

SUMMER 2023

# DISCUSSION GUIDE

WEEK 23 | JUNE 4

BEACH CAMP WEEK

P R E S T O N W O O D S T U D E N T S



main point



**In order to model our lives after God, we must know who He is.**

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scriptures



Job:10-12; Hebrews 10:23; 1 John 2:1; Philippians 2:3-8; Daniel 9:9

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devotional  
questions



- How have you seen God love you this past weekend?
  - How can you share that love with all those you will encounter today?
  - How have you seen God's faithfulness?
  - How can you share the faithfulness of God with all those you will encounter today?
  - How have you seen God's righteousness?
  - How can you share the righteousness of God with all those you will encounter today?
  - How have you seen God's selflessness?
  - How can you share the selflessness of God with all those you will encounter today?
  - How have you seen God's mercifulness?
  - How can you share the mercy of God with all those you will encounter today?
- 

essential  
doctrine



**Characteristics of God** | This week we will look at five characteristics of God: His love, faithfulness, righteousness, selflessness and mercifulness. There are so many more attributes we could have chosen, as Scripture is full of "who God is." As we look at who God is, it should transform who we become as Christ-followers.

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**Christ  
Connection**



Every single characteristic is embodied in the very Son of God, Jesus. Jesus was the ultimate example of living our lives as a reflection of the heavenly Father. He was loving, faithful, righteous, selfless and merciful in every action, word and thought He had.

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**discussion  
questions**



- What do you tend to model your life after? Whom do you tend to act like, talk like, or dress like? Why?
  - What keeps or limits you from modeling your life after these characteristics of God?
    - Tackle this question by asking about each of the five characteristics as there are different answers for each.
  - What is one action you can implement this week to help you become more like God in one of the following five ways:
    - Loving
    - Faithful
    - Righteous
    - Selfless
    - Merciful
  - Why is it so important to know WHO God is before you can begin to model your life after Him?
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SUMMER 2023

# DISCUSSION GUIDE

WEEK 24 | JUNE 11

P R E S T O N W O O D S T U D E N T S

**No Guide – Beach Camp Sunday**



SUMMER 2023

# DISCUSSION GUIDE

WEEK 25 | JUNE 18

THE EARLY CHURCH SERIES

P R E S T O N W O O D S T U D E N T S



main point



**Christians are to avoid living selfishly, instead giving generously and sacrificially.**

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scriptures



Acts 4-5

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devotional  
questions



- What are the biggest ways your parents (or those who take care of you) show you generosity?
  - How has God been generous to you? How can you be more generous in using the blessings God has given to you?
  - How would you describe culture's view of generosity?
  - Before today, how would you have explained why generosity is important for Christians? How do you see it differently now?
  - How is God calling you to cultivate generosity in your life?
- 

essential  
doctrine



**Deity of the Holy Spirit** | The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity, possessing the fullness of deity like the Father and Son. His deity can be seen in the fact that He is eternal (Hebrews 9:14), omnipresent (Psalm 139:7-8), the Creator and giver of life (Genesis 1:2; Psalm 104:30; John 3:5-7), and directly identified with the triune God (Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14).

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Christ  
Connection



Ananias and Sapphira's deceptive action was a sin against the Holy Spirit. The Spirit distinguishes between giving that is from a heart of generosity and giving that is from a heart of pride and deceit. The Holy Spirit prompts us to share our resources and give generously to those in need, following the example of Jesus who gave up heavenly riches to share His inheritance with all who trust in Him.

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## in defense



The Bible tells us again and again that we don't have to live in fear (Isaiah 41:10; Psalm 23:4; 2 Timothy 1:7; 1 John 4:18). However, Scripture also teaches that the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom (Psalm 111:10). When people encountered God's glory, they generally responded in sheer terror. For instance, when God descended upon Mount Sinai, all Israel was terrified (Exodus 20:18). Even Moses trembled in fear (Hebrews 12:21). When Peter, James, and John saw Jesus' glory and heard the Father's voice at His transfiguration, they fell on their faces, terrified (Matthew 17:6). John, when He saw the glory of Jesus revealed in a vision, fell down as if dead, out of fear. When we are made aware of God's holiness, we see our depravity in relation and the natural reaction is legitimate fear. However, because of Jesus and despite that we still wrestle with the flesh, we are made holy in God's sight and are forgiven of our sin. With this in view, we no longer fear the judgment of God, yet we are to live toward Him with a reverential fear that leads to our wisdom and obedience.

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## discussion questions



- How has God revealed to you that you may be more selfish and less sacrificially generous than you may have previously believed?
  - How can you practically reflect the generosity and sacrificial nature of Jesus this week?
  - What does the way you view and use money and possessions say about your heart?
  - How can you work to protect your heart from materialism?
  - Describe a time when someone did something for you that was generous and sacrificial. How did this affect you?
  - What has God given to you that you will use to bless others?
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SUMMER 2023

# DISCUSSION GUIDE

WEEK 26 | JUNE 25

THE EARLY CHURCH SERIES

P R E S T O N W O O D S T U D E N T S





main point



**The Spirit empowers God's people to boldly proclaim the Gospel, even in the face of death.**

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scriptures



Acts 6-7

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devotional  
questions



- When have you been absolutely captured by a story?
  - What is your biggest fear of sharing the Gospel?
  - How would you explain to a new believer that Bible reading is so important?
  - What are the most common obstacles that keep you from consistent Bible reading?
  - How will you commit to blessing those who curse you and praying for those who persecute you?
  - How can the sufferings of Christ help us understand persecution?
- 

essential  
doctrine



**Illumination of Scripture** | Because of the vast difference between God's wisdom and ours, and because of humanity's sinful state, human beings are incapable, on our own, of fully grasping spiritual truth without being aided by the Holy Spirit through the process of illumination. When it comes to understanding the meaning of God's Word, Christians do not rely ultimately upon human reasoning in the process of interpretation, nor do we rely solely upon an institution or body of scholars. Instead, a Christian's ultimate reliance is upon the work of the Spirit of God, who illuminates the Scriptures in the heart and mind (John 14:15-18; 16:7-15).

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**Christ  
Connection**



In his death as the first martyr, Stephen followed in the footsteps of His Savior. Both Jesus and Stephen were falsely accused and charged for blasphemy. Both Jesus and Stephen prayed for their executioners. Both Jesus and Stephen entrusted their spirits to God as they died. As a follower of Jesus Christ, Stephen reflected His Master, in life and in death.

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**in defense**



This is an optional category. If you have something from your week of devos that our students would need to know in defending their faith, explain it here. Don't force it, but if there is something, utilize this portion.

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**discussion  
questions**



- When have you come to understand something in Scripture that you didn't understand at first?
  - How should we read the Scriptures even when they can be difficult to understand at times?
  - Why was it dangerous for Stephen to proclaim Jesus to the Jews?
  - How does love for God and others compel you to live the same ways Stephen did? How can you grow in showing Christ-like love daily?
  - How might you be tempted to resist the Holy Spirit?
  - What has God called you to do that you've failed to live out? How will you make it happen?
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SUMMER 2023

# DISCUSSION GUIDE

WEEK 27 | JULY 2

THE EARLY CHURCH SERIES

P R E S T O N W O O D S T U D E N T S



main point



**The Gospel is the Good News that God has provided salvation to sinners through Jesus.**

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scriptures



Romans 5-6

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devotional  
questions



- Think about your best friend. What made you close?
  - How should the Church look differently than the rest of the world?
  - How does the love of God compare with any other kind of love?
  - How would you explain our need for forgiveness to someone who was not a follower of Jesus?
  - What causes separation or division among people today? How does the Gospel overcome these?
  - What is confession? Why is it necessary for salvation?
- 

essential  
doctrine



**The Gospel** | The Bible teaches that the Gospel is both an event and a story. First, it is an event that took place at a specific point in history – the life, death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ for the redemption of sinners (1 Corinthians 15; 2 Corinthians 5:21). Second, the Gospel is also the story of redemption that God has planned since “before the foundations of the earth” (Ephesians 1:4), which runs through Scripture and culminates in a restored and redeemed creation – a new heaven and new earth where sin, death and suffering will never again plague humanity, and God’s people will live with Him forever (Isaiah 25:8; 2 Peter 3:13; Revelation 21). The event and story do not exist apart from or in conflict with one another, but together inspire us to a life of devotion and mission.

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**Christ  
Connection**



God's righteousness is revealed through the Gospel. Because of sin, all of us deserve death and separation from God, but God provided Jesus to be our substitute, to pay our sin penalty, to remove our sin, and to provide His righteousness in its place. All who trust in Jesus will be saved.

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**in defense**



This is an optional category. If you have something from your week of devos that our students would need to know in defending in their faith, explain it here. Don't force it but if there is something, utilize this portion.

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**discussion  
questions**



- How does your relationships with other believers reflect Christ and His work?
  - What steps do you need to take to deal with conflict or division in your life?
  - When have you loved someone so much that you were willing to sacrifice for him or her?
  - How has your love for God moved you to live sacrificially for others?
  - How has your love for others moved you to live sacrificially?
  - Jesus died for us when we were God's enemies (Romans 5:8). How do you live sacrificially for those with whom you're not necessarily close as a picture of the Gospel?
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SUMMER 2023

# DISCUSSION GUIDE

WEEK 28 | JULY 9

THE EARLY CHURCH SERIES

P R E S T O N W O O D S T U D E N T S



main point



**True faith is always demonstrated in the way we live.**

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scriptures



James 1-2

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devotional  
questions



- How do our actions prove our faith in Christ?
  - What are some examples of needs people may have? As followers of Jesus, how should we respond to someone in need?
  - What are some ways you can demonstrate love for a neighbor on an ongoing basis?
  - When have you been unresponsive to the truth of God? Why is this such a serious issue?
  - What comes to mind when you hear the phrase “useless faith?”
- 

essential  
doctrine



Justification is not the result of human effort or good works but through faith in the righteousness of Christ. Although good works do not lead to justification, justification leads to good works in the life of a believer (Ephesians 2:10). Faith without works is dead (James 2:17). While good works do not establish justification, they do verify a genuine faith and make our justification evident to others.

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**Christ  
Connection**



Salvation only comes by grace through faith in Jesus Christ, and not from works (Ephesians 2:8–9). However, true faith leads to good works in the life of the believer, verifying the reality of that faith in order to bring God glory and to draw others to faith in Christ as well.

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**in defense**



This is an optional category. If you have something from your week of devos that our students would need to know in defending in their faith, explain it here. Don't force it but if there is something, utilize this portion.

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**discussion  
questions**



- Why is it necessary that we believe the right things about God to have real faith?
  - Whom do you know that struggles to believe the right things about God?
  - When others experience good things, what is your natural reaction?
  - When you see others struggling, do you feel genuine compassion, or do you ignore it?
  - How does your life prove this?
  - How can you help them to understand the truth?
  - Whom do you know that has a practical need right now?
  - How should real faith respond to this situation?
  - Are you convinced that your faith is genuine? Talk to a mature friend or a trusted leader if you have questions.
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SUMMER 2023

# DISCUSSION GUIDE

WEEK 29 | JULY 16

THE EARLY CHURCH SERIES

P R E S T O N W O O D S T U D E N T S



main point



**God makes all things new!**

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scriptures



Genesis 1; 2; Colossians 1:16; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Matthew 22:37-40

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devotional  
questions



- If God makes all things new, how does that change how you live your life today?
  - Whom are you going to glorify today?
  - Pay attention to what comes out of your mouth today. That's a good indication of the status of your relationship with the Lord.
  - Whom can you love better today?
- 

essential  
doctrine



**Creation** | Throughout the creation account, we see a powerful, creative purposeful God prepare a place for His beloved creation of man to dwell. Not only do we see God's power through His ability to simply speak things into existence, but we also see God's master plan of creating an entire universe that is good and free from evil and sin. God's original plan must not be forgotten in the midst of the evil and dark world in which we live. And we must find our very hope in the fact that one day we will be reunited with God in a new heaven and a new earth where everything will be exactly as He planned for it to be in the first place. God creates with intentionality and purpose. Knowing that we are created in His image gives even more meaning to our lives.

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## Christ Connection



Man has never been more fully in the presence of God than at the beginning of creation. Humanity was designed to live with God in the Garden of Eden. And where God was present, so was Jesus. In those early moments of the earth, mankind was perfect and sinless, so our connection to Christ was effortless. It was a living, breathing relationship with no inhibitions.

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## discussion questions



- Now that we understand God's original plan for man to exist eternally with Him in a perfect place, how does that impact the way we understand man's disobedience at the time of the Fall – and our continued disobedience today?
  - Knowing that God ultimately wants to fix everything that evil has undone, how does that encourage you toward a closer relationship with Him ... and further His kingdom and purpose now?
  - How would you explain to others how God is Creator of the heavens and earth? How would you defend God as Creator to someone who has a different perspective?
  - Have you ever thought about God's being the main entity of the Bible?
  - We are created to glorify Him. In what ways are you not glorifying the Lord, and what needs to change in your life to give Him the worship and praise He deserves?
  - Do you have a personal relationship with Jesus as your Lord and Savior?
  - How does God's love for us spur us on to extend love to others?
  - God makes all things new. How does that change how we live our lives day to day?
  - Have you ever thought about God's creation of you in His image as "very good"?
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SUMMER 2023

# DISCUSSION GUIDE

WEEK 30 | JULY 23

THE EARLY CHURCH SERIES

P R E S T O N W O O D S T U D E N T S



main point



**God's perfect creation was destroyed by man's imperfect desires.**

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scriptures



Genesis 3:1-10, 23-24; Romans 1:18-24; 6:20-23

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devotional  
questions



- What did Satan question?
  - What are some of the lies that you are tempted to believe every day?
  - Why do we “hide” from God when we sin?
  - Does it give you hope to know that God provides a solution to your sin? How?
  - How do you honestly view the sin in your life?
  - God sent Jesus to be the payment for your sin. What does that tell you about how God thinks of you?
  - When was the last time you felt the wrath (punishment) of a parent when you disobeyed?
  - How thankful are you today that this payment has been made?
- 

essential  
doctrine



**Sin** | A world that had never known disobedience was about to change forever. In one moment, Adam and Eve took control and allowed their desire to ruin God's creation. All that God meant to be perfect came crumbling down. In light of this first act of sin, humanity would be forever separated from God and would need a payment to mend the brokenness. It would be a heavy cost in order to right the wrongs, but it would have to be paid.

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**Christ  
Connection**



Although we see sin enter the picture within our passages this week, it paves the way and shows the need for a future payment. An animal paid the cost when God clothed Adam and Eve in its skin. The blood was shed to help fix what was now tarnished. This blood sacrifice would only last momentarily, however. The cost needed to be paid for all eternity. That payment came in the form of God's one and only Son, Jesus Christ.

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**discussion  
questions**



- When did sin enter into the world? How did Adam and Eve respond when they realized they had sinned?
  - How did Adam and Eve try to cover their sin, and how did God cover their sin? How does this point to Christ?
  - What are some of the lies of the world that you are tempted to believe every day?
  - How has the Lord provided for you to fight against the lies of the world? Where can you find truth?
  - Does it matter to you what you believe about God? How does believing what's right about God change how you live?
  - How thankful are you that God paid your debt once and for all by sending Jesus to the Cross?
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SUMMER 2023

# DISCUSSION GUIDE

WEEK 31 | JULY 30

THE EARLY CHURCH SERIES

P R E S T O N W O O D S T U D E N T S



main point



**We are made new in our relationship with Jesus.**

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scriptures



Romans 8:1-2, 5-8, 10-11; Ephesians 2:8-10; 2 Corinthians 5:17

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devotional  
questions



- The key to this passage is the phrase, “*If Christ is in you.*” Do you know whether Christ lives in you?
  - When was the moment your dead heart came to life? Reflect on that moment and thank God for it.
  - How can you extend grace to someone today?
  - What makes it so hard to set your mind on the things of God?
  - What can you do today to keep your mind from the things of the world/flesh?
  - Are you carrying any shame with you today?
  - What is keeping you from releasing that shame to Christ and fully running *to* Him?
  - What have you placed your hope in? Has that thing failed you? How or why?
  - What can you do today to remind yourself of where your hope should be placed?
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essential  
doctrine



**New Life** | When we surrender our lives to Christ as our personal Lord and Savior, we are made new. Our old, sinful selves are no more, and our new creation is what lives. In that moment of salvation, our desires, our thoughts, our words and our actions all move away from sin and toward the Lord. Shame melts away and freedom takes over. This allows us to pursue God with a whole and full heart.



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**Christ  
Connection**



The only way to be made new is to accept Christ into our heart and believe that He is God's Son who died on the Cross for our sins. It is *by* grace and *through* faith that we run to Him.

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**discussion  
questions**



- Ask your LifeGroup members if they have experienced being “made new.” You could have students raise their hand, fill out a card, text you individually, or tell you in any other creative way. The goal is to have each student share their testimony.
  - What does it mean to be “made new”?
  - What happens to your “old self” when you surrender to Jesus?
  - What’s the difference between grace and mercy? What does grace mean to you in your life?
  - If you haven’t been “made new,” what is keeping you from doing that?
  - Why does shame play such a factor in our day-to-day lives walking with Jesus?
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SUMMER 2023

# DISCUSSION GUIDE

WEEK 32 | AUGUST 6

THE EARLY CHURCH SERIES

P R E S T O N W O O D S T U D E N T S



main point



**As believers, we can have this hope: Creation will be restored again!**

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scriptures



Romans 8:1-2, 5-8, 10-11; Ephesians 2:8-10; 2 Corinthians 5:17

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devotional  
questions



- How does Jesus' return change how we live?
  - Have you ever prayed "Your will, God ... not my own"? How would this change your prayer life? How would praying with this attitude change your life?
  - Knowing that His Word will remain forever, how does this change our lives and how much time we spend in His Word?
  - How does this verse bring comfort to you today? How can you share the hope that you have with someone you know today?
  - Do you know Jesus as your personal Lord and Savior? If not, you can begin a relationship with him today. Check out [prestonwoodstudents.org/accepting-christ](https://prestonwoodstudents.org/accepting-christ).
  - How can you live with hope today knowing that the world will one day be restored?
- 

essential  
doctrine



**Second Coming** | Jesus is coming back, and everything will be restored to what God originally intended. We will have a new heaven and a new earth, which will be what God desired the Garden of Eden to be. This is where we will live with God as in the early days of Adam and Eve's existence.

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**Christ  
Connection**



This week of devos and messages points to Christ and what will happen when He returns. We will be united with Him if we believe and have surrendered our lives to Him. If we haven't, then we will be eternally separated from Him. There is no moment more pressing than right now for us to make that decision. Once we have given our lives over to Christ, we then need to share the Gospel with all of those who do not know so that they have the same opportunity as you did to put their faith in Jesus. This free gift of eternal life is not one that we can hold on to and keep to ourselves.

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**discussion  
questions**



- Knowing that Christ is returning, how does that change how you live today?
  - What do you think about when you hear "Jesus is returning"?
  - During this time of waiting until Jesus returns, with whom are you going to share the hope of the Gospel?
  - If you have a relationship with Jesus, How does Christ's restoration of you change your life?
  - Knowing that God's will is greater than your will, and Jesus prayed that prayer in Luke 21:33, how does that change your prayer life and how you live?
-

SUMMER 2023


# DISCUSSION GUIDE

WEEK 33 | AUGUST 13


THE EARLY CHURCH SERIES

P R E S T O N W O O D S T U D E N T S




main point  **REACH – As Jesus reaches for the lost, we should do the same. LEARN – The more we learn about Christ, the more we will look like Christ. LOVE – Christians are called to love everyone because Christ died for everyone. MULTIPLY – Christ followers should “reproduce themselves in others” to carry on the legacy.**

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scriptures  Luke 15:1-7; Jude 1:17-23; Hebrews 10:23-25; Ephesians 4:11-16; Luke 23:29-39; 2 Timothy 2:2

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devotional questions 

- What did your life look like before you accepted Christ as your Savior?
- If you are a Christian, are you reaching others as Jesus did? If so, how are you reaching them?
- When a sinner comes to know Jesus, do you act like the brother who stayed home? Or the father? Leaders, begin by giving your story in one sentence, and then have your students take turns telling their story.
- What does suffering and pain look like in your school?
- How are you reaching people who do not believe in Jesus?
- Would you consider yourself a young Christian or a mature Christian according to Ephesians 4:13?
- This week, what is one way you can learn and imitate Christ?
- Have you ever faced someone who mocked Jesus? How did you react?
- Would you choose to die for someone who hated you?
- Are your daily actions mocking who Jesus is?
- Which criminal represents you? Are you denying Jesus or serving Jesus?
- Why would Jesus see the Cross as an act of love?
- Do you love the body of Christ?

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essential doctrine  **Mission |** Evangelism tells the Gospel, and it's the first part of our mission statement: REACH. Without people, the body of Christ cannot be a whole body. We must reflect on the actions of Jesus and reach others with the Gospel. In order to know who Jesus is and His mission, we must learn about Him through prayer and reading the Bible. We are commanded to love our neighbors as ourselves. We are commanded to multiply ourselves into others.

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Christ  
Connection



The first thing we have to do is pursue Christ. He wants us to go after Him by carrying our cross daily and by putting Him above everything else in our lives. Once we put Him at the center, then He wants us to pursue others. Jesus came to seek and save the lost, and we should do the same thing.

We are unable to share the Gospel with our own understanding of this world. We must lean on the Lord and His teachings to reach others. Christ tells us to come to Him with all of our questions, wonders and concerns.

**Jesus did not come to die for certain people. He came for those who have stayed, departed, and returned.**

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discussion  
questions



- Why is it necessary to make sure people see Christ in us in order for our ministry to be effective?
  - Do you see evangelism as optional or as a necessary part of being a Christian?
  - Do you have any fears in evangelizing?
  - How do you start a Gospel conversation?
  - Do you see growth as an important part of being a Christian? Why or why not?
  - Personally, how can you look more like Christ every day?
  - What are some things that stop you from looking more like Jesus? How can you eliminate those things (sin) from your life?
  - If you are growing spiritually every day, what will be the result? What fruit will be produced?
  - How easy do you think it is to live out the greatest commandment: to love your neighbor as you love yourself?
  - What does it mean and look like to love in this way?
  - Based on God's love for us, how should we treat others?
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