

**WHY MUST THE REDEEMER BE TRULY HUMAN?**

That in human nature he might on our behalf perfectly obey the whole law and suffer the punishment for human sin; and also that he might sympathize with our weakness.

**Bible Passage:** Hebrews 2:5–18

**Memory Verse:** Hebrews 2:17

**Big Idea:** The substitute sacrificed for our redemption had to be human.

**Virtue:** Love

**LEADER'S NOTES:**

People generally have little problem understanding the humanity of Jesus. They may be comfortable with the fact that Jesus is a historical figure and that he once lived on the earth. But they may still struggle with the concept of Jesus being fully human and fully God. This catechism question, in connection with Question 23, will further enable us to explore the fact that Jesus is one person with two natures. This lesson will specifically focus on why it was essential for the Redeemer to be fully human, aiming to provide us with a robust understanding of why Jesus came to earth and took on human nature.

**Things to remember:**

- Some will still be trying to comprehend the fact that Jesus is one person with two natures.
- Be careful to maintain some reverence when speaking about Jesus's humanity.

**Question 21 Review**

**What sort of Redeemer is needed to bring us back to God?** One who is truly human and also truly God.

**INTRODUCTION TO QUESTION 21**

Ask the group how they came into the world.

- They were born.

Ask the group how they grew from a little baby into a child.

- They were cared for by parents or guardians who fed them and nurtured them.

Ask the group what they do when they're really sad.

- They cry.

Ask the group what they feel when they haven't had any food for a while.

- They feel hungry.

Ask the group how they anticipate their lives ending.

- They will die.

Explain that these are all experiences that are common to human beings. Remind them that Jesus was fully human as well as fully God. Jesus was born and had parents who nurtured and fed him. Jesus cried when he was sad and felt hungry when he hadn't eaten for a while. Jesus' earthly life ended when he died. Introduce Question 22: "Why must the Redeemer be truly human?" There is a reason that Jesus the Redeemer had to be fully human in order to bring other humans back into relationship with God. This catechism question will help us to understand why.

**TEACHING OUTLINE**

That there is one big difference between Jesus and every other member of the human race that has lived, is living, or will live. Ask the group if they can identify what the big difference is. The difference, of course, is that Jesus is the only person who has lived a sinless life. Jesus was the perfect human. This is a crucial thing to understand as they consider why the Redeemer must be truly human.

**Read Hebrews 2:5–18**

*5 For it was not to angels that God subjected the world to come, of which we are speaking.*

*6 It has been testified somewhere, "What is man, that you are mindful of him, or the son of man, that you care for him?"*

## QUESTION 22

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*7 You made him for a little while lower than the angels; you have crowned him with glory and honor,*

*8 putting everything in subjection under his feet." Now in putting everything in subjection to him, he left nothing outside his control. At present, we do not yet see everything in subjection to him.*

*9 But we see him who for a little while was made lower than the angels, namely Jesus, crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.*

*10 For it was fitting that he, for whom and by whom all things exist, in bringing many sons to glory, should make the founder of their salvation perfect through suffering.*

*11 For he who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one source. That is why he is not ashamed to call them brothers,*

*12 saying, "I will tell of your name to my brothers; in the midst of the congregation I will sing your praise."*

*13 And again, "I will put my trust in him." And again, "Behold, I and the children God has given me."*

*14 Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil,*

*15 and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery.*

*16 For surely it is not angels that he helps, but he helps the offspring of Abraham.*

*17 Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.*

*18 For because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.*

These fourteen verses in the book of Hebrews describe clearly why Jesus had to become fully human. To help us understand the significance of Jesus's humanity, think back to Genesis and identify who the first man was. Then consider:

- Who has every person on earth descended from?
- Who introduced sin into the human race?

The answer to both questions is Adam. Adam was originally created with the ability to perfectly keep God's law, but he rebelled against God, and so sin and death entered the world. Jesus, the Redeemer, is sometimes called the second Adam.

**Briefly compare Adam and Jesus:**

1. Adam was created sinless; Jesus is sinless.
2. Adam gave life to all people; Jesus gives eternal life to those he redeems.
3. Adam was given the authority to rule over creation; Jesus is Lord over all.
4. Adam brought spiritual and physical death into the world; Jesus brings eternal life to those who repent of their sins and follow him.

In order for Jesus to be the Redeemer, the second Adam, it was crucial that he was fully human. Look back to Hebrews 2:5–18 and see if you can identify from the passage any reasons why Jesus’s humanity was so important.

The writer of Hebrews begins in verses 5–9 by describing how things were meant to be! Humans were made to rule over everything, but because of sin, that had not happened. The earth had not been filled and subdued as God intended. It was messy and out of control. Jesus had to enter this messy world as a man. He left the splendor of heaven to come to earth as man who was intimately involved in the mess that humans had created.

Verse 10 describes how Jesus, the man, became humanity’s ultimate champion and deliverer. In the ancient world, it was quite normal for one man to be chosen to go out and fight another man, each man representing his respective army. The examples of David and Goliath could be used to illustrate this or the fight between the Greek Achilles and the Roman Hector as recorded in Homer’s Iliad. The way Jesus is described in Hebrews 2 is as the one who has been sent on behalf of humans to fight and overcome sin, the resulting death, and the Devil. Jesus fights to redeem those who have been trapped and enslaved by sin and who face the devastation of death.

When Jesus became fully human, with flesh and blood, he became just like those he would count as brothers and sisters after he redeemed them. Jesus’ humanity allowed him to fully understand what life is like in every way. Hebrews especially mentions the struggle of temptation; Jesus was tempted in every way, and yet he was without sin. Jesus understands what it’s like to be tempted to disobey God and tempted to love things other than God.

**Is it helpful and encouraging to know that Jesus understands everything about human life because he lived a life on earth as a human, and still lives as a (glorified) human now?**

## QUESTION 22

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God told his people that the penalty for sin is death, but he established a pattern of sacrifice in the Old Testament that allowed people to temporarily atone for their sins. An animal had to be sacrificed and blood had to be shed in order to receive forgiveness. However, an animal sacrifice was not enough; the Bible says that human blood is required to pay the permanent penalty for sin. If there is going to be a substitute, it needs to be sufficiently qualified. Only a human can die in the place of other humans and truly satisfy the penalty.

If the Redeemer was not fully human, then he would not have been able to fulfill God's requirements. He is the ultimate mediator between God and humans because he can represent all those who believe and repent. Through his sacrifice, humans find forgiveness for their sins and have a relationship with God. Jesus in his perfect humanity was able to turn God's anger away from sinful people by taking the full force of the anger and punishment on his own body.

**SMALL GROUP ACTIVITY**

Take a few minutes and individually consider the humanity of Jesus. Stop and think about every unique quality that makes us human. Our feelings, anatomy, ambition or even fears.

**How does Christ's humanity help you relate to him as your Redeemer?**

**SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION**

(Allow for several answers within your group before reading the provided response.)

- 1. If Jesus was fully human, doesn't that mean that he was a sinner?** God created Adam and Eve without sin. That was what it was to be truly human. They chose to sin, and every human born since has been a sinner. Jesus did not have an earthly father; he had a heavenly Father. This meant he didn't inherit Adam's sinful nature.
- 2. Did Jesus become less God when he lived on earth?** Jesus did not become less God, but that he did choose to lay aside his heavenly glory when he came to earth, and that he submitted himself fully to the will of God the Father.

**More to consider:**

What does it mean to know that Jesus fully understands what it is to be human?

Are you struck by Jesus's humility and love, knowing that he willingly left heaven to redeem us?

Sum up why Jesus needed to be fully human.

**VIRTUE VISION: Love**

Consider the story of Maximilian Kolbe, a monk who was arrested in Poland in February 1941 and was eventually sent to Auschwitz, a Nazi concentration camp. While he was at the concentration camp, a prisoner escaped, and in retaliation the guards chose ten men to punish by starvation and death. One of the chosen men, Franciszek Gajowniczek (pronounced Fran-sis-ek Ga-jown-izek), was deeply distressed at the thought of dying and leaving his family. Maximilian Kolbe offered to take Franciszek's place. After weeks of starvation, Maximilian was eventually murdered instead of Franciszek. He had taken another man's place and had willingly suffered death to save his friend's life. Maximilian Kolbe was motivated by the great humility and love that he saw in Jesus, who left the glory of heaven to come to earth and die so that he might save people from their sins. Maximilian showed the same humility and love when he died for his friend.



*Maximilian Kolbe*

What feelings do you have in response to this story?

What feelings might Franciszek have had? (he was the man who was spared so that he could remain with his family.)

What motivated Maximilian, Franciszek's lifesaver?

**"How is love humble?" and "How might the humility and love of Jesus affect how you live your life and how you love others?"**

**Memory Verse**

**"Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people."**

**(Heb. 2:17)**