

# Christ's Last Supper jeans ad banned again (Sun 13 Mar, 2005)

## WARM-UPS

**CHAT:** Talk in pairs or groups about the Roman Catholic Church / Leonardo da Vinci's *Christ's Last Supper* / jeans / supermodels / *The Da Vinci Code* / censorship / the very heart of religion / socks / ...Change topic / partner frequently to increase conversation.

**CATHOLIC BRAINSTORM:** Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word 'Catholic'. Share your words with your partner / group and talk about them.

**JESUS CHRIST:** Talk in groups about Jesus and his life. Discuss whether everything in the Bible about Jesus is 100% true. Talk about the kind of relationships Jesus might have had with the following people –

- Mary (his mother)
- A blind beggar
- Paul the Apostle
- John the Baptist
- A Christian soldier
- Judas Iscariot
- Mary Magdalene
- Pontius Pilate

**RELIGION OPINIONS:** Students A agree with the following opinions. Students B disagree:

- a. The image of Jesus Christ should never be used in commercial advertising.
- b. Banning religious images in advertising is censorship.
- c. The Church should never be able to influence government policy.
- d. Everything written about Jesus Christ in the New Testament is 100% true.
- e. Suggestions that Jesus Christ was married to Mary Magdalene are blasphemous.
- f. In many countries Christianity is given more government support than other religions.
- g. It's OK to use a religious painting created 1,400 years after the death of Christ to sell jeans.
- h. It's OK to publicly display an image of Christ as a woman.
- i. Changing the images sacred to a religion is dangerous for children.
- j. It's OK to wear a crucifix necklace to school, but not a Muslim headscarf.

## PRE-READING IDEAS

**WORD SEARCH:** Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... of the words 'public' and 'display'.

**TRUE FALSE:** Guess whether the following statements about the article are true or false:

- a. Judges in France have banned the public display of a fashion advertisement. T / F
- b. The Catholic Church opposed the banning of the ad. T / F
- c. A judge ruled the harm done to Catholics was greater than concerns for profit. T / F
- d. The ad depicts female supermodels in the places of Jesus and his Apostles. T / F
- e. The ad suggests Jesus is embracing Mary Magdalene at the Last Supper. T / F
- f. Some lawyers believe the ban is "un-French" censorship. T / F
- g. Some lawyers say the ad is degrading to women. T / F
- h. Some lawyers say it is OK for an image of Christ to be used to sell socks. T / F

**SYNONYM MATCH:** Match the following synonyms from the article:

- |                 |               |
|-----------------|---------------|
| (a) parody      | invasion      |
| (b) bigwigs     | hugging       |
| (c) gratuitous  | startling     |
| (d) intrusion   | debate        |
| (e) sensational | spoof         |
| (f) inspired    | unjustified   |
| (g) embracing   | cheapens      |
| (h) controversy | fuming        |
| (i) incensed    | driven        |
| (j) trivializes | heavy hitters |

**PHRASE MATCH:** Match the following phrases from the article:

- |                                   |                                     |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| (a) banned the public             | \$100,000 per day fine              |
| (b) based on                      | offense to Catholics                |
| (c) subject to a                  | running high                        |
| (d) The sensational ad creating   | to hide this for centuries          |
| (e) It is supposedly inspired     | against France's liberal traditions |
| (f) the Catholic Church has tried | display of a fashion ad             |
| (g) Passions are                  | changing values                     |
| (h) something that goes           | a parody of                         |
| (i) no intention of causing       | by the best-selling book            |
| (j) a reflection of our           | this storm                          |

## GAP FILL

### Christ's Last Supper jeans ad banned again

**BNE:** Judges in France have \_\_\_\_\_ the public display of a fashion advertisement based on a parody of Leonardo da Vinci's *Christ's Last Supper*. Judge Jean-Claude Magendie agreed with France's Roman Catholic \_\_\_\_\_ that the poster, used by a leading fashion house Girbaud, was offensive to the beliefs of French Catholics, and "a gratuitous and aggressive act of intrusion on people's innermost \_\_\_\_\_." He argued that the harm done to the Catholic Church was greater than any concerns for profit. If the posters are not removed within three days, they will be \_\_\_\_\_ to a \$100,000 per day fine. The ad was also banned last month in the Italian city of Milan.

*beliefs*            *banned*            *bigwigs*            *subject*

The \_\_\_\_\_ ad creating this storm shows female supermodels substituting for Jesus and his Apostles, one of whom is hugging a \_\_\_\_\_ man wearing Girbaud jeans. It is supposedly inspired by the best-selling book *The Da Vinci Code*, which controversially \_\_\_\_\_ that Jesus was married to his follower Mary Magdalene. Author Dan Brown indicates the Catholic Church has tried to hide this for centuries. He also suggests the person seated next to Christ in *The Last Supper* was really Mary Magdalene, and not, as the Christian Church believes, the Apostle Paul. Based on this, the role reversal Girbaud ad would have Jesus \_\_\_\_\_ Mary.

*proposes*            *embracing*            *bare-chested*            *sensational*

\_\_\_\_\_ are running high on both sides of this controversy. Girbaud's lawyers are incensed by what they regard as censorship, something that goes against France's \_\_\_\_\_ traditions. They argue that the ad is just a photograph based on a painting, not on the Bible, and that there was no intention of causing \_\_\_\_\_ to Catholics. Lawyer Bernard Cahen says, "There is nothing in it that is offensive to the Catholic religion. It is a way of showing the place of women in society today, which is a reflection of our changing \_\_\_\_\_." Opponents to the ad say it trivializes things sacred to the very heart of religion, and is dangerous for children. He warns of future ads in which the crucified Christ is commercialized, and selling socks.

*offense*            *values*            *passions*            *liberal*

## DISCUSSION:

- a. What was interesting in this article?
- b. Did anything in this article make you angry?
- c. Was there anything in this article that you thought was ridiculous?
- d. Are you a religious person?
- e. Do you think the ad is offensive to Catholics?
- f. Do you think French judges were right to ban it?
- g. Do you think French judges should also have banned the sale of the book *The Da Vinci Code*?
- h. Is it OK to use religious icons in advertising?
- i. Is it OK to portray Jesus as a woman?
- j. Is the ad “a gratuitous and aggressive act of intrusion on people's innermost beliefs”?
- k. Is this all really just a storm in a teacup?
- l. What do you think of the suggestion Jesus Christ had sexual relations with Mary Magdalene?
- m. Is suggesting that Christ had sexual desire an act of blasphemy or free speech?
- n. If Christ was married to Mary, why is this not documented in the New Testament? How could any church hide such a “fact”?
- o. To what extent should governments censor adverts depicting religious scenes?
- p. Would other religions be incensed by their religious icons being used in commercial advertising?
- q. Does an ad showing Jesus as a woman reflect more liberal values in society?
- r. Why is Jesus Christ largely depicted as a white man with blonde hair and blue eyes?
- s. The history of demographics shows Christ is more likely to have been black. Should Christians rethink their perceptions of his color (and change their statues and paintings)?
- t. Is France a liberal country?
- u. Does this ad trivialize religion, or show a new take on an old painting?
- v. Is this ad dangerous for children?
- w. What would you think of an ad with Christ selling sandals or socks?
- x. Has this discussion changed your mind about anything?
- y. Did you like this discussion?
- z. Teacher / Student additional questions.

## HOMEWORK

- 1. VOCAB EXTENSION:** Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.
- 2. INTERNET:** Search the Internet and find information on *The Da Vinci Code*. Share your findings with your class next lesson.
- 3. GIRBAUD LAWYER:** Imagine you are a lawyer for the Girbaud fashion house. Write a letter to the judge telling him what you think of his decision.
- 4. JESUS' THOUGHTS:** Write an imaginary diary entry for what Jesus would have made of the passions and arguments surrounding this case.

## TEXT

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The **sensational** ad creating this storm shows female supermodels substituting for Jesus and his Apostles, one of whom is hugging a **bare-chested** man wearing Girbaud jeans. It is supposedly inspired by the best-selling book *The Da Vinci Code*, which controversially **proposes** that Jesus was married to his follower Mary Magdalene. Author Dan Brown indicates the Catholic Church has tried to hide this for centuries. He also suggests the person seated next to Christ in *The Last Supper* was really Mary Magdalene, and not, as the Christian Church believes, the Apostle Paul. Based on this, the role reversal Girbaud ad would have Jesus **embracing** Mary.

**Passions** are running high on both sides of this controversy. Girbaud's lawyers are incensed by what they regard as censorship, something that goes against France's **liberal** traditions. They argue that the ad is just a photograph based on a painting, not on the Bible, and that there was no intention of causing **offense** to Catholics. Lawyer Bernard Cahen says, "There is nothing in it that is offensive to the Catholic religion. It is a way of showing the place of women in society today, which is a reflection of our changing **values**." Opponents to the ad say it trivializes things sacred to the very heart of religion, and is dangerous for children. He warns of future ads in which the crucified Christ is commercialized, and selling socks.