

Icebreaker:

Some scholars think the Philippians 2 passage was an early hymn. Share with your group a favorite hymn or Christian song that talks about who Jesus is.

Read this week's scripture and discuss:

1. When you read this grand Philippians 2 passage, what stands out the most to you?
2. In Philippians 2, Paul says that God the Father exalts Jesus and gives him the name above every name. What do we learn about Jesus in Philippians 2:6-8 as to why he would be exalted? For you, is it easier to be humble and obedient like Jesus, or exalted and praised like Jesus? Why?
3. In the Mark passage, Jesus and his disciples get away from the crowds to rest. If Jesus is God, why does he need rest? When do you feel the need for rest and how do you get refreshed?
4. Jesus and the disciples thought they were getting a break (Mark 6:31), but then they ended up serving. Have you ever had a situation like that? What was your attitude? How did you serve?
5. When Jesus saw the crowds who ran ahead of him, he had compassion and taught them many things (Mark 6:34). One of Jesus' gifts was teaching. What gift(s) has God given you that you can offer to others in times of need?
6. Empathy means to enter into someone else's suffering. Is sharing empathy to others an act of self-sacrifice? If so, how?

Closing Prayer:

The Philippians 2 passage reads like a hymn or a creed, helping us to remember what we believe about Jesus. To close your group time, and to remember what we believe and why, please recite aloud the Apostles' Creed:

*I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.*

*I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our
Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit
and born of the virgin Mary.*

*He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to hell.*

*The third day he rose again from the
dead.*

*He ascended to heaven
and is seated at the right hand of God the
Father almighty.*

*From there he will come to judge the living
and the dead.*

*I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic* church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,*

*the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen*

*that is, the true Christian church of all times and all places

Jesus is humble. Jesus is exalted. Jesus is a servant. Jesus has the name above every name. God the Father exalted Jesus because of his humility, obedience to the call, and his self-sacrifice. How can we be shaped like Jesus in his servant-leadership, his compassion, and his self-sacrifice?

1. This passage may have been an early hymn, or just Paul using poetic and grand language to describe what Jesus did. Your group might focus on Jesus' humility, obedience or Jesus being a slave/servant. Or you might focus on him being at the right hand of the Father, his name being exalted and why we praise Jesus.
2. Despite being God (fully God, fully human), Jesus "emptied" himself of some of what it meant to be God. As a man, he could feel pain, could get sick and was limited to time and place. People disrespected him and treated him poorly; doubting that he was God or that he represented God. He was obedient to his calling as well. For some, it might be more natural to be humble, while others might sometimes prefer the spotlight or to be in leadership.
3. In his humanness, Jesus needed sleep and food. He was not above those things. He humbled himself to become human. Even though in Mark 6 Jesus did not get the rest he needed right away, in other passages Jesus does pull away to be alone to rest and/or pray. We need to do the same. It is healthy to pull away when we need to rest, get refreshed and pray.
4. In a time when Jesus needed rest, he still felt compassion for the people, who were like sheep without a shepherd. So, instead of rest he helped to teach them and feed them. We might find times like this in crises, at work, in big family gatherings, being a parent or caring for needy kids. We often have to sacrifice our own desires to show compassion for others.
5. Jesus was who he was. The people needed a shepherd and he was it. He was a rabbi who taught, so he taught them. They needed food, and he didn't send them away, but fed them with the miracle of the loaves and fishes. When you have compassion, what gifts do you have to offer others?

6. Empathy can also mean to share someone else's experience and feelings. If someone is hurting, you can be there for them. If you have somehow experienced what they have, then going there and being present is a great act of care. It does take sacrifice to go and to be with someone, especially who is suffering.

Closing Prayer:

The Apostles' Creed is a statement of Christian belief, written by very early Christians, but not by the apostles/disciples themselves. It is used by many church backgrounds and affirms faith in God the Father, Jesus Christ the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Saying the Creed together can help remind us what we believe and that we believe the same things. In the Creed, the phrase "catholic church" means universal church or all churches, not the Roman Catholic Church.