

SHARED EXPERIENCE

*And at the end of eight days, when he was circumcised,
he was called Jesus. Luke 2:21*

ORDINARY LIFE

Unpromising Start _____ Matthew 1:18-21; 2:13-15, Luke 2:24

Everyday Name _____ Matthew 1:25
(Hebrew: *Joshua*)

Typical Relationships _____ Matthew 1:24-25, Mark 6:3,
Matthew 13:53-58

NORMAL PERSON

Mentally had to deal with _____
Luke 2:52

Physically had to deal with _____
John 4:6, Matthew 4:2, John 19:28, Luke 23:46

Emotionally had to deal with _____
John 11:35, Matthew 8:10, Luke 10:21, Luke 22:15, John 12:27, 13:21,
Matthew 26:38

HARD OBEDIENCE

_____ **Fully** Hebrews 2:14-18

Jesus had to become man to assume his role as a merciful high priest. Simon Kistemaker

He suffered with them and for them, and through his sufferings was made perfect—qualified in every way to be their high priest. F.F. Bruce

_____ **Completely** Hebrews 4:14-16

Sympathy with the sinner in his trial does not depend on the experience of sin but on the experience of the strength of the temptation to sin which only the sinless can know in its full intensity. He who falls yields before the last strain. B.F. Wescott



GIFT EXERCISE

Trust God to let you experience the real comfort of the shared experience we have in Jesus this Christmas.

- Thank God for what He is already teaching you this season, and ask Him again to make this Christmas season one like no other. Ask Him to let you *give* to others out of what you are learning.

Think about the people you have relationships with and what they are going through. Who do you know that is going through a difficulty that you have actually experienced yourself? The circumstances don't have to be exactly the same, but close enough that you can say, "I have been through that before." (i.e. "I lost my mother to cancer." or "I was let go from my job." or "We had a miscarriage.")

Now think about what was or would have been most encouraging to you during that difficulty. Some things that people say and do to help are not actually helpful at all. Since you have personally experienced the suffering, you can more easily put yourself in the other person's place. You know the accompanying doubts and frustrations and temptations. You know the real needs. You know what could be truly encouraging.

- Now give the gift of Shared Experience. Give what you know will be appropriate encouragement. It can be big or small. It can include words and conversations—or not. It is a gift offered from your range of experience into the life of someone who needs just that. A gift that is truly comforting.

See your own spiritual story in this experience. What are the things that you struggle with? What are the things you feel like no one understands? What are things you are so weary of carrying? Jesus is the one thinking, "I know what that is like. I know how to care for you in a way that is genuine and appropriate."

What did you notice from the other person's situation and his or her response to your gift that can help you see how you can respond to Jesus?

- Take the burdens you thought of above to Jesus, the One who has been tempted in every respect as we are. Believe Him. Come to Him with new confidence about His care for you related to these specific things. With that confidence, trust Him for grace and mercy for today.

JESUS CHRIST
GIFT OF
CHRISTMAS

Send stories of your GIFT EXERCISE experiences from any of the weeks to giftexercise@nhcconline.com .