

# Mystery of Faith

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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**What is a mystery?**

In our everyday lives, the word “mystery” refers to a problem to be solved, a code to be cracked, or a suspenseful story that will unfold in a book. If we can only get to the bottom of the mystery, we will have solved the puzzle.

In the context of our faith, the word “mystery” has a different meaning. A mystery is a belief that we cannot fully understand; it is revealed to us by God and accepted through faith. It does not contradict reason but goes beyond our natural human understanding.

Consider the account of Moses and the burning bush in Exodus 3. God called Moses to go into Egypt and free the Israelites from slavery. Moses asked God how he should respond if the Egyptians asked him for the name of God. God responded, “I AM WHO I AM” (3:14). As the *Catechism* states, “This divine name is mysterious just as God is mystery. It is at once a name revealed and something like the refusal of a name, and hence it better expresses God as what he is—infinitely above everything that we can understand or say” (CCC 206).

It would be a mistake to dismiss these mysteries simply because they cannot be fully understood. Instead, we are invited to prayerfully study and contemplate the mysteries so we can grow in our love and knowledge of God.

**What does the word “mystery” refer to in the context of our faith?**

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**What are some mysteries of our faith?**

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Discuss the following questions in your group. Record your group’s responses in the spaces provided.

**Why do you think God reveals truths about who he is?**

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**Why might a person find the mysteries of our faith challenging to believe?**

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How should we respond to the revealed mysteries of our faith?

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# The Word Became Flesh

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Instructions:** Read the excerpts from the *Catechism* and Sacred Scripture below. Then answer the questions about why it matters that God became man.



## *Catechism of the Catholic Church, 460*

The Word became flesh to make us “*partakers of the divine nature*”:<sup>1</sup> “For this is why the Word became man, and the Son of God became the Son of man: so that man, by entering into communion with the Word and thus receiving divine sonship, might become a son of God.”<sup>2</sup> “For the Son of God became man so that we might become God.”<sup>3</sup> “The only-begotten Son of God, wanting to make us sharers in his divinity, assumed our nature, so that he, made man, might make men gods.”<sup>4</sup>

Jn 1:1-14

**1** <sup>1</sup>In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup>He was in the beginning with God; <sup>3</sup>all things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made. <sup>4</sup>In him was life, and the life was the light of men. <sup>5</sup>The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

<sup>6</sup>There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. <sup>7</sup>He came for testimony, to bear witness to the light, that all might believe through him. <sup>8</sup>He was not the light, but came to bear witness to the light.

<sup>9</sup>The true light that enlightens every man was coming into the world. <sup>10</sup>He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world knew him not. <sup>11</sup>He came to his own home, and his own people received him not. <sup>12</sup>But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God; <sup>13</sup>who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

<sup>14</sup>And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only-begotten Son from the Father.

**According to CCC 460, what is one main reason the Word became flesh?**

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**List the names that are used to identify the Son of God, Jesus Christ, in the prologue of John’s Gospel, above:**

a. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

c. \_\_\_\_\_

<sup>1</sup> 2 Pet 1:4.

<sup>2</sup> St. Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, 3, 19, 1: Patrologia Graeca 7/1, 939.

<sup>3</sup> St. Athanasius, *On the Incarnation*, 54, 3: Patrologia Graeca 25, 192B.

<sup>4</sup> St. Thomas Aquinas, *Opusc.*, 57:1–4.

**In your own words, summarize what we learn about Christ in each of the following verses from John 1.**

**Verses 1-2:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Verse 3:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Verse 4-5:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Verse 14:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Reflection Questions**

**Why did the eternal Son of God become man?**

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**What does it mean to participate in the life and love of the Blessed Trinity?**

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**How can we participate in the divine life of God here on earth?**

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# Instructing the Ignorant

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

The spiritual works of mercy are actions to care for the spiritual needs of others:

- Counseling the doubtful
- Instructing the ignorant
- Admonishing the sinner
- Comforting the sorrowful
- Forgiving injuries
- Bearing wrongs patiently
- Praying for the living and the dead

Saint Athanasius lived his life instructing the ignorant.

Skim through the section entitled “Defending the Mysteries of Faith” (page 52 of the Student Text), which discusses Saint Athanasius’ defense of the faith.

**Which two mysteries of the faith were central to Athanasius’ teaching?**

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Jesus said, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life” (Jn 14:6). If Jesus is the Truth, we should want to learn as much as we possibly can about the truth. In this way, we can draw closer to him. It is an act of charity, then, to instruct those who may be ignorant of the truths Christ reveals. In this way, we can bring people closer to God, the source of all truth.

There are many ways you could instruct the ignorant. Perhaps you could help a younger sibling learn about Jesus or share with your parents what you learned at school. Maybe there is a classmate or friend who could use some encouragement in school as you seek to learn together. Your class could volunteer to sit with the younger students at Mass to help them learn how to pray and focus at Mass.

Remember that instructing the ignorant must always be done in charity—that is, out of love for God and the other person. The one who knows more must still be kind, patient, and understanding toward the one who is learning.

**How can you instruct the ignorant at home this week?**

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**How can you instruct the ignorant at school this week?**

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Who could you invite to go to Mass with you on Sunday to learn more about Jesus?

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