been waiting for God’s promised savior for many years. Unfortunately, when Jesus came, a lot of people didn’t recognize Him as the Son of God. Jesus is sort of “quizzing” His disciples. By this point, they should realize who He is, but they’ve also likely heard other people talking about Him, and might wonder what the truth is. So Jesus makes the question more specific...

“But what about you?” he asked. “Who do you say I am?”

¹⁶ Simon Peter answered, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.” -Matthew 16:15-16

Here comes Peter again! We can usually count on Him for a fast and forthcoming answer. In this case, He acknowledges Jesus as the Messiah, savior and redeemer, Son of the living God. Maybe it was that whole water-walking thing, but Peter has been clearly convinced. And Jesus commends him for this observation.



Jesus replied, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven. ¹⁸ And I tell you that you are Peter,^[b] and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades^[c] will not overcome it. ¹⁹ I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be^[d] bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be^[e] loosed in heaven.” ²⁰ Then he ordered his disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah. -Matthew 16:17-20

Jesus acknowledges that Simon Peter has hit on the main point. He has not seen who Jesus is because of what someone else said, but because of what God clearly announced. Jesus calls this disciple “Peter”, which means “rock,” and promises to build the church on faith like his. Peter will, in fact, be critical in the life of the church!

And for us? We, of course, know who Jesus is, and what He did. We can and should rejoice in that knowledge. He is the fulfillment of God’s promises to us. The Son of God, and God Himself. We can have utter faith in that, and want to tell other people about Him, too!

Ask: How can you tell others about Jesus and who He is?

Close with a prayer thanking God for His Son Jesus, the Messiah. Ask for trust and help as we continue to worship Jesus and to tell others about His work and His amazing love.

Sunday School Craft Ideas

Crafts: Consider a few crafts connected to the idea of Peter as “rock” of the church, or crafts that involve identity:

- Make a collage representing attributes of Christ (love, sacrifice, servanthood, etc.); or make a collage of things that students enjoy and ways they describe themselves.
- Decorate large rocks with sharpies, puffy paint, or other materials.
- At home, build a small rock garden or dry river bed.



More Learning Activities & Ideas

Follow up/Additional Activities

- Identify people that need to hear about Jesus and who He is. This might be people in your area, or far away. Pray for them, and look for ways to help or talk to others about God.
- Look in the Bible for ways that Jesus described Himself, as well as ways that Prophets or others spoke about Him. The amazing miracle of God's word is that every story connects back to Christ! Look for Jesus in Old Testament stories (this activity is great for older students).
- God wants all to know Him...write a letter to an overseas missionary and thank them for their work in spreading the Gospel.
- Just as Peter was the "rock", make some delicious rock candy! Simple recipes are available online, and several variations are possible.





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