

# WHO IS GOD?

## Who is God - Session 1: Is God Really Real?

In today's study we'll tackle the question of God's existence. This question is neither easy nor new; people have argued over the existence of God for thousands of years, and many continue to wrestle with it today. One might think about the question in terms of truth and falsehood: Is it true or false that God exists?

*Answer all questions in your journals and be ready to show your mentor you did the work:*

- 1) When have you struggled to find the truth about something or someone in your life?
- 2) Did you eventually arrive at a conclusion? If so, how were you able to do so?

It's not always easy to discern the truth, especially when it comes to something about God, without concrete, visible proof. But as we'll see today, God does make His existence known to us—we just have to know what to look for. And when we become passionately convinced that God is real, we will desire nothing more than to share this good news with the world.

**READ:** Hebrews 11:1

*Take a minute to pray.*

**PRAY:** Father in heaven, we pray to You, our good and gracious God. We ask that You guide this study, showing us Your presence and Your love. Help us to see Your hand in all that we do. Keep us faithful to You as we guide others into Your holy presence. Let us worship You in spirit and truth, as convicted individuals bound by Your endless love and grace. We ask this through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

**VIDEO:** Scene 1. This clip will last about 3 minutes.

The following is a summary of the video segment:

- Atheism is a growing trend in our culture.
- Despite this trend, the CIA reports that less than 3% of people on earth don't believe in God.
- People have a natural sense that there has to be a "creator" or "maker."
- The complexity of life disproves the theory that life originated from an accident.
- People desire to believe in God; it gives them a sense of hope.
- Faith in God helps people answer some of life's most puzzling questions.

**READ:** 1 Kings 18:22-24, 27, 32-39, then answer the following questions:

1. What do these verses tell us about God?
2. Do you think you could have had the kind of trust in God that Elijah did?

**VIDEO:** Scene 2. This clip will last about 4 minutes.

*Here is what the Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC) says about it:*

- *The Argument from Design: Order and beauty in the world imply an intelligent creator (see CCC 32).*
- *The Argument from Your Heart: For every need, there is something to fill it (see CCC 27).*

*“The desire for God is written in the human heart, because man is created by God and for God; and God never ceases to draw man to himself. Only in God will he find the truth and happiness he never stops searching for.”—CCC 27*

*“The world: Starting from movement, becoming, contingency, and the world’s order and beauty, one can come to knowledge of God as the origin and the end of the universe.”—CCC 32*

Use the following to take notes about the Arguments for God:

*Arguments for God*

**DESIGN:**

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**CAUSALITY:**

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**YOUR HEART:**

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**VIDEO: Scene 3.** This clip will last about 3½ minutes.

The following notes summarize this scene and will help guide you and answer question

- Some people may be called anti-theists—they have difficulty believing in God because of the hurt or pain they've experienced.
- God sees things from the eternal perspective—from beginning to end.
- God doesn't cause bad things to happen but allows it so that a greater good may come, either in this life or the next.
- In the midst of suffering, we must remember that God loves us enough to suffer with us, as Christ suffered on the cross.
- God doesn't promise us freedom from suffering, but He does promise us His presence in our suffering.

Please answer the following questions:

1. What situations are you aware of where people are struggling with the problem of pain?
2. How do you see people coping with this?
3. When you face pain in your own life, what helps you deal with it?

**VIDEO: Scene 4.** This clip will last about 5 minutes.

1. What does it mean to be a “living example” of the Christian faith?
2. On a scale from 1 (not at all) to 10 (completely), what rating would God give you for being a sign of Him in this world—and why?
3. How can you be a more effective “sign” from God to the world that He exists?

**VIDEO: Scene 5.** This final clip will last about 4 minutes.

The following is a summary of the video segment:

- There are a lot of ways to grow in your faith: being in a community with other believers, studying your faith, and getting to know the rational reasons for faith.
- God reveals himself to us, we study about Him, but at some point we need to be willing to give ourselves to the God who gives Himself to us.
- When we choose faith, that's when joy and hope are born.
- In the midst of pain, we can keep making the choice for faith. This can be proof to the world that God exists.
- “Seek not to understand that you may believe, but believe that you may understand.”  
— St. Augustine

Take a few minutes to write your answers to the following questions In your journal.

1. What are you doing to grow in your faith?
2. What does it mean to surrender yourself to God and your faith?
3. When do you feel your faith is challenged the most? How do you feel during those times? What does choosing faith look like in those difficult times?

**PRAY:** Take time to pray about this study and allow the Holy Spirit to work in your heart.

*As you pray, take comfort in the things you believe about God. Find hope in them. Let them inspire you to be a powerful sign of God's existence in the world.*

**The Apostles' Creed**

I believe in God, the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, 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 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 life everlasting. Amen.

“We begin our profession of faith by saying: ‘I believe’ or ‘We believe.’ Before expounding the Church’s faith, as confessed in the Creed, celebrated in the liturgy and lived in observance of God’s commandments and in prayer, we must first ask what ‘to believe’ means. Faith is man’s response to God, who reveals himself and gives himself to man, at the same time bringing man a superabundant light as he searches for the ultimate meaning of his life.”—CCC 26

**BEAR FRUIT:** We do not just want you to watch the videos and answer the questions in order to get credit for this study. It is our hope and prayer that you will find ways to apply it to your everyday life. This next section will give you some guidance on ways to LIVE IT and bear fruit daily. Please take a few more minutes to go through this section.

**READ:** Ephesians 2:8-9

How is this gift, the gift of grace, special to you? What will you do with it, and how can you share it with others?

**Number 1**

1. Part of this study’s focus was on the topic of atheism, or the denial of God’s existence. Think of someone you know who may not believe in God. What do you notice about that person’s life?
2. Now think about your life with God.
3. What is the person who doesn’t believe in God missing?
4. Can you define the word “believe”? In the space below, attempt to write a definition of the word “believe.” How does your understanding of belief and faith affect the painful or difficult events in your life?

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**Number 2**

Your study last time focused on your faith being a gift from God that is to be prayed for, nurtured, strengthened, and shared. Take some time to write your personal faith story. Your group will be gathering next week and sharing these stories. Not some notes here to help your begin to form your personal story or testimony:

1. When you hear the faith stories of others, how do you feel about your faith?
2. How can you strengthen your faith?
3. In what way does being a member of this group strengthen your faith?

**Number 3**

Think of the road signs you see every day.  
What does each sign communicate?  
How could you yourself be a sign that God exists?

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Thank you for taking the time to do this little bit longer study and the daily application part at the end! It's so important to find ways to apply all of this to your life.

**Be sure to show your mentors that you did the work to receive credit for this session.**  
*(The last page is simply topic info, quotes, scripture and encouragement)*

**For Your Info:**

1. *A 2004 survey by the CIA in "The World Factbook" estimates about 12.5% of the world's population are non-religious, and about 2.4% are atheists. If time allows, reiterate this information to your teens. Then discuss the difference between being an atheist and non-religious. How might a non-religious person be considered a practical atheist? Baal, the god of fire, storm, fertility, and life, should have been able to bring rain and provide water for the people. Nevertheless, they experienced a severe drought for over three years. When Elijah drenched the sacrifice with precious, scarce water, he did it to humiliate Baal and emphasize the enormity of God's power. Only a miracle from God could burn the soaked sacrifice.*

2. The Big Bang Theory is based on a cosmological model that proposes that the universe began with a big bang. According to this theory, the release of hot and dense matter caused the universe to expand rapidly and incessantly.
3. According to Webster's Dictionary, infinite regress is "a causal relationship transmitted through an indefinite number of terms in a series with no term that begins the causal chain." Ask your teens to imagine an infinite regress—betcha they can't!
4. Blessed Chiara Badano was beatified in September of 2010. She was the first member of Generation X to receive the distinction. Generation X includes people born between the early 1960s and the early 1980s.

"Art and the Saints are the greatest apologetics." —Pope Benedict XVI

**Who is God – Session 2: Is God Really My Father?**

When Jesus first referred to God as “Father,” He ultimately introduced humanity to a far greater relationship dynamic than had been previously known. Apart from emphasizing the need for humanity to cultivate a trusting relationship in and with God, Jesus also assigned characteristics that are typically possessed by a human father to God. In addition to being omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent, Jesus taught that God is also approachable, loving, caring, understanding, supportive, and gentle.

*Answer all questions in your journals and be ready to show your mentor you did the work:*

1. When you hear the word “father,” what images or descriptions come to mind?
2. Why can the word “father” stir up all sorts of emotions for people?

READ: 2 Corinthians 6:18

PRAY: Almighty God, my Eternal Father, from the fullness of my soul I adore you. I am deeply grateful that you have made me in your image and likeness, and that you ever hold me in your loving embrace. Direct me to love you with all my heart, with all my soul, and with my whole mind. Direct me to love all your children as I love myself. O, my Father, my soul longs to be united to you, and to rest in you forever. Have the Holy Spirit touch my soul so that I may love you as He does, and as your Beloved Son Jesus does. Amen.

**Video: Scene 1** - This clip will last approximately 2 minutes

**Questions:**

1. What makes a father a “good” father?

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**Video: Scene 2** - This clip will last approximately 2½ minutes

**Questions:**

1. 1. What does God's Fatherhood mean for us?

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**Read:** READ: Genesis 5 : 3

**Video: Scene 3** - This clip will last approximately 3½ minutes.

**Question:** 1. Is God really good? Can God really be trusted? And can He be trusted as a Father?

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2. Why is it sometimes easy to doubt God's goodness? Why is it sometimes difficult to trust God?

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**Video: Scene 4** - This clip will last approximately 4 minutes.

**Prayer:** Our Father, Who art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy name; Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Amen.



**Reflection:**

1. As you prayed the Our Father with your group, listening deeply to what you were saying, what new insights did you gain about what you were praying?

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2. What are some of the confusions you've had because of the differences between the God of the Old Testament and the God of the New Testament?

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**Video: Scene 5** - This final clip will last approximately 4½ minutes.

**Questions:**

1. In what ways are you like the Prodigal Son?

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2. Are there areas of your life where the brokenness has become a roadblock for you to know and embrace God as your Father? How can you get past the roadblocks in your life?

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3. In what ways do you need to return to God with your heart, and how can you accomplish this in the upcoming week?

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**Prayer for the Week:**

As you come to God, our Father, in prayer, touch on each of these “P’s”:

- Praise (honoring God)
- Purpose (seeking God’s will, not your own)
- Provision (trusting God to care for you)
- Pardon (asking for forgiveness)
- Protection (from temptation and evil)

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**Who is God – Session 3: Is Jesus really Divine?**

The teaching of the Catholic Church asserts that Jesus is both fully Divine and fully Human. Apart from performing various miracles throughout His ministerial life, Jesus also attended to the people He encountered with a Divine heart and mind. When we curiously investigate the Divine nature of Jesus, we are provided with a fuller understanding of the love that binds the Trinity.

**Reflection Questions:**

Directions: Search for various appropriate images of Jesus Christ on Google. After you have selected at least 5 images, answer the following questions:

1. Which image do you think is the closest likeness to who Jesus really was? Why?

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2. What different aspects do these images convey about the person of Christ?

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3. What image do you identify with the most? What is it about the image that attracts you?

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**Read:** READ: Matthew 16:13-15

**Opening Prayer:**

Jesus, we ask that you be with us today as we begin to look more deeply at who you are and how you have impacted the world. May our hearts be open to understanding the amazing gift of your divinity and love for us. Thank you for the gift of that love and for humbling yourself to become one of us, so that through you we may know how to live. Amen.

**Video: Scene 1** - This clip will last about 1½ minutes.

**Question:**

1. What makes Jesus unique or different from other religious leaders out there?

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**Video: Scene 2** - This clip will last about 3 minutes.

**Question:**

1. 1. What do you find most convincing about Jesus' claim to be God?

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2. 2. What's most challenging for you about Jesus' claim?

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**Video: Scene 3** - This clip will last about 4 minutes.

**Read:** John 20:24–29

**Questions:**

1. Are there situations where you've refused to believe something until you saw it with your own eyes? How do you relate most to Thomas' doubts?

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2. Have you ever experienced a sudden change from a lack of faith to a strong sense of belief? If so, what brought about this change?

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**Video: Scene 4** - This clip will last about 4 minutes.

**Questions:**

1. What do you think about the claims that Christ made? How can you know that Jesus' miracles are real?

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2. Describe a time when you had a “Thomas moment”—when you knew Christ was God? What stands out most about that experience

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**Video: Scene 5** - This final clip will last about 3 minutes.

**Questions:**

1. What prevents you from taking your relationship with Jesus seriously and truly giving your life to Him? Why is this an obstacle between you and Jesus?

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2. What concrete things can you do this week to more fully give your life to Christ?

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3. How can the members of this group hold you accountable to do the things you just mentioned?

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**Prayer:**

You are holy, Lord, the only God, and your deeds are wonderful. You are strong. You are great. You are the Most High. You are Almighty. You, Holy Father, are King of heaven and earth. You are Three and One, Lord God, all Good. You are Good, all Good, supreme Good. Lord God, living and true. You are love. You are wisdom. You are humility. You are endurance. You are rest. You are peace. You are joy and gladness. You are justice and moderation. You are all our riches, and you suffice for us. You are beauty. You are gentleness. You are our protector. You are our guardian and defender. You are our courage. You are our haven and our hope. You are our faith, our great consolation. You are our eternal life, Great and Wonderful Lord, God Almighty, Merciful Savior

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**Who is God – Session 4: Is the Holy Spirit Really a Person?**

While existing through the love that is shared between God the Father and Jesus Christ, the Son, the Holy Spirit is often considered as being the “Paraclete.” In Catholic Theology, the term “Paraclete” means either advocate, guide, or counselor. Through the celebration and active participation within the Feast of Pentecost, Catholic’s can gain a deeper understanding of the Holy Spirit as a person. When we first come to God, we’re like the raw metal. We’re hard, rough, rocky, and unshaped. The Holy Spirit is like fire that refines and purifies us. He works in our lives to change and transform us. He makes us moldable so we can become beautiful and useful instruments to fulfill God’s will.

**Reflection Questions:**

1. What parts of your life are rough and rocky?

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2. Where does the Holy Spirit need to work in your life to shape you into a beautiful and useful instrument for God’s kingdom?

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**Opening Prayer:**

O, God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit did instruct the hearts of the faithful, grant that by the same Holy Spirit we may be truly wise and ever enjoy His consolations. Through Christ, our Lord. Amen.



**Video – Scene 1:** This clip will last approximately 2 minutes.

**Questions:**

1. What do you already know about the Holy Spirit?

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2. What images come to mind when you hear the name “Holy Spirit”?

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**Video – Scene 2:** This clip will last about 3½ minutes

**Questions:**

Based on what you’ve just read, what things do you notice that the Holy Spirit does?

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**Read:** Acts 2:1–3

**Video – Scene 3:** This clip will last about 4½ minutes

**READ:**

John 18:15–18

John 18:25–27

Acts 2:14–36

**Questions:**

1. What change do you see in Peter?

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2. Where does Peter’s courage come from?

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**Video – Scene 4:** This clip will last about 5 minutes

**Questions:**

1. Describe a time when you felt like Peter did after the Crucifixion—a time when you were hesitant or afraid to talk about Jesus.

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2. What are some ways the Holy Spirit could work in you or through you if someone challenged your beliefs or your faith?

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**Read:**

READ: Acts 9:1–18

**Video – Scene 5:** This final clip will last about 5 minutes.

**Questions:**

1. In what ways are you like Paul before his conversion? How can you experience a transformational change in your life?

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2. How can the Holy Spirit come alive in you? How can the Holy Spirit help you to see things differently and get closer to God?

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3. God speaks to you in the depths of your heart through the Holy Spirit. How can you recognize that little voice of God inside you? What concrete steps can you take this week to be more attentive to the inspirations of the Holy Spirit?

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**Prayer:**

St. Augustine's Prayer to the Holy Spirit Breathe in me, O Holy Spirit, that my thoughts may all be holy. Act in me, O Holy Spirit, that my work, too, may be holy. Draw my heart, O Holy Spirit, that I love but what is holy. Strengthen me, O Holy Spirit, to defend all that is holy. Guard me, then, O Holy Spirit, that I always may be holy. Amen.

**Concluding Reflection Questions:**

The Holy Spirit and Me Reflect on the questions below and consider how a relationship with the Holy Spirit might help you in these situations. Write your answers in the space provided. In the first chapters of Genesis, the Holy Spirit has a vital role in the creation of the universe and mankind. The Spirit is a creative force and gives life. Contact with the Holy Spirit renews and recreates life in us as well. In what parts of your life do you feel spiritually drained? Are there areas of your spiritual life in need of renewal and re-creation?

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St. Peter denied knowing Jesus because he was afraid of what might happen to him. However, after the Holy Spirit worked in his soul, he was fearless. Are there times when you've been afraid to tell people you're Catholic because of what they might think? How does that make you feel?

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At Pentecost, the Holy Spirit is seen as a transforming fire. He comes down on the apostles and they're ignited with courage, zeal, and the ability to speak about Jesus openly. Do you shy away from answering questions about the Catholic faith because you don't know what to say? What are some ways you could feel more empowered to talk about your faith?

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St. Paul was full of hatred and anger. He saw Christianity as a threat to God and wanted it stamped out. He even went so far as to imprison and kill people to carry out his mission. But the Holy Spirit came in a blinding light and enlightened his mind to the real truth of God's plan. Describe a time when you were angry and resentful because things don't work out the way you wanted. Why is it easy to get angry with God when He's not working according to your plan?

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