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The first student text and teacher resource in the series, *God’s Word Revealed in Sacred Scripture*, which has been found to be in conformity with the USCCB Protocols for Assessing the Conformity of Catechetical Materials with the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, will be available in Spring 2011, followed by Book 2, *Son of God and Son of Mary* in Winter 2011.

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The following pages present a sample chapter from the student text of Book 1 of the *Credo* series, *God’s Word Revealed in Sacred Scripture*, as well as sample pages and worksheets from the accompanying teacher’s resource.

Information on *Credo’s* technology component can be found on page 32.
CHAPTER 12


John the Evangelist

Beloved Disciple

Anonymous

Symbolic Language

‘I Am...’ Statements

Signs

Miracles

The Gospel According to John

Jesus Christ / Messiah

Son of God

Divinity / Humanity
In this chapter we explore the Gospel according to St. John and discuss the identity of its author. The last of the four Gospels, John’s Gospel is so distinct from the three Synoptics that it is sometimes referred to simply as the Fourth Gospel. It is a mature theological presentation of Jesus Christ, the Light of the World, the Son of God, who was with God at the beginning of creation and who took on flesh to live among us and show us ‘the way’. This Gospel was probably written in the last decade of the first century AD for a Jewish community that was trying to reconcile the Jewish faith in one God with the Revelation that Jesus Christ is truly the Son of God.

LEARNING OUTCOMES
As a result of studying this chapter and exploring the issues raised, you should be able to:

- recognize and explain symbols used in John’s Gospel;
- understand the context in which John wrote his Gospel and how that influenced what he wrote;
- list some differences between John’s Gospel and the Synoptic Gospels;
- through becoming familiar with the ‘I am’ statements of Jesus, list some of the images of Jesus in John’s Gospel;
- understand the significance of the miracle (sign) stories in John’s Gospel;
- appreciate the significance of a number of passages from the Last Supper discourse in John’s Gospel;
- reflect upon chapters 18 and 19 of John’s Gospel;
- understand Mary Magdalene’s role in the Post-Resurrection Narratives;
- find and read in John’s Gospel accounts of significant relationships Jesus had with people;
- understand the term ‘Hypostatic Union’;
- know the story of Maximilian Kolbe.

FAITH-FORMATION OUTCOMES
As a result of studying this chapter and exploring the issues raised, you should also be able to:

- identify and appreciate the power of symbols in your own life;
- reflect on how the humanity of Jesus can help you in your efforts to live as a disciple of Jesus;
- recognize people in your family and neighborhood who make significant sacrifices for others.

FAITH WORD: Hypostatic Union

LEARN BY HEART: John 13:34–35

LEARN BY EXAMPLE: Maximilian Kolbe
How important are symbols in the search for meaning in life?

Since the beginning of time, human beings have tried to figure out the meaning of life. This is part of our human nature—to wonder about ourselves. It is as if there are two levels to life: the obvious, and then what is not so obvious at all and invites us to ‘go figure it out’.

A primary path by which we delve deeper into the meaning of things is through the creation and use of symbols. Symbols help us discern and make meaning out of life and express and share the meaning that we find. In John’s Gospel we encounter a symbol-laden world of meaning; deciphering the symbols in the Fourth Gospel will shed light on the meaning of God’s Revelation for our lives.

But first . . .

BRAINSTORM
- What is a symbol?
- What symbols can you think of from everyday life? Make a list.
- How and when can symbols have more than one meaning?
- Why do people use symbols?

Symbols touch us on many different levels and give us ways to express ourselves in more than just words. Symbols communicate experience where words are not enough. Unlike signs (for example, a traffic light), which have just one meaning, symbols have many meanings. Symbols convey meaning when an experience is so profound that it is difficult to find the words to communicate its meaning. For example, when someone dies or when people fall in love, symbols are often used to help express and communicate the meaning of what is taking place.

There are symbols that are particular to certain cultures or groups. For example, every baseball team has its own particular logo, nickname and colors, and every country has its national anthem. But there are also universal symbols that communicate across divides of time and culture. Light and water are examples of universal symbols.
Think for a moment about what light symbolizes. Then, with a partner, discuss the following questions:

- Why is light a very powerful symbol?
- What might light be used to symbolize?
- What might someone mean if they were to say, ‘You are the light of my life’?
- Share your best conclusions on why light is a powerful symbol.

As we turn to St. John’s symbol-laden Gospel, you will need to be all the more attuned to the language of symbol and the deeper meaning than the dictionary definition that symbols communicate. Throughout John’s Gospel the author uses the vivid imagery of symbols that were known by his audience to communicate the meaning of God’s Revelation in Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

There are four distinct parts in John’s account of the Gospel, all symbol-laden with meaning for life:

- The Prologue (1:1–18)
- The Book of Signs (1:19—12:50)
- The Book of Glory (13:1—20:31)
- The Epilogue: Appearances in Galilee (21)

The Prologue (John 1:1–18)

John’s Gospel begins with the Prologue, which is like an introduction. The very opening statement in the Prologue uses the symbols of light and darkness to identify Jesus and his work among us. We read:

What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. (John 1:4–5)

When John’s Gospel was written, the world was very different from our world today, where we can dispel darkness with the flick of a switch. People back then were all the more aware of how important light is for life and health and growth. So, to say that a light could not be quenched by darkness was a very strong statement.
**READING ACTIVITY**
As you read the Prologue now, mark all the symbols used in it and then discuss with a partner the possible meaning of each.

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 came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light.

The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. (John 1:1–14)

The Prologue uses a variety of symbols to provide a summary of the teaching about Jesus in this account of the Gospel. Here, Jesus is the Word who was God, pre-existing with God from all eternity. The Word participated in God's work of Creation, high-pointed in the creation of life, which is the light of the world. This life/light came into the world but was generally rejected (John is surely referring here to Jesus' Crucifixion). Those who do recognize and have faith in Jesus become children of God.

John concludes his summary with the amazing statement that 'the Word'—God—'became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father’s only son, full of grace and truth' (John 1:14). This is the most powerful statement we have of the Incarnation of the Son of God in the one divine Person of Jesus. The Son of God became one of ourselves without giving up his divinity. He was ‘full of grace and truth’—for us.

Let’s look closely at five more examples of the Prologue’s use of symbolic language:

In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. (John 1:1–2)

The Word was there from the beginning and was God’s instrument in Creation. Now made flesh in Jesus of Nazareth, the Word is the fullness of Revelation of who God is and how we are to live as the People of God.

All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. (John 1:3)
Through the Word, all things were created. So everything in the world manifests God to us. It is probably the poets who have best expressed this sentiment. Gerard Manley Hopkins wrote: ‘The world is charged with the grandeur of God.’ Another poet, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, put it thus: ‘Earth’s crammed with heaven, and every common bush afire with God.’

What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. (John 1:4–5)

Throughout John’s Gospel, the reason for the Word coming into the world is to bring life: ‘I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly’ (John 10:10). For John, life without Christ is life in the dark.

The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. (John 1:9)

John is saying that Jesus is the only true light to guide us on our way. His coming among humanity scattered the shadows of doubt, death and despair. Later John has Jesus declare, ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life’ (John 14:6).

And the Word became flesh and lived among us. (John 1:14)

The high point of God’s Revelation of himself and his divine plan came in Jesus, in whom the Word of God was made flesh: Jesus is true God and true man. The Incarnation of the Son of God in Jesus—from the Latin incarnatio, to take on flesh, or to become human—is the core of our Christian faith. As later Christians came to profess clearly, Jesus Christ is ‘of the same substance’ as God the Father in divinity and of us in humanity—which is the faith we profess in the Nicene Creed. Indeed, imagine the ‘grace and truth’ that we can find in Jesus. Through him our lives have profound meaning, and we can live the meaning that they have to the full.

**TAKE ANOTHER LOOK**

- What other symbolic language can you find in the Prologue? The footnotes in your Catholic Study Bible may help.

**WHAT ABOUT YOU PERSONALLY?**

- The Son of God became one of us in all things but sin. He took on human nature in the divine Person of Jesus. How do you think this will help you in your search to know God?
The authorship and content of John’s Gospel

OPENING CONVERSATION

If someone were writing about an event they had experienced, how might their account or analysis be different if they were writing:

a. immediately after it happened?
b. some years later?

What might be the strengths and weaknesses of each account?

THE IDENTITY OF JOHN THE EVANGELIST

Scholars all agree that John’s account of the Gospel was written well after the three Synoptics had come together; as we shall see, John’s Gospel presumes that the reader is familiar with the Synoptic Gospels. This advantage probably contributed to the writer’s ability to create a more mature presentation—after years of preaching and praying, living and reflecting—on Jesus and the work his Father sent him to do. But first, who was John? Get ready for some detective work!

From the days of the early Church, the Tradition of the Church has named John the Apostle, the brother of James, and who is thought to be the ‘beloved disciple’ (John 13:23; 19:26; 20:2 and 21:7, 20), to be the author of the Fourth Gospel. (Read Mark 1:19 for Jesus’ call of James and John.) The basis for identifying John the Apostle as the ‘beloved disciple’ or ‘the disciple whom Jesus loved’ is that John and James are the only members of the Twelve not named in the Fourth Gospel. This has led some people to assert that the author of John’s Gospel modestly refers to himself by that phrase. Summarizing the early Tradition of the Church, St. Irenaeus, writing about the year 190, attested: ‘John, the disciple of the Lord, who also had leaned upon his breast, did himself publish a Gospel during his residence at Ephesus in Asia.’

Let’s take a look at the references to ‘the disciple Jesus loved’ in the Gospel according to John. It is at the Last Supper that the ‘disciple whom Jesus loved’ first appears. There we see that he is the one leaning on the Lord’s breast, asking the question about who is the traitor among them. (Read John 13:23–25.) Later on, this beloved disciple appears at the foot of the Cross with Mary, the mother of Jesus, the only disciple to do so, and it is to this disciple that Jesus entrusts the care of his mother; and to Mary Jesus entrusts the care of this disciple, who is a symbol of the Church. (Read 19:26–27.)

There are also three references to the beloved disciple in the Resurrection Narratives. In chapter 20, Mary Magdalene goes to Jesus’ tomb ‘early on the first day of the week’ after Jesus’ Death and burial. When she sees that ‘the stone had been removed from the tomb’, she runs and tells Peter and ‘the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved’; both immediately run there. (Read
The disciple whom Jesus loved is a faster runner than Peter (Is he younger?), and gets there first. But he waits for Peter to go into the tomb before he enters. They both see the ‘linen wrappings’ lying there and ‘the cloth that had been on Jesus’ head’. (Read John 20:6–7.) Ironically, both of them leave, whereas Mary Magdalene stays on, and she is the one rewarded with the first appearance of the Risen Christ.

Finally, in chapter 21, this disciple is the only one who recognizes Jesus by the lake: ‘That disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, “It is the Lord!”’ (John 21:7). At the conclusion of this passage, in which Peter professes his love for Jesus and Jesus entrusts the care of the Church to Peter, we read: ‘Peter turned and saw the disciple who Jesus loved following them; he was the one who had reclined next to Jesus at the supper. . . . This is the disciple who is testifying to these things and has written them, and we know that his testimony is true’ (John 21:20, 24).

Elsewhere in John’s Gospel, there are other references to an anonymous disciple; could this also be John? The first reference is to the companion of Andrew, who had been a disciple of John the Baptist when both stayed with Jesus for a day. (Check out and read John 1:35–40.) The other reference concerns the disciple known to the high priest, who managed to get himself and Peter into the high priest’s house during the trial of Jesus. (Check out and read John 18:15–16. Is this a clue to the author?)

But does this settle the question: did John the Apostle really write the Fourth Gospel? Is the ‘disciple Jesus loved’ the same as John the Apostle, and the same as the anonymous disciple who was with John the Baptist and at the high priest’s house? And if so, did this John write the Fourth Gospel?

Some scholars say ‘Yes’, as does the ancient tradition of Irenaeus.
Gospel that the Church recognizes to be inspired by the Holy Spirit and that accurately passes on the apostolic faith in Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

REFLECT AND DISCUSS
 nø In light of what you have read in this section, what evidence is there that John the Apostle was the author of the Fourth Gospel?
 nø How might the facts that the author of John’s Gospel wrote his account of the Gospel after the other Evangelists and that he had known Jesus personally have helped him?

WHAT IS DISTINCTIVE ABOUT JOHN’S ACCOUNT OF THE GOSPEL?
The writer of the Gospel of John wrote from the perspective of one who had spent time with Jesus, listened to his words, accompanied him during his public ministry, witnessed his Death and Resurrection, and whose faith had been profoundly shaped by the experience of Jesus’ Resurrection. What distinguishes John’s Gospel from the Synoptics are the following key differences:

First, the Gospel of John presumes that the reader is already familiar with the Synoptic Gospels. Why is that? Very little is repeated in John from the three Synoptics. There are no parables, for instance, no Sermon on the Mount, no (or very little) mention of the Kingdom of God, nor of Christ’s body and blood given at the Last Supper.

Second and more significant, the Fourth Gospel focuses more on the divinity of Christ, while the Synoptics each present a very human Jesus who is gradually recognized to be divine, the Son of God. In John’s Gospel, Jesus from the beginning is clearly divine. He is the ‘Word

The seven ‘I am’ statements of Jesus

A key and unique writing technique in John’s Gospel is his use of seven ‘I am’ sayings or statements to teach that Jesus is divine, truly God. These two words, ‘I am’, have their roots in the Book of Exodus when God reveals his identity, his name, to Moses. When Moses asks the voice in the burning bush, ‘If I come to the Israelites and say to them, “The God of your ancestors has sent me to you”, and they ask me, “What is his name?”, what shall I say to them?’, God says to Moses, ‘I AM WHO I AM . . . . Thus you shall say to the Israelites, “I AM has sent me to you”’ (Exodus 3:13–14). These words had very clear meaning for the audience for whom John’s Gospel was written, namely, Jews who came to believe in Jesus. How significant it is, then, that Jesus so often echoes this divine name and applies it to himself.

The seven ‘I am’ statements of Jesus are included in and are part of longer sermons, or discourses, of Jesus. They are: ‘I am the bread of life’ (6:35); ‘I am the light of the world’ (8:12); ‘I am the gate’ (10:9); ‘I am the good shepherd’ (10:11); ‘I am the resurrection and the life’ (11:25); ‘I am the way, and the truth, and the life’ (14:6); and ‘I am the vine’ (15:5).

‘I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live’ (11:25). What an extraordinary promise—those who believe in Jesus will live forever. No wonder John can say, ‘For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life’ (3:16).
who was God’ (John 1:1) who has come among us. John’s Gospel was written around the year 90, during a time of conflict between Jews who accepted Jesus and those who did not, to support the faithful and to encourage them to remain faithful to Christ in their time of suffering. Jesus clearly favors those who do believe in him, and sounds harsh against those who do not. We need to read his condemnations in this context—a struggle to hold on to Christian converts—and apply the meaning of their message to situations that we face in our time.

John’s central theme is Jesus as the Christ and Messiah, the Son of God, who was present with God from all eternity and has come to reveal God to us. God in Jesus marks the triumph of light over darkness, truth over untruth, freedom over slavery, life over death—and his disciples share in these victories. Jesus’ miracles—seven great ones in John’s Gospel—are signs of who Jesus is, and are meant to evoke faith in Jesus, the Son of God, in those who witness them.

Another theme in John’s Gospel is Jesus’ affection and care for his disciples, whom he calls ‘friends’ (John 15:14–15). There is a deep intimacy between Jesus and his disciples; when he said, ‘I am the vine’, he immediately added, ‘and you are the branches’ (15:5). His whole last discourse on the night before he died, chapters 14 to 17, speaks of his great love and concern for his disciples, praying ‘that they may all be one’ (17:21) and that ‘my joy might be in you, and that your joy may be complete’ (15:11). And he promised to send the Holy Spirit upon them to enable them to continue his own saving work throughout the world and down through human history: ‘I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever. This is the Spirit of truth…’ (14:16–17). God’s saving work in the divine Son, Jesus, continues now through the Church—his community of disciples—through the power of the Holy Spirit.

John sums up his aim in writing his Gospel for Jews who had come to believe in Jesus (and thus for disciples in every age and every place) when he says: ‘These things are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name’ (John 20:31).

**TALK IT OVER**
- What is your initial impression of Jesus as John represents him?
- Discuss why you think John might have chosen to explore the meaning for us of Jesus’ words and actions rather than simply narrate them.

**WHAT ABOUT YOU PERSONALLY?**
- John sums up his aim in writing his Gospel when he says: ‘These things are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name’ (John 20:31). Reflect on your own belief that Jesus is the Messiah. What difference does this belief make to your hopes and fears for your life?
A Different Perspective on Miracles

Jesus once said to the people, ‘Unless you see signs and wonders you will not believe’ (John 4:48). What do you think he meant?

In our everyday lives, where do we see ‘signs’ or evidence of God’s presence?

Do you think miracles still happen? Why or why not?

The Book of Signs (John 1:19–12:50)

The second section of John’s Gospel is the Book of Signs. In this section of the Fourth Gospel there are seven ‘sign’ (or miracle) stories. In John, ‘works’ or ‘signs’ are used to mean ‘evidence’ of God’s presence in Jesus. This echoes the Old Testament, which refers to the freeing of the Israelites from Egypt as the ‘works of God’, and describes the ‘signs of God’ performed by Moses. The signs or miracles of Jesus in the Gospel of John are evidence of a new reality—that God is in Jesus saving the world. Jesus is the Word of God made flesh in the world for our salvation. He is the true and complete Revelation of the Father. ‘No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father’s heart, who has made him known’ (John 1:18). In summary, the writer of John’s Gospel includes these signs not only to reveal that Jesus is the saving Son of God, but also to invite his readers to faith in Jesus and to understand the new life that is God’s gift to all who believe in Jesus.

GROUP WORK/DISCUSSION

Look up and read some of the seven signs in the Book of Signs (John 1:19—12:50): The wedding at Cana (John 2:1–11); Jesus heals an official’s son (John 4:46–54); the cure of the paralytic man at the pool (John 5:1–47); the feeding of the five thousand (John 6:1–14); the walking on water (John 6:16–24); the restoring of sight to a man born blind (John 9:1–12); the raising of Lazarus to life (John 11:38–44).

Notice in these stories how people seem...
to discuss the sign or evidence after it has happened. Whether they are Jesus’ close disciples and companions, Jews who have come to believe in Jesus, the crowd who are attracted to him, or his Jewish opponents, or even the people for whom the ‘work’ was done, they are often confused about what the ‘miracle’ might mean. They needed to ‘go deeper’—as we do!

○ Pick out some phrases in the passages you read that indicate what the listeners thought these ‘works of Jesus’ meant; see for example John 6:14. What do you think these works ‘said’ to the people who witnessed them?

○ Pick out the words of Jesus in each passage. What is the deeper meaning of these words in the context of the stories?

○ Search for passages in the stories that show that faith had a role in these ‘works’ of Jesus. What do they mean for our own faith today?

The Book of Glory
(John 13:1–20:31)

In this third section of John’s Gospel, the writer passes on the apostolic faith in the meaning of Jesus’ identity, life and work. Many of the chapters in this section are part of the Last Supper discourse, one of several long discourses in John’s Gospel. In the Last Supper discourse, Jesus makes no secret of who he is or what he is doing. As in the opening Prologue, he is the Son, sent by God to bring light to the world.

The Last Supper discourse (John 13–17)

In chapter 13, John’s account of the Gospel has the Last Supper of Jesus with his disciples take place on the day when the lambs were killed for the Passover meal, clearly referring to and recalling the release of the Israelites from slavery in Egypt. The Old Testament tells us that the Israelites sprinkled lambs’ blood on the doorposts of their houses. The angel of the Lord who slew the first born of the Egyptians passed over these houses and their first born were spared. (Read Exodus 12:1–32.) John’s Gospel describes Jesus as the Lamb of God, whose blood, shed on the cross, freed all people from the slavery of sin.

Unlike the Synoptics, John’s Gospel does not give an account of the institution of the Eucharist at Jesus’ final Passover meal with the disciples. Instead, it tells the story of Jesus washing the disciples’ feet before the meal and his final discourse with his disciples. The washing of the feet sets the context for Jesus’ teaching on the true meaning of being his disciple. It was an amazing and most symbolic act by Jesus. He, their leader, was performing a task for them that not even a slave was required to perform. When he had finished, Jesus said to them, ‘If I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet. For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you’ (John 13:14–15).

Jesus was teaching that his disciples must become as servants, as he was the Servant. We, his disciples, are ‘apprenticed’—the meaning of ‘disciple’—to a Master who shows us the way, a way whose heart is service to others.
Jesus was teaching that his disciples must become as servants, as he was the Servant.

**TALK IT OVER. . . .**

- We remember Jesus’ washing of the feet of his disciples in our Liturgy on Holy Thursday. How is ‘the rite of the washing of the feet’ remembered in your church?
- What do you think Jesus was teaching all disciples—forever after—through this action?

In chapters 14 to 17 of his final discourse to his disciples, Jesus speaks to them about the fact that soon he will leave them. It is as if he is telling them all the things he would want them to remember once he is no longer with them. He explains that he is giving this final instruction ‘so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete’ (John 15:11). To live as a disciple of Jesus, embracing his Good News, is to find true joy and real peace in life.

Jesus urges his disciples to remain strong and united. He promises to send them the Holy Spirit as a helper, describing the Spirit as the ‘Parakletos’, which means comforter or advocate.

I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever. This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you. (John 14:16–17)

He also asks his disciples to love him by living as he modeled and taught. Then he and the Father will be present in them. He says, ‘Those who love me will keep my word, and my Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them’ (John 14:23). Jesus concludes this section of the discourse by sharing with them the gift of his peace: ‘Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you’ (John 14:27).

In the next section of the discourse, Jesus speaks of his relationship with his disciples (his first disciples and his future disciples). This is one of the best known and most important passages in the New Testament. It is the final ‘I am’ saying in John’s Gospel. In it Jesus speaks of himself as the vine, his Father as the vinegrower, and the disciples as branches. He tells them (and us) that, like shoots on a vine, he (‘I am’ or God) is the source of all life for them (and us): ‘I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinegrower. . . . Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you the branches’ (John 15:1, 4–5). United with him, his disciples will have the true life and bear the richest fruit. They will have the gift of peace or ‘shalom’ from God.

Jesus continues to speak of the depth of his relationship with his disciples. He commands them to witness to their love of him by loving one another as he has loved them, saying, ‘This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you’ (John 15:12). He then sums up the depth of his love for them, calling them ‘friends’: ‘No one has greater love than this, to
lay down one’s life for one’s friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you’ (John 15:13–14). His coming Death on the Cross, his hour of glory, will be the greatest sign of his love for and commitment to them, his friends. Jesus seems to raise the level of demand in the Great Commandment of love, which is at the heart of living the New Covenant (see Matthew 22:15–22, Mark 12:1–12 and Luke 20:9–19), as it was of the Old (see Leviticus 19:18 and Deuteronomy 6:5), binding God and his people. Indeed, we are to love God by loving our neighbor as ourselves; however, the model here is that of Jesus’ own love for his friends and for his Father.

In chapter 16 Jesus prepares his disciples for his own Death and the suffering and persecution they will suffer for their faith in him—being a disciple always has been and always will be very demanding. Jesus repeats his promise to send ‘the Spirit of truth’ who ‘will guide you into all the truth’ (John 16:13). We know that the Holy Spirit continues to guide the Church toward the truth today. Jesus alerts his disciples that he is about to leave them—his Crucifixion is the very next day—but like a woman who forgets her labor pangs after the child is born, so, too, their joy will be made ‘complete’ (John 16:24). John knows well that Jesus’ Death led to Resurrection and new life.

The discourse concludes with chapter 17, which is Jesus’ prayer to his Father for his disciples. As the prayer ends, Jesus prays, ‘Father, I desire that those also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory, which you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world’ (John 17:24).

**REFLECTIVE EXERCISE**

Stop for a moment and imagine yourself as a disciple sitting at the Last Supper table with Jesus. What are you hearing from him? What do his words mean to you?

**Jesus’ suffering and Death and Resurrection**

From chapter 18 on, John’s Gospel recounts the story of Jesus’ Passion (his suffering and Death) and Resurrection. However, the theme is quite different from that in the Synoptic Gospels. For now, the writer can tell us, from the vantage point of the end of the first century, what the Death of Jesus means. Here, Jesus’ Death is not seen as tragic at all—it is a necessary step in his glorious return to the Father. This account of the Gospel assures us that trust in God will be rewarded.

And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also. (John 14:3)

No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.

**JOHN 15:13**
READING ACTIVITY

- Working in pairs, read chapters 18 and 19 of John’s Gospel. Each person, in turn, could read a paragraph while the other listens; then the ‘listener’ summarizes what he or she has heard. Continue like this until you have read the two chapters.

- Then see if you can remember the three places where Peter denied Jesus. Discuss why you think Peter did this. See if you can remember the words Jesus said on the Cross.

After the Resurrection, according to John’s Gospel, Jesus appeared first to a woman, Mary Magdalene. He called Mary by name, and she recognized him as the Lord. Then the Risen Jesus sent her to bring the Good News of the Resurrection to the other disciples (John 20:17). The Risen Jesus also appeared to the disciples who had gathered together and were hiding behind a locked door. He commissioned them to continue the work he had begun.

Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained. (John 20:22–23)

The Epilogue (John 21)

In the final chapter of John’s Gospel Jesus appears to the disciples on the shores of Lake Galilee, where he shares a breakfast of bread and fish with them.

GROUP WORK

- Look up the different appearances of the Risen Jesus after the Resurrection as told by John in chapters 20 and 21. In small groups, choose one of these post-Resurrection stories and act it out. Think about how the different people would feel in the situation—excited, shocked or maybe even afraid! Try to convey this in your short role-play or by using a freeze-frame (which is like a still photo).
THINK IT THROUGH

Exploring the meaning for us in John’s Gospel

OPENING ACTIVITY

- Work in small groups to produce a diagram or mind-map titled ‘What’s Wrong with the World?’ When you have done this, try to agree as a group on what is the single biggest problem in the world. Then have a class discussion based on your ideas.
- Do you think the world still needs a Savior? Why or why not?
- How does a Christian perspective on the world help us to address our many problems?
- What hope and challenge does John’s Gospel put before us in the context of today’s world?

JESUS—TRUE GOD AND TRUE MAN

John wrote his account of the Gospel for the early Church in Ephesus. In their prayer and in their reflection, these believers were in danger of losing sight of the fact that Jesus was true God and true man. John wanted to affirm and strengthen their faith that the Son of God had truly become a man in Jesus. As John says in the Prologue: ‘The Word became flesh and lived among us’ (John 1:14). John also alerted his readers to the fact that Jesus called and continues to call his disciples to reflect in their own lives the love with which he has loved them, the very love of God.

I give you a new command, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love one for another. (John 13:34–35)

This is the ‘new commandment’ that Jesus gave to the disciples—we are to aspire to the unconditional love that we see in him and that reveals to us the very love of God. When we keep Jesus’ commandments, we show our love for him. Jesus said, ‘They who have my commandments and keep them are those who love me; and those who love me will be loved by the Father, . . . and we will come to them and make our home with them’ (John 14:21, 23).

John also alerted his readers to the fact that Jesus called and continues to call his disciples to reflect in their own lives the love with which he has loved them, the very love of God.

For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. (John 3:16)
Hypostatic Union

The fact that the Son of God became man in the Incarnation does not mean that Jesus Christ is part God and part man. The Son of God, the Second Person of the Trinity, became truly man while remaining truly God. Jesus Christ is true God and true man. Jesus possesses two natures, one divine nature and one human nature, united in one divine Person, the Son of God. The term ‘Hypostatic Union’ refers to this unity of God and man in one divine Person, Jesus Christ.

JUDGE AND DECIDE

☐ Why do you think God chose to become man and live among us?

☐ How does knowing and understanding Jesus help you to know and understand God? To know and understand yourself?

☐ What is the hope that John’s Gospel offers to all who believe?

RELATIONSHIPS IN JOHN’S GOSPEL

John’s account of the Gospel describes many significant encounters between Jesus and various persons. One of the great stories in John’s Gospel tells of the meeting between Jesus and the Samaritan woman. Read this story now in John 4:5–29.

TALK IT OVER. . . .

☐ What do you think of the response of the Samaritan woman when Jesus asked for a drink? (Remember that it was the custom for Jews not to associate or share things with Samaritans because Jews considered that Samaritans were guilty of false worship. The woman alludes to this in verse 20 when she says to Jesus, ‘Sir, I see that you are a prophet. Our ancestors worshipped on this mountain but you say that the place where people must worship is Jerusalem.’)

☐ Why do you think the disciples reacted as they did when they saw Jesus talking to the woman? (Clue: In first-century Israel, men did not talk to women in public.)

☐ The woman obviously did not know what Jesus meant when he spoke of ‘living water’. What do you think is the ‘living water’ that Jesus promised to her—and to disciples ever after?

☐ In the end, how did the woman react toward Jesus?

☐ What do you think of the question that the woman asks in verse 29?

☐ How many times in this story does Jesus show that he is not bound by customs and stereotypes when the message of the Gospel is at stake?

☐ How can you have access to the ‘living water’ that Jesus spoke of?

☐ What is the ‘life’ that it can give you?

GROUP WORK/DISCUSSION

☐ Find more stories in John’s Gospel that tell of significant encounters between Jesus and others. List the references.

☐ What do each of these stories reveal about Jesus and his attitude to other people?

☐ What do each of these stories say to you in your life right now?

Hypostatic Union

The fact that the Son of God became man in the Incarnation does not mean that Jesus Christ is part God and part man. The Son of God, the Second Person of the Trinity, became truly man while remaining truly God. Jesus Christ is true God and true man. Jesus possesses two natures, one divine nature and one human nature, united in one divine Person, the Son of God. The term ‘Hypostatic Union’ refers to this unity of God and man in one divine Person, Jesus Christ.
IMAGES OF JESUS IN JOHN’S GOSPEL
The following are some of the images that John’s Gospel presents of Jesus:

- The Word made flesh (John 1:14)
- The Light of the World (John 8:12)
- The Good Shepherd (John 10:11)
- The Way, the Truth and the Life (John 14:6)
- The Lamb of God (John 1:29)
- The Vine (John 15)
- The Bread of Life (John 6:35)
- The Resurrection and the Life (John 11:25)

OVER TO YOU
- Choose the image that means most to you. Read the passage in which it is contained.
- What does this image mean to you in your daily life?
- How does it help you?
- How does it challenge you?

Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!

JOHN 1:29
JUDGE AND ACT

REVIEW AND DISCUSS

- What stands out for you as the greatest ‘good news’ from John’s Gospel?
- What do you like best about John’s portrayal of Jesus?
- How will you take to heart the ‘grace and truth’ revealed in John’s Gospel?

LEARN BY EXAMPLE

The story of Maximillian Kolbe

In John’s Gospel, Jesus asked his disciples to be prepared to serve, even if they had to suffer in doing so. Here is the story of someone who did as Jesus asked.

Maximilian Kolbe was born in January 1894 in what was then a part of Russia. In 1907 he and his brother joined the Capuchin branch of the Franciscan Order. He was ordained in 1918 and returned to the newly independent Poland, where he founded the monastery of Niepokalanów near Warsaw. Between 1930 and 1936 he led a number of missions to Japan, where he built another monastery. During the Second World War he provided food and safety for some two thousand Jewish refugees from Poland in his monastery at Niepokalanów. For this, he was arrested by the German Gestapo and transferred to Auschwitz in May 1941. There he was simply known as Prisoner 16670.

Three months after he arrived in Auschwitz, a prisoner escaped from Kolbe’s barracks. In order to dissuade other prisoners from attempting to escape, the commander announced that ten prisoners would die. He chose ten men at random as he walked along the line. One of the men, Franciszek Gajowniczek, cried out for mercy, saying that he had a wife and family. Immediately Maximilian Kolbe stepped forward and said that he would like to take this man’s place.

‘Who are you?’ asked the commander. Kolbe replied, ‘A priest.’ The commander was dumbfounded. He kicked Gajowniczek out of the line and ordered Father Kolbe to join the other nine.

In the ‘block of death’ the men were ordered to strip naked, and the slow starvation of the ten men began. Maximilian Kolbe led the men in song and prayer. After three weeks of starvation and dehydration, only Kolbe and three others were still alive. Finally, on August 14, the eve of the Feast of the Assumption, Maximilian Kolbe was killed by an injection of carbolic acid. The Church beatified him in 1971 and canonized him in 1982.
LEARN BY HEART

Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.

JOHN 13:34–35

JOURNAL EXERCISE

Jesus called upon his followers to lay down their lives for their friends. You are not likely to be asked to die for your faith, but as a disciple you are invited to live it. What is the biggest challenge this holds for young people today? For you personally? Write your thoughts on this.

GROUP DISCUSSION

Sometimes people make great sacrifices for others that go unnoticed. People in families do without things so that others can have what they need. In local communities people often work as volunteers so that others can have a better life.

Share some stories of such people in your families or in the communities where you live.

Then discuss how the people you chose as examples are living as Jesus taught in the Gospel according to John.

RESPOND WITH YOUR FAMILY AND FRIENDS

Jesus prayed for peace for his followers before he left them. You might decide to pray the following prayer of St. Francis with your family or friends.

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace;
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;
Where there is injury, pardon;
Where there is doubt, faith;
Where there is despair, hope;
Where there is darkness, light;
And where there is sadness, joy.
Grant that I may not so much seek
To be consoled as to console;
To be understood as to understand;
To be loved as to love;
For it is in giving that we receive,
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
And it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

WHAT WILL YOU DO NOW?

Are there things that you do that break rather than build peace at home? In your neighborhood? With your friends? Decide how you will change your behavior.

What practical things might you do in your day-to-day life to serve and love others as Jesus commanded?
PRAYER REFLECTION

Pray the Sign of the Cross together.

LEADER
Let us remember and reflect upon some of the things Jesus said about himself in John’s Gospel.

READER 1
Jesus said: ‘I am the vine, you are the branches’ (John 15:5).

(Pause)
Jesus is the source of your life and my life in faith.

Lord Jesus, help us to bear in our lives the abundant fruit of love for others.

READER 2
Jesus said: ‘I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me’ (John 10:14).

(Pause)
Jesus knows us through and through. He loves us always and unconditionally.

Lord Jesus, help us to show our families and friends that we love them.

READER 3
Jesus said: ‘I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty’ (John 6:35).

(Pause)
When we take time to grow in our relationship with Jesus, he answers all our real needs.

Lord Jesus, help me to make space to talk to you every day. Help me to listen so that I will hear your promptings in my heart and respond as your disciple.

READER 4
Jesus said: ‘I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life’ (John 8:12).

(Pause)
Jesus is our constant companion. He shines a light on our path, showing us the way to live as disciples.

Lord Jesus, be a light for me always, but especially when I seem to be surrounded by darkness.

LEADER
Lord Jesus Christ, you said to your Apostles: ‘I leave you peace, my peace I give you.’

Look not on our sins, but on the faith of your Church, and grant us the peace and unity of your kingdom where you live for ever and ever.

ALL
Amen.

Pray the Sign of the Cross together.
CHAPTER 12

The Gospel According to John — Jesus Is God’s Word to the World

INTRODUCTION
In this chapter we explore the Gospel according to St. John and discuss the identity of its author. The chapter is developed under the following five major headings:

- **ATTEND AND REFLECT:** How important are symbols in the search for meaning in life?
- **HEAR THE STORY:** The authorship and content of John’s Gospel
- **EMBRACE THE VISION:** A different perspective on miracles
- **THINK IT THROUGH:** Exploring the meaning for us in John’s Gospel
- **JUDGE AND ACT (Activities and exercises that encourage the young people to integrate what they have learned in the chapter into their daily lives)**

Theological Background for the Teacher

THE AUTHORSHIP OF JOHN’S GOSPEL
Biblical scholars place the writing of the Gospel of John, or the Fourth Gospel, toward the end of the first century AD. This account of the Gospel has long been associated with the early Church in the port city of Ephesus, which is on the west coast of the country we now call Turkey.

According to tradition, the author of the Fourth Gospel is John the Apostle. He was the younger son of Zebedee, whose family had a fishing boat on the Sea of Galilee. His mother was Salome. Along with his brother James, he followed the call of Jesus (Mark 1:20). It is likely that James and John were in some kind of partnership with Peter in the fishing trade. John was especially close to Jesus and he is frequently referred to in the Fourth Gospel as the ‘disciple Jesus loved’ (John 13:23, 19:26, 21:7 and 21:20). Peter, James and John were often the ones chosen to accompany Jesus.

SYMBOLIC LANGUAGE
In the first section of this chapter we spend some time introducing the young people to the language of symbol in order to prepare them for their reading of St. John’s Gospel. John’s account of the Gospel, more than any of the other three, is rich in symbolic language and imagery.

Much of our religious language is symbolic. It has to be because it deals with ‘mystery’ and with the human person in relation to what is not immediately perceived by the senses in ordinary experience. Symbolic language points to particular realities, of whose truth only a fragment is caught in our everyday language. For example, the Bible describes God as light, which he is, but not in the way we commonly experience or think of light.

Young people are constantly using symbols in their communication, in their celebrations and in their activities, such as sport, drama, dance and so on. In this chapter we encourage the students to explore their own experience of the use of symbols and symbolic language in their everyday lives.

This exploration of the use of symbols in the young people’s own life experiences leads on to an exploration of the Prologue to John’s Gospel (John 1:1—18), the language of which is, to a large extent, symbolic. Here John describes Jesus as the Word.

The central theme of the Prologue is Revelation. It begins: ‘In the beginning was the Word. . . .’ The Word was there before Creation and was God’s instrument in Creation. Now that Word, Jesus of Nazareth, is present among us.

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES
Section two of this chapter explores the ways in which John’s Gospel differs from the Synoptic Gospels. While the essential message of John’s account of the Gospel is the same as that of Matthew, Mark and Luke, it differs from them in many ways. For example:
Some of the people who have not appeared in any of the Synoptics, such as Nicodemus and the Samaritan woman, are central to John's Gospel.

John is less interested in telling us stories about the events of the life of Jesus and more interested in revealing the meaning of what Jesus did and said.

There are few short pithy sayings from Jesus and more long teachings, or discourses, such as the Last Supper discourse, which we discuss in section four of this chapter.

The language in John's Gospel frequently makes use of symbols and tends to be more theological than that of Matthew, Mark and Luke.

**JOHN’S PRESENTATION OF JESUS**

John’s Gospel, from its opening words, emphasizes the ‘divinity of Christ’. John declares: ‘In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God’ (John 1:1). John frequently identifies Jesus to be ‘The Word’. The wonder of the Incarnation is that God the Son, the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, became man: ‘The Word became flesh and lived among us’ (John 1:14). Jesus is the living Revelation of God, and what he reveals is love (John 3:16). Christians are called to reflect that love in their own communities (John 17:11, 21).

The way in which the author teaches about the identity and ministry of Jesus and how God touches human life through Jesus is deftly conveyed in the seven ‘I am’ statements: John 6:35; 8:12; 10:9; 10:11; 11:25; 14:6; 15:5. These are dealt with in section two of the chapter.

**THE ROLE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

The Evangelist notes with particular care the role of the Holy Spirit in the life of Jesus’ disciples. The Holy Spirit is the teacher of Jesus’ disciples (the Church) and their advocate. According to John 14:16, the Holy Spirit is involved in the remembering of Christ’s words and actions as they are pondered again with new levels of insight. Through the Spirit, Christ talks to the believers as, through the ages, they attempt to grasp the mystery in different situations (John 16:13, 14). There is a link between the Spirit and worship in John 4:24: ‘God is Spirit and those who worship him must worship in Spirit and truth.’ The disciples of Jesus (the Church) are temples of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19), a living prayer, moved by the Holy Spirit and directed by true teaching.

See general note on page X of this resource.

**Learning Outcomes**

As a result of studying this chapter and exploring the issues raised, the young people should be able to:

- recognize and explain symbols used in John’s Gospel;
- understand the context in which John wrote his Gospel and how that influenced what he wrote;
- list some differences between John’s Gospel and the Synoptic Gospels;
- through becoming familiar with the ‘I am’ statements of Jesus, list some of the images of Jesus in John’s Gospel;
- understand the significance of the miracle (sign) stories in John’s Gospel;
- appreciate the significance of a number of passages from the Last Supper discourse in John’s Gospel;
- reflect upon chapters 18 and 19 of John’s Gospel;
- understand Mary Magdalene’s role in the Post-Resurrection Narratives;
- find and read in John’s Gospel accounts of significant relationships Jesus had with people;
- understand the term ‘Hypostatic Union’;
- know the story of Maximilian Kolbe.

**Faith-formation Outcomes**

As a result of studying this chapter and exploring the issues raised, the young people should also be able to:

- identify and appreciate the power of symbols in their own lives;
- reflect on how the humanity of Jesus can help them in their efforts to live as disciples of Jesus;
- recognize people in their families and neighborhoods who make significant sacrifices for others.
Teacher Reflection

A Teacher’s Prayer
God, our Master,
You are the Supreme Teacher
Who illumines human beings with truth.
Blessed be your word of love.
God, our Father,
Make me your echo,
And allow me to sow truth and goodness.
Blessed be your attitude,
So full of understanding.
God, our Master,
Let me be passionate about beauty
And truth,
And warm my heart with your commandments.

Blessed be your light of truth,
Filled with blessings for us.
Grant me the gift of conveying,
Teaching, correcting, and indicating your ways,
Your shining glorious kindness.
God, our Master,
Direct my mind to your truth,
My hands to kind acts.
I am small and frail in your light,
But allow me to fulfill my difficult mission.
Blessed be your mercy,
Which teaches us so much.
Amen.

– Hugo Schlesinger
ATTEND AND REFLECT

How important are symbols in the search for meaning in life?

Learning Outcome
That the young people would:
○ recognize and explain symbols used in John's Gospel.

Faith-formation Outcome
That the young people would also:
○ identify and appreciate the power of symbols in their own lives.

Overview
Chapter 12 begins by introducing the young people to the use and significance of symbols in their lives. We then take a brief look at the structure of John's Gospel and focus on the symbolic language in the Prologue.

Supplementary Activities for ‘Attend and Reflect’

Teacher Tip: You might invite the young people to recall what they learned about literary genres in chapter 8 and identify the ‘language of symbol’ as a literary genre.

Worksheet 1: ‘Symbols in My Life’ (page 214 of this resource) encourages the young people to think about and name some of the important symbols in their lives and to articulate why they regard these symbols as important.

Worksheet 2: ‘The Light of the World’ (page 216 of this resource) helps the young people to explore the various ‘lights’ in their world. From this we encourage them to imagine what their life would be like if they really believed that ‘Jesus is the light of my world’.

The Nicene Creed is referred to on page XXX of the students’ text. Worksheet 3: ‘The Nicene Creed’ (page 217 of this resource) provides an opportunity for the young people to explore this Creed in more detail. While the Creed regularly professed at Mass is named by most as ‘The Nicene Creed’, in reality it is the revision of the Creed adopted at the Council of Nicaea (325) by the Council of Constantinople (381). Hence the name ‘The Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed’.

HEAR THE STORY

The authorship and content of John’s Gospel

Learning Outcomes
That the young people would:
○ understand the context in which John wrote his Gospel and how that influenced what he wrote;
○ list some differences between John’s Gospel and the Synoptic Gospels;
○ through becoming familiar with the ‘I am’ statements of Jesus, list some of the images of Jesus in John’s Gospel.

Overview
This section begins by exploring the identity of John the Evangelist and the authorship of the Fourth Gospel. It goes on to examine the significance and meaning of the seven ‘I am’ statements and the relationship that Jesus had with his disciples as expressed in John’s Gospel.

Supplementary Activities for ‘Hear the Story’

Worksheet 4: ‘The Seven “I Am” Statements of Jesus in John’s Gospel’ (page 218 of this resource) invites the young people to reflect on what Jesus meant by these statements, and then, in groups, to compose their own ‘I am’ statements based on the Gospel message. This exercise will help the young people to become more familiar with the message Jesus taught about himself and his identity.
Creative Activity
Encourage the young people to draw a picture or write a news report that would sum up John’s portrait of Jesus. They could do this activity alone or in pairs.

EMBRACE THE VISION
A different perspective on miracles

Learning Outcomes
That the young people would:
- understand the significance of the miracle (sign) stories in John’s Gospel;
- appreciate the significance of a number of passages from the Last Supper discourse in John’s Gospel;
- reflect upon chapters 18 and 19 of John’s Gospel;
- understand Mary Magdalene’s role in the Post-Resurrection Narratives.

Overview
This is a long section which begins with the seven signs in the second part of John’s Gospel, the Book of Signs. It then explores the Last Supper discourse and helps the young people to understand the meaning of some of the passages from it. Finally it looks at the Death and Resurrection of Jesus and at the post-Resurrection stories in John’s Gospel.

Supplementary Activities for ‘Embrace the Vision’

Worksheet 5: ‘The Miracles of Jesus (1)’ (page 220 of this resource) will help the young people to become more familiar with the details of the miracle (sign) stories in John’s Gospel.

Worksheet 6: ‘The Miracles of Jesus (2)’ (page 221 of this resource) invites the young people to find specific biblical references for Jesus’ miraculous deeds in all four accounts of the Gospel.

THINK IT THROUGH
Exploring the meaning for us in John’s Gospel

Learning Outcomes
That the young people would:
- find and read in John’s Gospel accounts of significant relationships Jesus had with people;
- through becoming familiar with the ‘I am’ statements of Jesus, list some of the images of Jesus that are presented in John’s Gospel;
- understand the term ‘Hypostatic Union’.

Faith-formation Outcome
That the young people would also:
- reflect on how the humanity of Jesus can help them in their efforts to live as followers of Jesus.

Overview
This section begins by focusing on the fact that John’s Gospel emphasized that Jesus was true God and true man. It goes on to explore some of the significant relationships and encounters Jesus had with people. The section concludes by examining some of the images of Jesus from John’s Gospel.

Supplementary Activities for ‘Think it Through’

Teacher Tip: The ‘Group Work/Discussion’ activity on page X of the students’ text asks the young people to identify accounts in John’s Gospel of significant encounters Jesus had with others, apart from his meeting with the Samaritan woman. These could include Nicodemus (John 3:1–21) or the woman caught in adultery (John 8:1–11).
Worksheet 7: ‘Images of Jesus in John’s Gospel’ (page 223 of this resource) offers the young people an opportunity to give their own artistic interpretations of some of the images of Jesus from John’s Gospel. This activity will help the students to become more familiar with the character of Jesus as presented in John’s Gospel.

Art Activity
Invite the young people to make a piece of artwork of an image for Jesus that appeals in a particular way to them. The class might like to organize an exhibition of these artworks.

JUDGE AND ACT

Learning Outcome
That the young people would:
• know the story of Maximilian Kolbe.

Faith-formation Outcome
That the young people would also:
• recognize people in their families and neighborhoods who make significant sacrifices for others.

Overview
John’s Gospel emphasized that sometimes we have to be prepared to suffer if we want to count ourselves among the disciples of Jesus. In this final section we introduce the young people to Maximilian Kolbe as an example of someone who made the ultimate sacrifice for his faith.

Supplementary Activities for ‘Judge and Act’

In the Spotlight
(See instructions for ‘In the Spotlight’ activities in the ‘Student Activity Tool Kit’, page 241 of this resource.)

By the end of chapter 12 the young people should be familiar with the four Evangelists. To recap and assess the students’ knowledge, invite Matthew, Mark, Luke and John to ‘sit in the spotlight’ and answer questions about their accounts of the Gospel, who they wrote for and so on.

Scripture Reflection
(See instructions for the use of doodling in prayer in the ‘Student Activity Tool Kit’, page 241 of this resource.)

Use the following Scripture verse to engage the young people in prayer:

For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

JOHN 3:16
Review of Chapter 12

1. Fill in the blanks with the most appropriate words from the wordbank.

a. Symbols have __________ meanings.
b. There are __________ distinct parts to John’s Gospel.
c. John’s Gospel begins with the __________, which is like an introduction.
d. Throughout John’s Gospel, the reason for the Word coming into the world is to bring __________.
e. ‘John the Apostle’ is also known as the __________ disciple.
f. Before he died on the Cross, Jesus entrusted the care of his mother to ________________
g. There are __________ ‘I am’ statements in John’s Gospel.
h. One of the great prayers of Jesus to the Father on the night before he died was ‘That they may all be __________’
i. In John’s Gospel, the miracles are contained in what is known as the Book of __________.
j. There are __________ miracle stories in John’s Gospel.
k. When Jesus washed his disciples’ feet at the Last Supper, he was teaching them that they should be __________ to others.
l. Jesus promised to send the Holy Spirit to his disciples to be their __________.
m. Jesus also referred to the Holy Spirit as the ________________.
n. According to John’s Gospel, Jesus appeared first to a woman named ________________.

Wordbank
Mary Magdalene; John the Apostle; Parakletos; servants; one; seven; helper; beloved; life; Signs; four; many; Prologue; seven
2. a. What was the New Commandment that Jesus gave in John's Gospel?

b. Which three Gospels give an account of Jesus' institution of the Eucharist?

c. Name the four parts of John's Gospel.

d. What are the two symbols used most often in the Prologue of John's Gospel?

e. According to Scripture scholars, which was the last Gospel to be written?
Chapter Review Answers

1. a. Symbols have **many** meanings.
   b. There are **four** distinct parts to John's Gospel.
   c. John's Gospel begins with the **prologue**, which is like an introduction.
   d. Throughout John's Gospel, the reason for the Word coming into the world is to bring **life**.
   e. 'John the Apostle' is also known as the **beloved** disciple.
   f. Before he died on the Cross, Jesus entrusted the care of his mother to **John the Apostle**.
   g. There are **seven** 'I am' statements in John's Gospel.
   h. One of the great prayers of Jesus to the Father on the night before he died was 'That they may all be **one**'.
   i. In John's Gospel, the miracles are contained in what is known as the **book of signs**.
   j. There are seven miracle stories in John's Gospel.
   k. When Jesus washed his disciples' feet at the Last Supper, he was teaching them that they should be **servants** to others.
   l. Jesus promised to send the Holy Spirit to his disciples to be their **helper**.
   m. Jesus also referred to the Holy Spirit as the **parakletos**.
   n. According to John's Gospel, Jesus appeared first to a woman named **Mary Magdalene**.

2. a. 'Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another' (John 13:34).
   c. The Prologue; the Book of Signs; the Book of Glory; the Epilogue.
   d. Light and life.
   e. The Gospel according to John.
### Symbols In My Life

List some important symbols in your life.

Now choose one symbol that has significance in terms of your **family life**.

What is this symbol?

Why is it important to your family?

What is its symbolic meaning?

Where did this meaning come from?

Now choose a symbol that is significant in terms of your **relationships with friends**.

What is this symbol?
Why is it important to you and your friends?

What is its symbolic meaning?

Where did this meaning come from?

Finally, choose a symbol that is significant for you in terms of your relationship with God. What is this symbol?

Why is it important for your relationship with God?

What is its symbolic meaning?

Where did this meaning come from?
In the Prologue to John's Gospel the writer uses the symbol of light to talk about the coming of Jesus into the world. Later in John's Gospel, Jesus describes himself in this way: 'I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life' (John 8:12).

What is the ‘light’ of your world?

What does this ‘light’ mean for your life?

If you were to describe someone as ‘the light of my world’, what would this say about your relationship with that person?

What do you think it would mean for you if you were to believe the following statement: ‘Jesus is the light of my world’? How might it affect your faith, your actions, your sense of security?
The Nicene Creed

Fill in the blanks in the Nicene Creed.

I believe in one _______,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of _________ and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father.
Through him all things were made.
For us and for our _______________
he came down from heaven:
by the power of the Holy Spirit
he became ______________________ from the Virgin Mary,
and was made man.
For our sake he was crucified under ____________ __________;
he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ______________________ into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to __________ the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.
We believe in the__________ __________, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. With the Father and the Son he is worshipped and glorified. He has spoken through the __________. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the ________________ of the dead, and the life of the world to come.

**TALK IT OVER**
Select one of the following parts of the Nicene Creed that appeals to you or that you would like to learn more about. Then discuss with a partner what this part of the Creed means to you.

1. **God**
   I believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

2. **Jesus Christ—The Incarnation**
   We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father. Through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven: by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary, and was made man.

3. **The Paschal Mystery**
   For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

4. **Judgment**
   He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

5. **Holy Spirit**
   We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. With the Father and the Son he is worshipped and glorified. He has spoken through the Prophets.

6. **The four Marks of the Church**
   We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.

7. **Hope for forgiveness and everlasting life**
   We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come.
The Seven ‘I Am’ Statements of Jesus in John’s Gospel

Read the following ‘I am’ statements of Jesus from St. John’s Gospel before moving on to the activity below.

‘I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.’ (John 6:35)

‘I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life.’ (John 8:12)

‘I am the gate. Whoever enters by me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture.’ (John 10:9)

‘I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.’ (John 10:11)

‘I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live.’ (John 11:25)

‘I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.’ (John 14:6)

‘I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing.’ (John 15:5)

REFLECT, DISCUSS, COMPOSE

Choose one of these ‘I am’ statements from John’s Gospel.

Think for a few moments about what Jesus meant when he made this statement.

Pair up with a partner and discuss the statement (or statements, if your partner has chosen a different one) and share your thoughts on the message that Jesus was seeking to convey.

Then, still working together, compose your own ‘I am’ statement for Jesus based on your reading and understanding of the Gospels. Write this statement on the lines provided below.
The Miracles of Jesus (1)

Complete the following exercise on the miracle stories in John’s Gospel.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Miracle story</th>
<th>Where did it happen?</th>
<th>Who was there?</th>
<th>What happened?</th>
<th>What did Jesus do/say?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The wedding feast of Cana (John 2:1–11)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>The healing of an official’s son (John 4:46–54)</td>
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<tr>
<td>The cure of the paralytic man at the pool (John 5:1–47)</td>
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<tr>
<td>The feeding of the five thousand (John 6:1–14)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miracle story</td>
<td>Where did it happen?</td>
<td>Who was there?</td>
<td>What happened?</td>
<td>What did Jesus do/say?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>The walking on water (John 6:16–24)</td>
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<tr>
<td>The restoration of sight to a man born blind (John 9:1–12)</td>
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<tr>
<td>The raising of Lazarus to life (John 11:38–44)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
The Miracles of Jesus (2)

Jesus’ miracles were often seen as evidence that God’s Kingdom had arrived. Complete the chart by giving one example from any of the Gospels for each of the miracles listed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Miracle</th>
<th>Gospel Reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The blind see</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The deaf hear</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The lepers are cleansed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The crippled walk</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The sick are healed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The oppressed (demon-possessed) go free.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The dead are raised</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Images of Jesus in John’s Gospel

Match each of the references from John’s Gospel below with the image of Jesus that it describes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Image of Jesus</th>
<th>Reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Word made flesh</td>
<td>John 15:5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Light of the World</td>
<td>John 10:11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Good Shepherd</td>
<td>John 11:25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Way, the Truth and the Life</td>
<td>John 1:29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Lamb of God</td>
<td>John 14:16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Vine</td>
<td>John 6:35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Bread of Life</td>
<td>John 1:14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Resurrection and the Life</td>
<td>John 8:12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Choose one of the images listed above and illustrate it in the space below. You may be as creative as you wish, reflecting your own interpretation of this image of Jesus.
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