

Prayer

Lord Jesus, although You are the Eternal One, the great I AM, You humbled Yourself to be born of a virgin in a little town called Bethlehem. Although You made and own all things, during Your earthly ministry You sought ownership of nothing. You sought the company of those considered to be unimportant little people so that You might share with them Your big truth. You walked the way of a Servant-without-limit. Your throne was a cross. Your resurrection was the greatest Good News the world has ever heard and will ever hear. Help us to rejoice in Your words of forgiving love as we journey through life, and inspire us to wait with joy to hear Your words of welcoming love on that Last Day. In Your precious Name we pray. Amen.

PICTURE TALK

The Nicene Creed contains the following words:

*And I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the only begotten Son of God,
begotten of His Father before all worlds...*

*And was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary,
and was made man.*

ILLUSTRATION 20A

Lower section

Make use of the symbols to explain:

- ◆ Jesus, as God, is without beginning and without end.

- ◆ Jesus, the King of the universe, took part in the work of creation.

- ◆ Jesus, the Second Person of the Trinity, united His Godhead with humanity when He was conceived within the Virgin Mary.

- ◆ Jesus the Messiah is both God and man still today, and always will be.

Upper section

Explain what the symbols depict about Jesus' life and ministry.

ILLUSTRATION 20B

ILLUSTRATION 20B repeats some of the details included in **ILLUSTRATION 20A**, but points to some additional profound details in relation to Jesus' ministry and continuing presence.

- ◆ According to Matthew 28:19,20, Acts 1:1-9, and Ephesians 4:10, where did Jesus go to when He "ascended"?

- ◆ Why is it more comforting to think of ourselves as waiting for Jesus "final appearing," rather than for His "second coming"?

ILLUSTRATION 20C

Use **ILLUSTRATION 20C** to explain the meaning of the statements in the Apostles' Creed which refer to the person and work of Jesus Christ, or Jesus the Messiah.

What useful purpose would be served by including in the Creed reference to the additional detail depicted in **ILLUSTRATION 20C** between the symbol for Jesus' birth, and the symbol for Jesus' scourging?

ILLUSTRATION 20D

ILLUSTRATION 20D depicts Jesus' various roles as Prophet, Priest, King, and Wisdom.

- ◆ The Old Testament prophets were those who spoke for Another, for God. What does John 17:7,8 reveal about Jesus' role as Prophet?

- ◆ John 1:29 and 1:36 refer to Jesus as "the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world." What terms does Hebrews 9:11-14 use to describe Jesus' saving work?

- ◆ In what way was Jesus' kingship radically different from traditional ideas about kingship, John 18:33–19:22?

- ◆ Read 1 Kings 10:23–25, and Matthew 2:1–12. What parallels do you detect? Why would Jesus' words recorded in Matthew 12:42 have caused concern among the teachers of His day?

ILLUSTRATION 20E

Why should we find Jesus' words to Philip very comforting, John 14:8–11?

ILLUSTRATION 20F

Use **ILLUSTRATION 20F** to explain the significance of Paul's words in Ephesians 1:20.

ILLUSTRATION 20G

Use **ILLUSTRATION 20G** to explain what Paul means when, in Ephesians 1:22, he says that God "has put all things under Jesus' feet."

- ◆ According to **ILLUSTRATION 20G**, points 1–6, what powers and authorities has God placed under Jesus' feet?

- ◆ What comfort do Paul's words give us?

- ◆ To what mission do Paul's words call us?

BEGINNING TO DIG

- 1 If someone were to ask you, "Who is this Jesus you believe in?" what would you say?

- 2 If that person were to ask you, "Where is Jesus now?" what answer would you give?

- 3 In what way was Jesus' life a living display of God's wisdom?

- 4 To understand how Jesus related to people during His earthly ministry is to understand how Jesus relates to us today. Refer to five events in Jesus' ministry which help us understand how Jesus relates to us today.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

- 5 How do you react to the following statement, and why?

Jesus' message and ministry constitute the only "peace plan" for the world that will really work.

DIGGING DEEPER

- 1 In what way did Jesus the Messiah establish an "upside-down," "back-to-front" kingdom? Refer to Philippians 2:4–11 as you formulate your answer.
