



# GODCONNECTS™

A COURSE IN CHRISTIANITY



[LHM.ORG/GODCONNECTS](http://LHM.ORG/GODCONNECTS)

DISCUSSION GUIDE - SESSION 5

## USING THE DISCUSSION GUIDE

This is an interactive study guide. We designed it to be flexible so it will fit both group and personal use. It includes links, which provide extra information on Internet sites where you can browse and dig as deep as you want.

A PDF discussion guide containing all 12 sessions, as well as single session guides, are available at [www.lhm.org/godconnects](http://www.lhm.org/godconnects).

To find the discussion guide on the DVD, load it into your computer (not your DVD player). You can right click the menu. Push "Open" instead of "Play" and you will pull up a list of files, which includes the discussion guide.



### ABOUT US

*God Connects* is a ministry of Lutheran Hour Ministries (LHM). As a Christian outreach ministry, LHM supports churches worldwide, producing Christian radio and TV programming for broadcast, Internet and print communications, dramas, music, and outreach materials—all designed to reach unchurched people in the United States and more than 30 countries around the world. Lutheran Hour Ministries' flagship program, **The Lutheran Hour**, airs weekly on more than 1,400 stations and the American Forces Network. To learn more about this long-running Gospel program and LHM's other ministry resources, go to [www.lhm.org](http://www.lhm.org).

### CONTACT US

We would love to connect to you. Call us at **1-855-JOHN316 (1-855-564-6316)** E-mail to [lhmresponse@lhm.org](mailto:lhmresponse@lhm.org).

# INTRODUCTION

*GodConnects: In a difficult and confusing world, God is connecting to you!*

## God, are You there?

Everyone, at some point, asks this question. It can come at moments of sterile reflection or in times of deep despair. "God, if You are there, why don't You show Yourself to me?" In this confusing world where authenticity is so elusive, it seems like we cannot connect to God.

We could not connect to God, but the good news is that God connects with us. He has been doing this from the beginning in amazing ways. The most direct way God connected to us is when He became one of us in Jesus Christ. When Jesus was on this earth, He was the very revelation of God as He taught and healed and loved.

Then to restore our connection to God which had been shattered because of sin, on the cross, Jesus willingly paid the penalty for our sins—in His own death! This is the most authentic, startling and determined love the world could have ever imagined.

Now God connects to us by revealing Himself in the Bible. This God-given book has an amazing story. It tells of God's constant and compassionate work to restore our relationship with Him.

*GodConnects* wants to share that story with you. *GodConnects* is a course that tells this unique, unequalled story. Whether you do not believe in Christ as Savior or want to deepen your faith in Him, as you delve into *GodConnects* you will explore what the Bible says about this remarkably loving God, and how this love gives direction and meaning to your life today and forever.

On this website, you can explore these questions of faith. You will find videos and other up-to-date media that take advantage of today's technology.

**So let's get started ....**

# WHO IS JESUS CHRIST?

## Session 5: A Course on Christianity

**Opening Prayer:** Heavenly Father, in Your boundless love You sent Your Son Jesus Christ as our Savior. Teach me all He did to win my salvation that I may always put my trust in Him. In Jesus' Name I pray. Amen.

### 5.1. WHO IS JESUS CHRIST?

Jesus is the Second Person of the Trinity, one God with the Father who created all things and the Holy Spirit who gives us faith. Jesus is our Savior; the only Person who could meet the requirements needed to pay the price for our sins. He is the Son of God and the Savior promised by God from the time Adam and Eve first sinned. While fully God, He also became fully man. History agrees that Jesus was a Galilean Jew born a little more than 2,000 years ago. Even most historians agree He was a teacher or a prophet, who was eventually crucified by order of the Roman governor Pontius Pilate. However, as is so often the case, there is more to the story.

### 5.2. HOW COULD JESUS BE BOTH A HUMAN AND GOD?

According to Colossians 2:9, Jesus was God in human form: "For in Him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily." To us this may seem complicated, if not impossible. It is indeed a miracle our minds cannot fully grasp—like the Trinity. This is how the angel Gabriel (<http://cyclopedia.lcms.org/display.asp?t1=G&word=GABRIEL>) explained it to Mary, who would become His mother:

*The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the Child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God. ... For nothing will be impossible with God.* (Luke 1:35, 37)

### 5.3. HOW DO WE KNOW THAT JESUS IS TRUE GOD?

The Bible clearly describes Jesus as God. The apostle John identifies Him this way:

*And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding, that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.* (1 John 5:20)

When the angel Gabriel announced the coming birth of Christ to Mary, he described Him using the following words:

*And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His Name JESUS. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end.* (Luke 1:31-33)

This is reiterated by the angels when they proclaimed Jesus' birth to the shepherds in Luke's account of the birth of Christ:

*And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord."* (Luke 2:10-11)

Jesus also possesses the divine characteristics of God. He is eternal (see John 1:1-2), all-powerful, all-knowing, changeless and without sin. Jesus also demonstrated His divine power through the many miracles He performed, including the changing of water into wine, healing many sick and leprous people, casting out demons, calming a stormy sea, feeding thousands of people, and raising people from the dead.

#### THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

- Describe some benefits that come from being connected with family or friends in high places?
- Discuss the infinitely better benefits of being connected with God Himself through His Son.

#### DIGGING DEEPER

- Did Jesus Ever Say He was God? (audio, <http://media.lhm.org/lutheranhour/mp3s/QA8037PD.mp3>)

## 5.4. HOW DO WE KNOW THAT JESUS IS TRUE MAN?

Once again, we find confirmation of Jesus' human nature in the Bible. Jesus was born to a human mother with a human body and a soul. As He grew from childhood into adulthood, Jesus experienced all the same emotions, feelings and experiences other people do. He felt hunger and thirst; He was tired; He slept; Jesus cried when He was sad; He got angry; and finally Jesus suffered and died.

### THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

- Had Jesus not experienced life as a human, how much more difficult would it be to share your life experiences with Him?
- How does it change your perspective on Jesus to realize He has experienced this life "up close and personal"?

### DIGGING DEEPER

- [What Did Jesus Not Know?](http://media.lhm.org/lutheranhour/mp3s/QA7547PD.mp3) (audio, <http://media.lhm.org/lutheranhour/mp3s/QA7547PD.mp3>)
- [Did God Have to Become Man to Save Us?](http://blogs.lcms.org/2011/simple-12-2011) (article) (<http://blogs.lcms.org/2011/simple-12-2011>)
- [Jesus "Silent" Years](http://media.lhm.org/lutheranhour/mp3s/QA7606PD.mp3) (audio, <http://media.lhm.org/lutheranhour/mp3s/QA7606PD.mp3>)

## 5.5. AS TRUE MAN, HOW WAS JESUS' HUMAN NATURE DIFFERENT THAN OURS?

While Jesus was born to a human mother, He did not have a human father. Thus He did not inherit the sinful nature we received from our sinful father and mother. He was conceived without sin. While announcing the coming birth of Jesus to Mary, the angel Gabriel explains to her how she will come to be with child despite being a virgin.

*And the angel answered her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the Child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God." (Luke 1:35)*

Another major difference between Christ and every other person who ever lived was the fact that Jesus lived without ever committing a sin. This is critically important because by living without sin, Jesus fulfilled the Law and therefore did not need to die. The fact He suffered and died was a choice He made so He could take our place. This is explained in the words of when Paul writes,

*For our sake He (God) made Him (Christ) to be sin who knew no sin, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God. (2 Corinthians 5:21)*

His death gave us life!

*But He was pierced for our transgressions; He was crushed for our iniquities; upon Him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with His wounds we are healed. (Isaiah 53:5)*

### THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

- In this life we are used to our "heroes" tripping and falling. What reassurance does it bring to know Jesus never slipped up?

## 5.6. WHY WAS IT NECESSARY FOR JESUS TO BE BOTH MAN AND GOD?

Jesus needed to be fully man so He could obey the Law in our place. Our sinfulness prevents us from being able to perfectly follow the Law as God requires. Jesus was the only Person to have ever lived without violating God's Law, earning eternal life for us. Jesus also had to be man to take our sin and guilt upon Himself and suffer the pain and agony of death on the cross as our perfect Substitute.

Jesus needed to be fully God so His single life and death could substitute for the sinful lives and deaths of every human who has ever lived or ever will live. What's more, Jesus needed to be God to overcome death, hell and the power of the devil. As Paul wrote and confirmed this victory to the church at Corinth (see [1 Corinthians 15](#)), (<http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20Corinthians%2015%20&version=ESV>) he reminded his readers to stand firm and be steadfast, knowing that Jesus paid the price in full so we might live lives that bring glory and honor to Him.

## 5.7. WHY DID JESUS DO ALL OF THIS FOR US?

John 3:16 explains why Jesus came down from heaven to live, die and rise again to save us from our sins: *“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.”*

Jesus loved His Father and left His throne in heaven to accomplish His Father’s plan to save sinful humanity—and that was a pretty scary plan! It involved Jesus suffering the punishment for our sins (death) for us. That is what He did on the cross. He loved us enough to lay down His life. He did this willingly and by His own choice. Again, John shows this clearly, as Jesus says,

*“For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it up again. No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of My own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from My Father. (John 10:17-18)*

Through Jesus’ sacrifice, we are set free from the bonds of sin. He bore the burden of our sin, suffering the consequences that were rightfully ours to face. Jesus stood in our place, taking from us our guilt, shame and the punishment for our sinfulness (see [Romans 5:19](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans%205:19&version=ESV) [<http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans%205:19&version=ESV>]). In its place, He gave us the gift of forgiveness of our sins and victory over death, which is the eternal life He earned for us (see [1 Corinthians 15:55-57](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20Corinthians%2015:55-57&version=ESV) [<http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20Corinthians%2015:55-57&version=ESV>]).

If you think about it from a worldly perspective, very few people go out of their way to risk death in order to save another person. What would cause someone to even consider this? Love. Love is why husbands will fight to defend their wives. Love is why parents will do anything to ensure the well-being of their children. As humans, we understand the idea of protecting the things that mean the most to us. The same holds true for God. Stop and take a moment to consider the wonderful things God created: the vast expanse of heavens, the awesome power of a hurricane, the majesty of the mountains, the beautiful colors of a sunset. With those images in mind, realize that above all of those things, God set us apart as the most special part of His entire creation. We are His masterpiece! So in the same way that any loving Father would, God does what is necessary to reclaim His most loved possession.

*For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die—but God shows His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. (Romans 5:7-8)*

### THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

- When we feel like worthless failures, how does Jesus’ loving sacrifice remind us of our true value?
- How does God’s forgiveness through Jesus Christ give us the confidence to assume the important position God has given us in our family, workplace and community?

### DIGGING DEEPER

- Why is Jesus called a “The Lamb of God?” (audio, <http://media.lhm.org/lutheranhour/mp3s/QA7549PD.mp3>)

## 5.8. DOES THE CHURCH TEACH THAT JESUS CAME BACK TO LIFE AFTER HE DIED ON THE CROSS? REALLY?

Absolutely! This is one of the most important teachings of the church. It is so critical because Jesus’ coming back to life after dying for our sins proves that He has defeated death and the cause of death—sin. This is why Easter is the greatest celebration of the church year.

*For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied.*

*But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. (1 Corinthians 15:16-22)*

### DIGGING DEEPER

- Read [1 Corinthians 15](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20corinthians%2015&version=ESV), (<http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20corinthians%2015&version=ESV>) an entire chapter on this topic.
- Did Jesus Really Rise from the Dead? (audio, <http://media.lhm.org/lutheranhour/mp3s/QA8031PD.mp3>)

## 5.9. I KNOW THAT JESUS HAS SAVED ME, SO NOW WHAT?

Imagine for a moment it's Christmas morning and you have just received the most amazing gift ever. Think about the thrill of Christmas when you were a kid. What would your reaction be? Through Christ, we have received a gift far greater than any electronic game, car, or piece of jewelry. We have been given forgiveness, salvation and eternal life.

*But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for His own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light. (1 Peter 2:9)*

Our response to the knowledge of Christ's great gift for us begins by surrendering our lives to Him. In this case, we surrender our lives to God, allowing Him to dwell in our hearts as we seek to live according to His will.

### THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

- Usually the word "surrender" carries negative thoughts of losing or forfeiting some freedom. What freedom do we actually receive when we surrender our selfish, hurtful desires and ambitions to God?

### DIGGING DEEPER

- See how the lessons learned from sports are applicable to the real-life world of following Jesus in *Running the Race*, (<http://www.lhm.org/men/studydetail.asp?id=20634>) a video-based Bible study.

## 5.10. WHAT DOES THE WORD "CHRIST" MEAN?

In the Old Testament, men who were called to fulfill certain offices would be anointed with oil to signify they had been chosen for that role. Those three offices were "prophet" (see 1 Kings 19:16), "priest" (see Exodus 30:30), and "king" (see 1 Samuel 16:13). Because the word "Christ" comes from the New Testament Greek word "christos," meaning "anointed," we find that Jesus Christ fulfills the anointing as our prophet, priest and king. In the Old Testament, the corresponding Hebrew word is "Messiah."

## 5.11. HOW IS JESUS OUR PROPHET?

A [prophet](#) is someone who speaks on God's behalf to the people. During His lifetime, Jesus confirmed Himself as the Messiah by fulfilling all the Old Testament prophecies that were spoken concerning Him. This also shows through the words Jesus spoke, the miracles He performed and, ultimately, in His resurrection.

*The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers—it is to him you shall listen. (Deuteronomy 18:15)*

Even today, through the Gospel written by His apostles, Jesus continues to proclaim Himself as the Son of God who gave His life to save the world.

*Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making His appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. (2 Corinthians 5:20)*

## 5.12. HOW IS JESUS OUR PRIEST?

A [priest](#) is someone who intercedes before God on behalf of the people. Jesus serves us as our Priest in three ways:

- 1.) Christ demonstrated an active obedience to God's Law by following it perfectly. Throughout His entire life, Jesus never committed a sin—in thought, word or deed.
- 2.) *He followed that with passive obedience when He sacrificed Himself for our sins, as John has written, "He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world."* (1 John 2:2)
- 3.) Finally, Jesus continues to be our Priest as He intercedes with the Father on our behalf to show us mercy and grace.

## 5.13. HOW IS JESUS OUR KING?

The third office of Christ is that of our [King](#). In Matthew 28:18, Jesus informs us that all authority in heaven and on earth had been given to Him, making Christ our ruler. As our King, Jesus governs and protects us as He leads us through life here on earth and in heaven for eternity.

### THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

- What security does it bring to your life and future to know Jesus will always be with you as your Prophet, Priest and King?

**Closing Prayer:** Lord Jesus, my God and Savior, thank You for taking my sins upon Yourself and dying on the cross in my place. Fill me with such joy and peace that I may share this Good News everywhere I go. Amen.