

Lesson Overview

1. Critical Thinking

Compare Genesis 1:1-5 with John 1:1-5. Note similarities.

2. Watch a Video

Watch John 1:1-14 at [bit.ly/
GCEDGospelOfJohn](http://bit.ly/GCEDGospelOfJohn) from 0
min 49sec to 3min 42sec
(2min 53sec).

3. Discuss OR Activity

Discuss John 1, or do a Word Cloud activity p.3.

New Church Concept Becoming Human

A person is born into the natural degree...and this increases...until one reaches the highest point of the understanding, which is called rational. The second degree, which is spiritual is opened by the love of uses arising out of the things of the understanding, namely, by the spiritual love of uses, which love is love towards the neighbor. This degree may also increase to its highest point, and it increases by spiritual truths. The third degree, which is celestial, is love to the Lord. This is nothing else than committing the precepts of the Word to life. It is to shun evils as sins and do goods because they are heavenly and Divine. See *Divine Love and Wisdom*

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The Word Made Flesh

FaithBuilder 3 | Lesson 12 | Christmas

In the Beginning

Matthew and Luke begin with Jesus' ancestry and birth. Mark begins with John the Baptist preparing the way for the Lord. But the Gospel of John is quite different. It begins somewhat like Genesis, the first book in the Old Testament. Compare Genesis 1:1-5 with John 1:1-5. Highlight similarities and differences.

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good; and God divided the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night. So the evening and the morning were the first day. Genesis 1:1-5

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it. John 1:1-5

1. What similarities did you find? Or differences?

2. Are these accounts

- Literal
- Spiritual, or
- Philosophical

3. True or false

John is saying that...

- God created everything through Jesus
- Jesus is the light spoken of in Genesis
- God made everything
- All life is from Jesus
- Jesus and God are the same
- Jesus is the light of the world

4. Finish the sentence

- Genesis is describing the creation of
- John is describing the creation of....

Watch a Video

Watch John 1:1-14 from *The Life of Jesus . English. Official Full HD Movie*, online at bit.ly/GCEDGospelOfJohn. (Enter link in the web browser bar at the top of your screen.) **Start at 49 sec and watch to 3min 42sec; 2min 53sec.**

Discuss OR Do Word Cloud Activity on the following page

Choose questions to discuss the story.

1. The prologue to the Gospel of John presents all the major themes in the gospel. Looking at John 1:1-14 and identify as many major themes as you can. (See a brief list of themes at the bottom of the page.)
2. People are born into darkness. In order to go to heaven people must receive spiritual light from the Lord. This spiritual light is like the Lord's coming at Christmas. John 1:5 says "the darkness did not comprehend [the light]." Why might it be hard for us to recognize the Lord? (see sidebar on right)
3. The story of the birth of John the Baptist in the Gospel of Luke parallels the story of the birth of Jesus Christ. Like Jesus' birth, John's birth is miraculous. John the Baptist represents the literal sense of the Word—the words on the page, the story itself. John 1:8 says John the Baptist was not the "true light." In What does the literal story of the Word do for us? Why is it not the "true light?"
4. Why is John the Baptist (the literal sense of the Word) an essential witness to the Lord's coming to each of us?
5. In what ways does the literal story of the Word point to something deeper?
6. What tools make it easier to see the higher spiritual meaning in the Word?
7. How does the Word of God become flesh in us?
8. How can a person become born of the "will of God?"
9. Compare "Word of God" with "The Bible." "Bible" (The Book) came into use when separate scrolls of the books of the Word were produced as a single manuscript. "Word [of God]" came into use in the Old Testament (e.g. Thy Word is a lamp to my feet). What images do these words bring up for you? Which word helps you feel greater connection with the Lord?
10. The Christmas story is about the Lord becoming flesh. In what ways does the Lord visit humankind today? How can he "become flesh" in us?

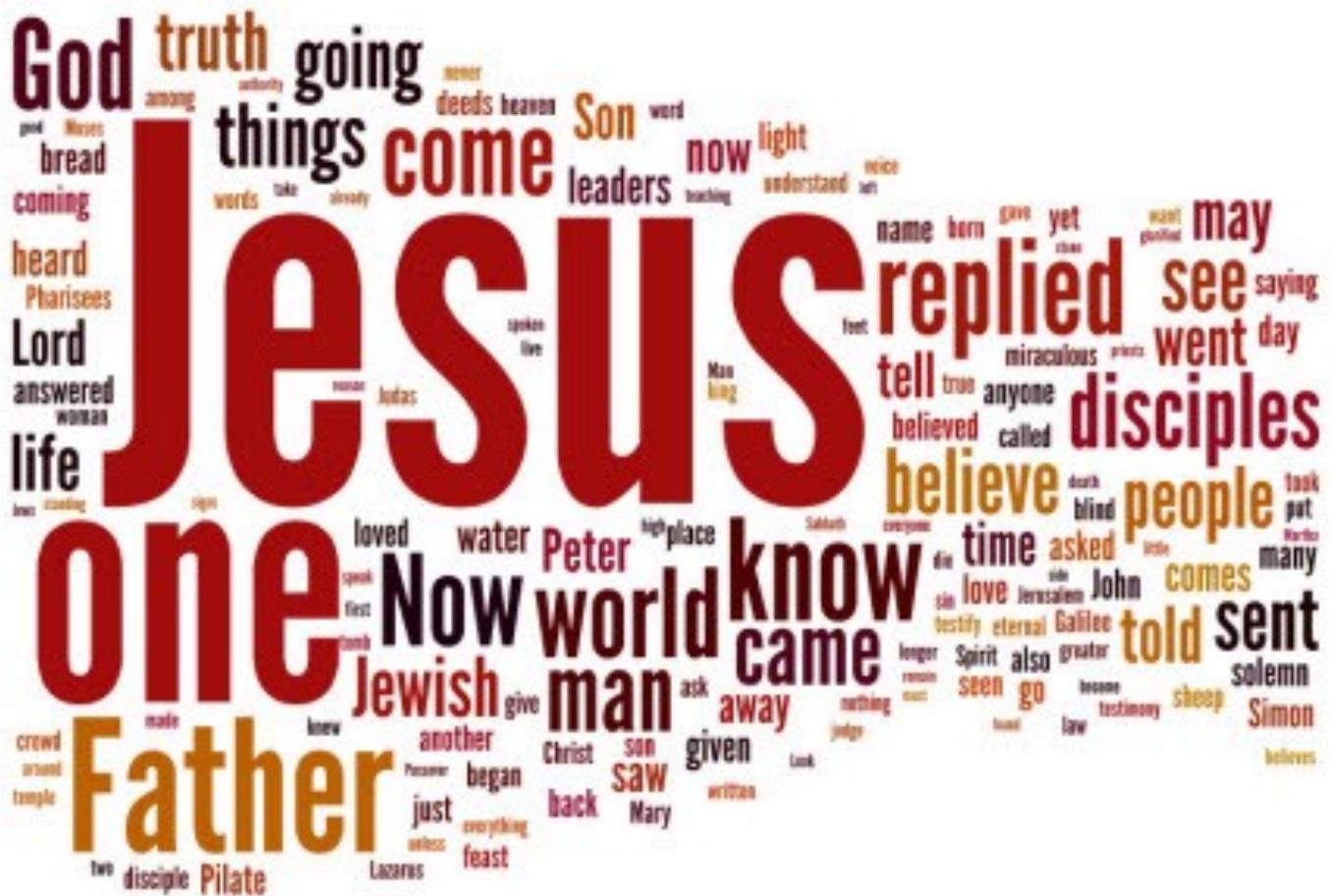
Themes in John

- Darkness and light
- All people are in darkness and need to come to the light
- Jesus is the light of the world
- Jesus is life
- Jesus is God
- People must be reborn through Jesus

New Church Concept

In the Beginning....

And God said, Let there be light; and there was light. This is at the outset when a person starts to realize that good and truth are something superior. Thoroughly external people do not even know what good is and what truth is, for they imagine that everything which comprises self-love and love of the world is good, and that everything that panders to those loves is truth. Thus they do not know that the things which they imagine to be good are in fact evil, and that those which they imagine to be true are in fact false. But when a person is conceived anew, first he starts to recognize that the good in him is not really good, and then, when he enters more into light, to recognize the existence of the Lord and that the Lord is good and truth themselves. The Lord Himself says in John that people ought to know He exists, "Unless you believe that I am, you will die in your sins" (John 8:24). The point that the Lord is good itself, which is life, and truth itself, which is light, together with the consequent point that no good or truth exist except from the Lord, is made once more in John, In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. All things were made through Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men, and the light shines in the darkness. He was the true light that enlightens every man coming into the world John 1:1, 3-5, 9. *Arcana Coelestia* 20



Gospel of John Word Cloud

This word cloud is based on the frequency with which words are used in the Gospel of John. Common words, such as and, or, the, etc. have been omitted. The more the word appears in the text, the larger it appears in the cloud. The color of the words is not significant.

1. What stands out to you when you look at this word cloud?
 2. Circle the 10 most frequently used words in the word cloud.
 3. Arrange the words you chose into the order of which words you think are most important, from 1-10.

4. Use all of these 10 words to summarize the message of the Gospel of John.