



**Growing
in
CHRIST[®]**

Upper Elementary Teacher Guide

CONCORDIA PUBLISHING HOUSE • SAINT LOUIS

God Sends His Son to Save Us

NEW TESTAMENT 1



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Introduction

The Upper Elementary level of the Growing in Christ curriculum is generally intended for use with students who are in third through fifth grades. Depending on the maturity of your students, it can also be used with younger or older students. The materials for this level include a Teacher Guide, a set of Teacher Tools, and a Student Pack. The materials for this level have been designed for easy preparation and instruction. Check out these resources.

Features of the Teacher Guide

The thirteen lessons in this guide are organized into four steps.

- **Opening**—including worship and routine Sunday School housekeeping
- **God Speaks**—the Bible study
- **We Live**—in-depth application of God’s Word and the Lutheran doctrines for the students’ lives
- **Closing**—review and closing devotions

Every lesson has an initial page offering “Preparing the Lesson” commentary about the scriptural text and a reproducible page to be used at some point in the lesson. The additional resource pages at the end of the guide provide portions of the Small Catechism, a glossary listing the Faith Words to be taught, and directions for all games used in the quarter. All reproducible pages are found in PDF files on the Teacher Tools CD. The perforated pages of the guide make it adaptable for other teaching scenarios, such as team teaching or substituting.

Teacher Tools

This packet contains essential tools for teaching a full lesson. Each quarter includes

- **Faith Word Cards**—Interwoven in the lessons are four lesson-specific faith vocabulary words. Use these cards in a variety of ways to help instill the language of the faith.
- **Bible Review Cards**—These cards contain questions, numbered according to their level of difficulty, relating to the Bible account. The set contains eight cards per lesson (104 total). Use these cards for reviewing each lesson, for regular review during the quarter, or for a number of review games described in the Teacher Guide. Save the cards from each quarter to continue the review process and to play review games during the entire year.
- **Growing in Christ Puzzle Book**—These puzzles are designed to assist the students in learning a key Bible verse or essential concepts from the lesson.
- **Timeline Poster**—This poster details the period of biblical history from which the quarter’s lessons are drawn and relates biblical history to significant events in world history.
- **Other Posters**—Additional posters explore various aspects of Lutheran doctrine.
- **CD**—This contains audio recordings of hymns, several of the weekly Bible Words, several portions of Luther’s Small Catechism set to music, melody-line scores for all the music in PDF files, lyrics for the hymns and songs in RTF format, and PDF files of the reproducible pages from the Teacher Guide. The Bible Words and catechism recordings are tools designed to help your students learn these important texts. You have permission to copy the reproducible pages, scores, and lyrics to use in class. **Recorded music is not reproducible.** If you wish to copy it, contact CPH’s copyrights office by emailing copyrights@cph.org or by calling 1-800-325-0191.

Student Pack

Each quarter, this packet of materials contains two items.

- Lesson Leaflets—Nested in a self-cover (designed for students to take home and use as a poster) are thirteen four-page leaflets, one for each week of the quarter.
- Bible Discovery Guide—This combined atlas, dictionary, and encyclopedia of biblical information is compiled specifically for the lessons in this quarter. Almost every week, the students will reference the wide variety of information provided in illustrations and text to learn more about the Bible account. Students will want to keep this book as a future reference, but it should be stored at church so the students have it each week. Later, send it home for future reference.

Additional Materials

Classrooms should have some basic teaching equipment and materials available each week: Bibles, catechisms, hymnals, songbooks, CD player, pencils or pens, paper, index cards, crayons or markers, tape, scissors, glue, and a chalkboard, whiteboard, or newsprint pad with chalk or markers.

You may wish to order the following helps from Concordia Publishing House (browse cph.org, or call 1-800-325-3040 for subscription information and to order):

- **My Devotions**—Daily devotions for families with children eight to thirteen years old
- **Bible Story Posters**—Set of thirteen biblical art posters for the lessons in this quarter
- **Arch Books**—CPH has these books that relate to Bible accounts this quarter; consider using them for Bible story presentation or review, or have them available before class.

Lesson 1	His Name Is John!	59-2207
Lesson 2	Mary's Christmas Story	59-1499
Lesson 3	Mary's Christmas Story	59-1499
Lesson 4	His Name Is John!	59-2207
Lesson 6	Baby Jesus Is Born	59-1579
Lesson 7	Baby Jesus Visits the Temple	59-1544
Lesson 8	Star of Wonder	59-1594
Lesson 9	Jesus and the Family Trip	59-1520
Lesson 11	The Story of Jesus' Baptism and Temptation	59-1503
Lesson 12	The Story of Jesus' Baptism and Temptation	59-1503
Lesson 13	The Twelve Ordinary Men	59-2222

Teaching Helps

You can find many teaching helps, including updates, training helps, and links to podcasts and other resources for your weekly preparation and teaching, at our Sunday School Web site, cph.org/sundayschool.

Preparing the Lesson

The Birth of John Foretold

Luke 1:5–25

Date of Use

Key Point

God promised to send John to prepare sinners to receive the Savior. Through His Word, God calls us to repent and declares us righteous because of Jesus.

Law/Gospel

I sin when I doubt God's Word and promises. **God sent His Son to forgive my sin and works through His Word and Sacraments to give me faith to believe and to strengthen my trust in Him.**

Context

God set up the regulations for the tabernacle, and later the temple, in order to establish and maintain His people. God is merciful in providing sacrifices to cleanse that which is unclean and make holy that which is common.

Commentary

God promises to make His people a holy nation, a kingdom of priests. Zechariah and his fellow priests followed all the temple regulations with the result that God's people were taught right from wrong and that God loves and forgives them.

The name *Zechariah* means "God will remember." God remembered His people by sending His holy messenger Gabriel to Zechariah to announce the birth of John, the forerunner and relative of Jesus. Zechariah was not only rightfully gripped with fear, but he also doubted God's message.

Would we not also doubt? After all, God had not sent a prophet or an angel for centuries. Yet God forgave Zechariah's doubting and gave him the cross of muteness to bear as a sign of the coming blessing of John, whose name means "the Lord is gracious and moved to pity."

Even when we bear our crosses, they testify to Christ. In this world or in the next, He gives us so much joy that all suffering for His sake will be forgotten, swallowed up in His love and abundant gifts.

God knows us, loves us, and desires to save us, even before we are born. God does not forgive us because of our worldly righteousness, but because Jesus exchanged His perfect righteousness for our deep and abiding sin when He was killed on the cross in our place. All those who speak the truth of God's love speak about the person and work of Jesus for us. Our human thoughts and frailties do not limit God's love. Nothing is impossible with God.

To hear an in-depth discussion of this Bible account, visit cph.org/podcast and listen to our Seeds of Faith podcast each week.

Lesson 1

The Birth of John Foretold

Luke 1:5–25

Connections

Bible Words

Repent therefore, and turn back, that your sins may be blotted out. Acts 3:19

Faith Words

Advent, prophecy, Confession, Absolution

Hymn

On Jordan's Bank the Baptist's Cry (LSB 344; CD 6)

Catechism

Lord's Prayer: Second Petition; Confession

Prepare to Teach

Before class, compile a packet of four Law phrases and a packet of four Gospel phrases by writing the following phrases or words on sheets of paper and placing them in unsealed envelopes.

Law packet: Top sheet reads, "Law"; second sheet reads, "God's Word shows my sin and proclaims repentance"; the third sheet reads, "Because of my sin, I cannot please God"; and the fourth sheet reads, "Sin."

Gospel packet: Top sheet reads, "Gospel"; second sheet reads, "God's Word proclaims my forgiveness through Jesus"; the third sheet reads, "Because of Jesus, I have eternal life"; and the fourth sheet reads, "God."

Attach the Law packet to one wall in the classroom, and the Gospel packet to the opposite wall of the classroom. Or packets can be placed on tables during the "We Live" section of the lesson.

1 Opening (7 minutes)



Welcome your students individually. Quietly play the Second Article songs, tracks 16–20 on the CD in the Teacher Tools, to introduce the theme of the quarter. Point out that these lessons will focus on the coming of Jesus as our Savior from sin.

Provide each student with a copy of Reproducible Page 1 (found at the end of this lesson) to color as they listen. Display Poster C, "The Apostles' Creed," in your classroom for reference throughout the quarter.

MATERIALS NEEDED

1 Opening	2 God Speaks	3 We Live	4 Closing
Teacher Tools Faith Word Card 1 CD Poster C	Teacher Tools Posters B and D Faith Word Card 2	Teacher Tools CD Growing in Christ Puzzle 1 Bible Review Cards 1–8	Teacher Tools Faith Word Cards 3–4 CD
Other Supplies Reproducible Page 1 (TG)	Student Pack Bible Discovery Guides Lesson Leaflets	Student Pack Lesson Leaflets	Other Supplies Slips of paper (optional) Luther's Small Catechism or Resource Page 5 (TG) (optional)
		Other Supplies Law and Gospel packets Hymnals Resource Page 3 Resource Pages 6–10 (TG) (optional)	

Take attendance, gather the offerings, and complete any other tasks. Light candles on your classroom altar. Begin with the Invocation. Invite children to make the sign of the cross in remembrance of their Baptism.

Say In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Pray Dear heavenly Father, thank You for bringing us together. Be with us today as we study Your Word. Your people before the time of Christ waited for the Savior to be born; now we wait for our Savior to come again. Prepare our hearts to receive Him. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Celebrate birthdays or Baptism anniversaries. Sing "Luther's Morning Prayer" (CD 22).



What Am I Waiting For?

Read the following clues to the students and allow them to guess what each one describes.

Say Today's lesson is about waiting. Let's play a game. See if you can guess the answers to my riddles.

I'm watching clothes tumble around. When they stop, the clothes will be warm and feel good on my skin. What am I waiting for? (Clothes from the dryer)

The days seem to go very slowly. But in just a few more days, I will receive a party, a cake, and presents. What am I waiting for? (A birthday)

I'm hungry. I have a glass of juice, some jam, and a knife. Soon I'll have something warm to put the jam on. What am I waiting for? (Toast or a muffin from the toaster)

Sin came into the world when Adam and Eve disobeyed God. Now all people, including you and me, are born sinful. We can't get to heaven by ourselves. But God made a promise about a way we could get to heaven. What are we waiting for? (A Savior, the Messiah, Jesus) **In today's lesson, you will find out more about how God kept His promise.**

2 God Speaks (15 minutes)

Sacrifices and Duties of Priests

Display Poster B, "The Temple." Distribute the Bible Discovery Guides. Ask each student to write his or her name on his or her copy. Direct the students to pages 2–3; read and discuss "Sacrifices" and "Priestly Duties." Refer to Poster B to show where the priests performed their duties.

Say God's people had been waiting a long time for their Savior. They worked hard to keep God's laws in order to atone for their sins until the Savior came.

Display Poster D, "Genealogy of Jesus," which shows the generations of God's people through more than 2,000 years of waiting for the Messiah.

Say Events in today's Bible account show that the waiting was almost over.

Key Point

God promised to send John to prepare sinners to receive the Savior. God calls us to repent through His Word and declares us righteous because of Jesus.

Teacher Tip

Sit near the students who have difficulty behaving appropriately. Whisper reminders of your expectations as needed to help refocus their attention.

John's Birth Foretold

Distribute the Lesson Leaflets and ask volunteers to read today's Bible story on page 2, or read the story from Luke 1:5–25 as students study the picture on the front of the leaflet. Refer again to Poster B to locate Zechariah's place in the temple when Gabriel appeared. (If you have an Internet connection in your classroom, you could search for "Herod's Temple in 3-D" to let the students see what the temple actually may have looked like.) Point out Gabriel's role as God's messenger in the text.

Do a quick check of comprehension by using the questions and responses at the bottom of page 2 in the leaflet. Ask students to choose the correct answers for the multiple-choice questions by indicating with their fingers the number of their answer. Demonstrate how they can show their choice with their fingers held in front of their chest. Correct answers are (A) 2 fingers; (B) 1 finger; (C) 3 fingers; and (D) 4 fingers.

Check for further understanding with these review questions.

Ask What might make Zechariah (zack ah RIE a) and Elizabeth good parents for John? (They were eager to raise a son because they had no children. They were both descendants of Aaron and knew the importance of God's laws. They were righteous before God, yet sinful. They looked forward to the coming of their Savior.)

How would their son, John, be a blessing to many people? (Gabriel told Zechariah that John would be great in the sight of the Lord, and he would be filled with the Holy Spirit from his birth. He would turn many people back to God and prepare them for the coming Messiah. John would "make ready for the Lord a people prepared" [Luke 1:17].)

Why did the people need to repent? (Since sin entered the world in the Garden of Eden, all people were sinful. They had been taught to prepare sacrifices to atone for their sins. Soon their Savior would come, and He would atone for their sins. The people still needed to recognize their sinfulness and their need for a Savior. John would proclaim "a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins" [Luke 3:3].)

Briefly consider the activities on page 3 in the leaflet. "What Would You Do?" and "His Name Will Be John" allow for discussion and demonstration by the students.

Write the word *repentance* on the board or large paper. Explain that *repentance* is "genuine sorrow toward God on account of sin and belief in Jesus as our Savior."

Discuss The root of the word *repentance* is *repent*, and it means "to turn from sin." The Holy Spirit turns us from our sin to Jesus. Through the work of the Savior, Jesus Christ, our sins are forgiven. We are justified, and God sees us as righteous. God forgives us for Jesus' sake and brings us to Him through His Word and Sacraments.

Note to teacher: Zechariah doubted Gabriel's message because he believed he was too old to have children. Did his doubt show a lack of faith? Zechariah was startled by the appearance of the angel because God hadn't sent any prophets or visions for a very long time. Doubting God's Word is a sin, but it doesn't mean a lack of faith. Faith comes to us through the Holy Spirit at our Baptism. We can't help having doubts because we are sinful people. But God

forgives our doubts and, through the Holy Spirit, grants us faith to believe in Him. God still used Zechariah and Elizabeth for His purposes, even though they were sinful.

Show the Faith Word Card *prophecy* and relate it to Gabriel's message to Zechariah. Discuss that a prophet is a person whom God called to preach His Word and point people to the coming Savior. Many Old Testament prophets wrote the Scriptures by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. John was the last Old Testament prophet who would prepare God's people for their Savior. Show the Faith Word Card *Advent*. Point out that this word means "coming" or "appearance"; share the full definition.

Say John was not the Savior, but he was a prophet who would prepare the people for the coming of the Savior. He would preach to the people, telling them to repent of their sins. He proclaimed a Baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.

Key Point

God promised to send John to prepare sinners to receive the Savior. God calls us to repent through His Word and declares us righteous because of Jesus.

3 We Live (15 minutes)

Law and Gospel

Display the Law and Gospel packets, which were prepared prior to class.

Say To help you understand how important it was for John to proclaim a Baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, we are going to do an activity. It may help you understand more about what repentance means for you.

Ask What is meant by the terms *Law and Gospel*? What is the purpose of each? (*Law* is what God commands every person to do and not to do, by which He condemns those who break His commandments. *Gospel* is the Good News about Jesus Christ, who came into the world to save us sinners. The Law shows us our sin and the need for a Savior; the Gospel shows us our Savior and God's grace.)

Distribute copies of Growing in Christ Puzzle 1 and let students work together in twos or threes to fill in the blanks of the Bible Words, Acts 3:19.

Ask students to face the wall or the table with the Law packet. Remove the "Law" page and ask them to read aloud the statement "God's Word shows my sin and proclaims repentance." Remind them that to *repent* means "to turn away from sin."

Ask them to turn around to face the Gospel packet. Remove the "Gospel" page and have the students read aloud the statement "God's Word proclaims my forgiveness through Jesus." Use the turning action to reinforce the "repent" concept, reminding them that in the Fifth Petition of the Lord's Prayer, when we say, "And forgive us our trespasses," that we "are neither worthy of the things for which we pray, . . . but we ask that He would give them all to us by grace, for we daily sin much and surely deserve nothing but punishment" (explanation of the Fifth Petition). This is the Law and the Gospel in action in our daily lives.

Remove the next sheet from the Law packet; ask the students to turn again and read, "Because of my sin, I cannot please God." Remove the next

sheet from the Gospel packet; ask the students to turn and read aloud the statement “Because of Jesus, I have eternal life.”

Then ask the students to read together the Bible Words, Acts 3:19, from page 4 of the Lesson Leaflet. Have the students face the “Sin” sheet of the Law packet, and make one final turn toward the “God” sheet as they recite the verse again.

Say Only Jesus was able to please God with His actions. Because of Jesus, God forgives our sins.

When we pray “Thy kingdom come” in the Lord’s Prayer, we are asking God’s kingdom to come to us. Review the Second Petition, Resource Page 3. **This happens when our heavenly Father gives us His Holy Spirit, so that by His grace we believe His Holy Word and lead godly lives here in time and there in eternity. Through our Baptism, we have the power of the Holy Spirit. Through Jesus, we have eternal life.**

Use the Bible Review Cards for this week to review the lesson as time allows. Games using the cards can be found printed on Resource Pages 6–10 at the end of the Teacher Guide.

4 Closing (5 minutes)

Show Faith Words Cards *Confession* and *Absolution*. Ask a volunteer to read the first question and explanation, “What is Confession?” from Luther’s Small Catechism. Provide copies of the words found on Resource Page 5 at the end of the Teacher Guide, or download the text from the CD. (You may wish to make small booklets of these catechism sections [Resource Pages 1–5] to have in class for use throughout the quarter.)

Faith in Action →

Explain In every worship service, we begin with Confession and Absolution. Then we are prepared to hear God’s Word and receive Him in His Sacraments.

Ask another volunteer to read the second question and explanation (“What sins should we confess?”). Ask students to think of a sin that they know they have committed. They may write the sin on a small slip of paper and fold it, or simply remember it. As you lead the closing prayer, ask them to confess this sin silently and ask for forgiveness when you pause in the prayer.

Provide copies of the lyrics and discuss any unfamiliar vocabulary in “On Jordan’s Bank the Baptist’s Cry” (LSB 344; CD 6). Discuss how the lyrics relate to the foretelling of John’s birth, repentance, and preparation. Play and sing the hymn. Then close with prayer.

Pray Dear heavenly Father, we are sorry we have sinned and are unable to please You on our own. Pause. We know You hear our prayer and forgive our sins because Your Word tells us that You love us and want us to repent. Thank You for sending Jesus as the final sacrifice for all our sins. Through Him, we look forward to eternal life. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.



The Second Article of the Apostles' Creed

Redemption

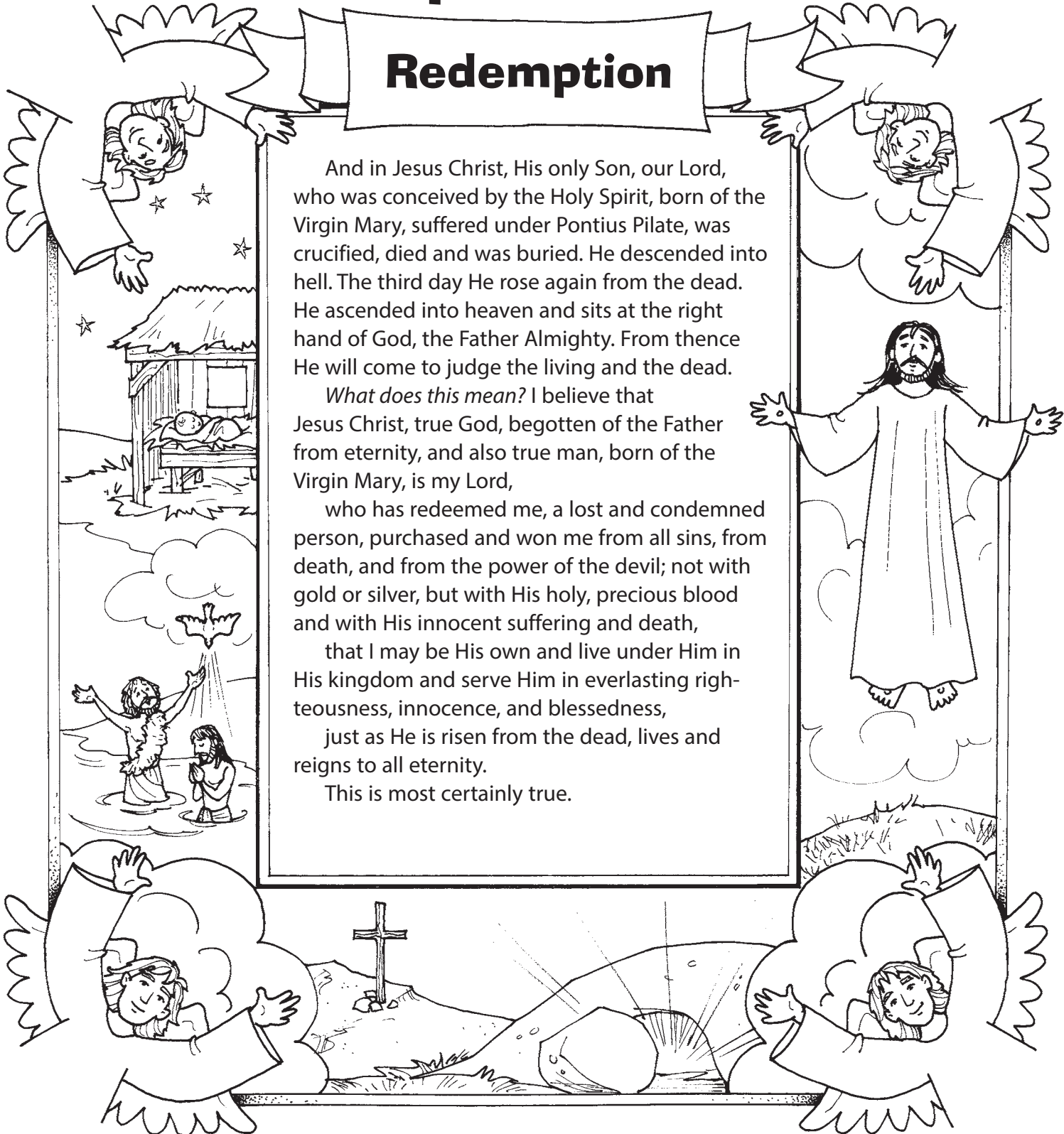
And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.

What does this mean? I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the Virgin Mary, is my Lord,

who has redeemed me, a lost and condemned person, purchased and won me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil; not with gold or silver, but with His holy, precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death,

that I may be His own and live under Him in His kingdom and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness, just as He is risen from the dead, lives and reigns to all eternity.

This is most certainly true.



Preparing the Lesson

 Date of Use

The Birth of Jesus Foretold

Luke 1:26–38

Key Point

Because of Christ, God favored Mary and chose her to be the mother of the Savior. Because of Christ, God favors us and chooses us to be His children.

Law/Gospel

Like Mary, I deserve nothing from God because of my sinfulness. **God gives me unmerited grace and favor because of His Son.**

Context

The angel Gabriel visited both Zechariah, Elizabeth's husband, and Mary, Elizabeth's relative. Elizabeth was too old to have a baby, while Mary was too young—still a virgin—only engaged to be married.

Commentary

This story about Mary begins “in the sixth month” (v. 26), that is, six months after John the Baptist was conceived. Gabriel appears to Mary with a message from God: “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you” (v. 35). This came about exactly as Gabriel described it would: the Holy Spirit conceived Jesus Christ within Mary.

While Elizabeth had the support of her husband, Mary faced the possible loss of her reputation, her family, her fiancé, and even her life. Not only could she be stoned

to death for supposed adultery, but she could also die because of complications of pregnancy and childbirth. In spite of the looming mix of joy and fear at Gabriel's message, Mary did not question God. She submitted to His will because she first received the Gospel, the Christ to be born from her womb. Her faith accepted the unacceptable, and for Christ's sake, all generations do call her blessed.

As Paul says in Philippians 1:6, any good work or blessing comes through Jesus Christ alone, who will complete that good work in the day of His second coming, even as He will execute judgment on the wicked.

The Good News of Christ embraces both His suffering and death for us on Calvary and also His return as Lord and Judge. It is His Word that counts, not the words of the world. That means we can trust His Word in spite of all worldly cares and fears. We can accept the unacceptable in Christ's name.

Like Mary, we can bear the most fearful of crosses that God gives us as blessings in Christ. We believe that the worst evil that might strike us in this world cannot overcome the Judge of all worlds and ages. Our victory in Christ is an eternal victory. Like Mary, we are eternally blessed.

To hear an in-depth discussion of this Bible account, visit cph.org/podcast and listen to our Seeds of Faith podcast each week.

Lesson 2

The Birth of Jesus Foretold

Luke 1:26–38

Connections

Bible Words

She will bear a son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.

Matthew 1:21

Faith Words

Chi-Rho, annunciation, Messiah, betrothed

Hymn

Jesus! Name of Wondrous Love (LSB 900; CD 2)

Catechism

Apostles' Creed: Second Article (CD 16–20)

Prepare to Teach

Make copies of Reproducible Page 2 and lyrics of hymns and songs.

For use in the “God Speaks” section of the lesson, prepare numbered paper slips as follows: (1) Luke 1:26–27; (2) Luke 1:28–29; (3) Luke 1:30–31; (4) Luke 1:32–33; (5) Luke 1:34–35; (6) Luke 1:36–37; and (7) Luke 1:38. Put them into a container.

Many activities, games, crafts, and the like are provided to assist you in your teaching on Sunday morning. As you get to know the learning styles of your students, select those activities that will motivate your students and enhance learning. Do not be concerned if you don't complete every activity.

1 Opening (7 minutes)

Distribute copies of Reproducible Page 2, found at the end of this lesson, to identify the names and symbols used for Jesus. If time permits, visit the sanctuary with the reproducible page. In a scavenger hunt–type activity, locate the same symbols in the windows, on the paraments (the ornamental hangings on the altar, pulpit, and lectern), on the altar, and in other artwork in your church.

Display the Faith Word Card *Chi-Rho*. Read the definition, noting that it is one of the most common symbols for Jesus.

MATERIALS NEEDED

1 Opening

Teacher Tools

Faith Word Card 5
CD

Other Supplies

Reproducible Page 2 (TG)

2 God Speaks

Teacher Tools

Faith Word Cards 5–8
Posters A and D
Growing in Christ Puzzle 2

Student Pack

Bible Discovery Guides
Lesson Leaflets

Other Supplies

Numbered slips of paper containing text references, as outlined in Teacher Guide
Bible story poster (optional)

3 We Live

Teacher Tools

Poster C
Faith Word Card 7
CD

Student Pack

Lesson Leaflets

Other Supplies

Hymnals
Resource Page 2
Luther's Small Catechism

4 Closing

Teacher Tools

Faith Word Card 2
Bible Review Cards 1–16

Student Pack

Lesson Leaflets

Other Supplies

Resource Pages 6–10 (TG)
(optional)

Gather offerings, take attendance, celebrate any birthdays, and recognize Baptism anniversaries. Light candles in your worship area. Sing “Jesus! Name of Wondrous Love” (LSB 900; CD 2). Begin with the Invocation, inviting students to make the sign of the cross in remembrance of their Baptism, if they feel comfortable doing so.

Say In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Pray Dear heavenly Father, thank You for Your promise of the Savior to redeem us from our sins. Prepare us for the celebration of Jesus’ birth. We humbly ask You to forgive our sins, as we remember that our sins caused Jesus to leave His heavenly home to humble Himself to die for the sins of all people. Keep us close to You in faith as we await Your second coming. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.



Key Point

Because of Christ, God favored Mary and chose her to be the mother of the Savior. Because of Christ, God favors us and chooses us to be His children.

2 God Speaks (20 minutes)

Display all of the Faith Word Cards for this lesson.

Say Our Faith Words today are nouns that name persons and things or events. Can you identify those that are names for a person? (*Messiah*) things? (*Chi-Rho*) events? (*annunciation, betrothed*) Can you explain or give the definition of any? Can you think what Bible account they might relate to? Allow for discussion. Show all definitions before proceeding.

On the board, write the following question words in a numbered column:

1. Who and Where? 2. What? 3. Why? 4. Who? 5. How? 6. What Else? 7. When?

Say When newspaper reporters write news stories, they frequently answer the questions Who, What, Where, When, Why, How, and What Else to be sure their readers get all of the news.

Last week in our lesson, Zechariah (zack ah RIE a) got some amazing news as a sign the Savior would soon be coming. Our story today is about getting even more amazing news about the Savior Himself. Let’s answer these questions and get the whole story.

Ask volunteer readers to draw the numbered slips (prepared before class) out of a container. Have all students open their Bibles to Luke 1, and ask readers to read one segment at a time, in sequence, beginning with number one. After each reading, determine the answer to the question word written on the board for that segment.

Responses include the following:

1. Who and Where? (vv. 26–27) The angel Gabriel appeared to Mary in the town of Nazareth in Galilee.
2. What? (vv. 28–29) Gabriel said, “Greetings, . . . the Lord is with you.”
3. Why? (vv. 30–31) Mary had found favor with God and would bear a son, Jesus. Point out that this promise is also contained in the Bible Words for this lesson, Matthew 1:21. Challenge the students to learn the verse.
4. Who? (vv. 32–33) The child will be the Son of the Most High, who will reign on the throne of David forever.

A Great Idea!

Key Point

Because of Christ, God favored Mary and chose her to be the mother of the Savior. Because of Christ, God favors us and chooses us to be His children.

5. How? (vv. 34–35) The Holy Spirit will come upon Mary, and the power of the Most High will overshadow her.
6. What else? (vv. 36–37) Elizabeth will also have a son. Nothing is impossible with God.
7. When? (v. 38) According to God’s Word; right away.

Display the Bible story poster for this lesson, if available, or distribute the Lesson Leaflets so students can appreciate the artist’s depiction of the Bible story. Point to the Faith Word Card *annunciation*.

Explain The event described in this text is known as the **annunciation**. **March 25 is the date this event is observed in the Church Year, because it is nine months before Christmas.** Check for understanding with the following review questions:

Ask **When have we heard from Gabriel before?** Remind students that angels are God’s messengers. Gabriel is the same angel who announced to Zechariah, six months earlier, that he and Elizabeth would have a son. Gabriel’s appearance now to Mary is even more important. He told Mary that she would be the mother of the Savior.

Distribute the Bible Discovery Guides and have students find Jerusalem and Nazareth on the map on pages 8–9.

How had Mary found favor with God? Like us, Mary was sinful. But she found favor with God through her faith and trust in His promise. God chose Mary to be the mother of the Savior. Like Mary, we are sinful, but we find favor with God through His Son. We receive the gift of faith through the Holy Spirit at our Baptism. God has chosen us to be His children.

How does the text describe who Jesus will be? Read verses 32–33. (Jesus will be great, the Son of the Most High [God the Father]. He will take His place on the throne of David, and His kingdom will never end. He is the Son of God.)

Refer students to Poster D, “Genealogy of Jesus.” Show the relationship between King David and Mary. Read verse 27 again. Mary was betrothed to Joseph, a descendant from the house of David. Display the Faith Word Card *betrothed* and review the definition. Ask students to identify other names on the poster that they recognize and summarize what they know about that individual. Use Poster A to show the time of the annunciation.

Another activity to review Jesus’ ancestors is provided in the Growing in Christ Puzzle 2. Provide copies and, if you have time, allow the students to complete the crossword puzzle.

Say **Let’s compare Mary’s reaction to Gabriel’s message with Zechariah’s reaction to the angel’s words.** Read Luke 1:18 as well as verses 34 and 38. (Mary believed that what Gabriel said was true. Her confusion was about *how* it could happen, not *if* it could happen. Zechariah had doubted that it could happen, knowing that he and his wife were old.)

Distribute Lesson Leaflet 2 and direct the students to page 2. Have them work in teams to create a summary of the Bible account, using the “reporter” questions, and a simple “photo” illustration.

3 We Live (15 minutes)

Discuss Why was Gabriel's message so important? Why did Jesus have to be born? (Since sin entered the world in Eden [Genesis 3], humankind has been born sinful and separated from God. Jesus is the promised Savior, the one of whom God spoke in Genesis 3:15. Because of God's grace and favor, He sent His Son, our Lord, Immanuel, to be with us and save us from our sin. God must punish sin. God sent His Son to take our punishment upon Himself. God is merciful to sinners.) **What does Gabriel's message mean for you?** Bring out in the discussion that God, in the fullness of time, was announcing to the world His plan of salvation for sinful humankind.

Display Poster C, "The Apostles' Creed." Provide copies of the Second Article catechism song lyrics, available on the CD and on Resource Page 2 at the end of this guide. Read the Second Article of the Apostles' Creed and its explanation together. Use catechisms, if available.

Say This part of the creed tells about Jesus' life and work. Let's answer these questions.

On the board or large piece of paper, write the following questions:

1. Who? 2. What? 3. Why? 4. What Else? As the students give you key phrases from the Second Article, write their responses after the questions.

1. Jesus, God's Son, our Lord, true God, true man;
2. conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered, died, was buried, descended into hell, and rose again;
3. to redeem me (buy me back) from all sins, death, and the devil's power;
4. that I may be His own, live in His kingdom, and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness.

Then listen to or sing the Second Article songs using the CD, tracks 16–20.



Chosen

Show the Faith Word Card *Messiah*. Discuss this name for Jesus and how it fulfills God's promise to send His Son.

Say Scripture identifies Jesus with many names. But no matter what name we use for Him, He is the only Savior. We were separated from God because of our sin. Because of His grace and favor, God sent the Messiah to us.

Ask How does Jesus come to us? (Jesus comes with power and with blessing in His Word. He comes in the Word along with the water of Holy Baptism, which gives us life as children of God instead of the death we deserve because of our sin. He comes in the sweet words of forgiveness in the Absolution after we have confessed our sins. He also comes to us in His true body and true blood in and under the bread and wine in the Lord's Supper, giving us forgiveness and strengthening our faith in Him.)

Refer students to page 3 in Lesson Leaflet 2. Assign one or more of the first three illustrations to students to role-play for the rest of the class. (If your

Teacher Tip

Use a "talking stick" to promote taking turns listening and speaking. Pass an object like an eraser or a ruler around the circle. Only the student holding the talking stick may speak. The student may pass the item if he or she chooses not to answer.

Faith in Action

Key Point

Because of Christ, God favored Mary and chose her to be the mother of the Savior. Because of Christ, God favors us and chooses us to be His children.

class is small, involve everyone in the role play, and you be the audience. If you have a larger class, assign a group of students to each of the situations.) Explain that their task will be to communicate how a person in that situation might feel about being chosen (e.g., scared, honored, excited, or embarrassed). Give the students a few minutes to discuss and act out their situation, and then use these discussion questions.

Ask In what way is each situation like or unlike that of Mary, who was chosen for an important role in God's plan? Answers will vary. Which of these situations depend on certain abilities or characteristics? (All except Baptism) To what extent is the choice in these situations up to us? (We might try out for the team and the play. We might volunteer or not volunteer to say our memory work. But we cannot volunteer to become God's child. Until the Holy Spirit works faith in us through simple water and God's Word, we are enemies of God.) Some students might point out that their parents chose for them. Remind them that their parents were simply obeying God's command and relying on God's promise that "whoever believes and is baptized will be saved" (Mark 16:16).

Say We can't choose to be in God's family, because we are sinful people. Our amazing God adopts us into His family through our Baptism because of Jesus.

Refer the students to Galatians 3:27–4:7 to review the process by which we become God's heirs, His adopted children. Remind the students of the impact of our adoption by God.

Say Like Mary, we deserve nothing from God because of our sinfulness, yet God grants us unmerited grace and favor because of His Son. God must punish sin; but, in His mercy, God sends His Son to take our punishment. Because of our sin, we were separated from God, but because of God's grace and favor, the Lord is with us. On our own, we are sinful and not blessed; Christ blesses us with His presence, just as He did Mary and Elizabeth. What a great God!

4 Closing (5 minutes)

The Birth of Jesus Foretold

Have students read together the Bible Words from page 4 of the Lesson Leaflet. Note that this verse fulfills a prophecy by Isaiah (7:14) written hundreds of years before Gabriel's visit to Mary. There are many such prophecies from God in the Old Testament. God gave them to His people to give them hope in their salvation.

Ask the students to summarize today's story text again, touching on the main questions Who, What, Where, When, Why, How, and What Else. Encourage the students to share their news story (page 2 of the Lesson Leaflet) with their families and friends, sharing the important news that the Savior will soon come.

Play a Bible review game using the Bible Review Cards for Lessons 1 and 2. See Resource Pages 6–10 at the end of this guide for game suggestions.

Faith in Action

Say Gabriel's news to Mary was wonderful: Mary would be the mother of the Savior. But the news got better! This child would take away the sins of the world!

Pray Dear heavenly Father, as we read about how You chose Mary to be the mother of the Savior, we thank You that You have chosen us to be Your children. Help us to be bold witnesses, sharing the news that our Savior comes to us. Strengthen our faith by the Holy Spirit. In Jesus' name, the name above all others. Amen.

Before singing the hymn "Jesus! Name of Wondrous Love" (LSB 900; CD 2), discuss how the hymn describes Jesus' name. Explain any difficult phrases. Then sing the hymn.

Direct the students' attention once more to the Lesson Leaflets. Encourage students to use the Weekly Devotions on page 4 of the Lesson Leaflet to see how the hymnwriter used God's Word to help us praise the name of Jesus.



Names of Jesus

The Bible lists many names for Jesus. Throughout the centuries, the Church has developed symbols to go with these names. How many of these symbols can you find in your church? in your classroom? in your home?



Chi-Rho
The name *Christ* in Greek



Agnus Dei or Lamb of God
Represents the atoning sacrifice of Christ



Alpha and Omega
Greek for the *Beginning* and the *End*



A fish
The oldest of Christian symbols



ICHTHUS
The Greek word for *fish*, initial letters from “Jesus Christ, God’s Son, Savior”



INRI
The initial letters of “Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews”; words placed on the cross of Christ



The Vine and Branches
Christ as the Vine and the believers as the branches (John 15:5)



Rose of Sharon
A symbol of the promised Messiah (Song of Solomon 2:1)



Crown
A symbol of Christ’s kingly office, and a symbol of victory through Christ



The Fleur-de-Lis
A lily, which is a symbol of the Virgin Mary—the human nature of Christ and the annunciation



The Five-Pointed Star, or Star of Jacob
Used in Advent and Epiphany



The Cross and the Sphere, also called the Cross of Triumph or the Cross of Victory
The sphere represents the entire world; the cross symbolizes Christ’s triumph over the sin of the world.

TRINITARIAN SYMBOLS



Three Entwined Circles
The three persons of the Trinity—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; the circles are entwined to show three distinct persons, yet one eternal God.



Equilateral Triangle
Represents the Holy Trinity; combined with a circle, represents the eternity of the Holy Trinity



Trefoil and Triangle
Represents the Holy Trinity