

Preparation for G226 — You and Jesus

Why, when we Unitarian Universalists are so inclusive about other religions, are so many of us conflicted about Jesus? In this session we'll examine our individual feelings about this spiritual leader.

The questions below are based on a session developed by Peter Bowden. His starting point was the book *Teacher, Guide, Companion: Rediscovering Jesus in a Secular World*, by the Unitarian Universalist minister Erik Walker Wikstrom who was baptized a Presbyterian, raised a Methodist, and is a student of Zen Buddhism.

Rev. Wikstrom invites us to take a fresh look at Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus is widely recognized by Unitarian Universalists as a historical figure and important spiritual guide or teacher. Yet according to Wikstrom, "When it comes to Christianity, many of us have not only thrown the baby out with the bathwater, but also have tossed out the tub, shut off the lights, and walked out of the house, locking the door behind us."

Why does this happen? According to Wikstrom, "Jesus presents a problem to the modern mind. How do we believe in a person when what we've been told about him is so unbelievable?"

1. What does it mean in the 21st century to profess to have a relationship with Jesus? Do you think it is possible to have a meaningful—even transformational—relationship with a historical figure? How is this different from having a relationship with living person?
2. What historical figures have inspired and supported you? Share an example of how a relationship with a historical figure has made a difference in your life.
3. Recognizing Jesus of Nazareth as an important historical figure and strong influence on our culture, what role, if any, does he play in your life? Who is Jesus to you?
4. What questions about the history and teachings of Jesus or other historical figures would you like to explore further?