This midweek study will explore the biblical teaching of Jesus' sinlessness. Use the following main points, Scriptures, teaching/discussion ideas, and questions to help students gain a better understanding of the essential doctrine for this session.

Essential Doctrine: Baptism

Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It is an act of obedience symbolizing the believer's faith in a crucified, buried, and risen Savior, the believer's death to sin, the burial of the old life, and the resurrection to walk in newness of life in Christ Jesus. It is a testimony to the believer's faith in the final resurrection of the dead. Being a church ordinance, it is prerequisite to the privileges of church membership and to the Lord's Supper.

1 Baptism unites us to Jesus, particularly in His death and resurrection (Rom. 6:2-7; Gal. 2:20; Col. 2:12).

▶ When have you joined yourself to an organization or a group of people? Was there any kind of initiation or joining ritual?

▶ Would you consider baptism a ritual to join the church? Why or why not?

▶ Is baptism purely a ritual? If not, what more is there to it? If yes, why do you say it is only a ritual?

▶ What exactly happens in a baptism? Why do you think we do it the way we do it?

Read Romans 6:2-7.

▶ Paul presented two ways in which baptism unites us to Jesus. What is the first?

▶ What did he mean that we are united to Jesus in His death? In what sense do we die in baptism?

▶ What is the second way baptism unites us to Jesus? In what sense are we raised to new life in baptism?

▶ In this context, Paul was particularly concerned about our relationship to sin. As we remember our baptism, how should we view sin?

2 Baptism identifies us with Jesus' name (Acts 2:38; 10:48; 19:4-5; 1 Cor. 1:13).

▶ What does it mean to do something in the name of something else? For instance, suppose an explorer arrives at a new land and says, "I claim this land in the name of my home country." Or if someone claims to do something in the name of love, what does he or she mean?

▶ What are some other examples of places where people do things "in the name" of something or someone else?

Read Acts 2:38.

▶ In what name were the people to be baptized? Considering the group in Acts 2 is mostly Jews, the very people who crucified Jesus, what is the significance of them being baptized in His name?

Read Acts 10:48.

▶ In what name were these Gentiles baptized? What is the significance of these former outsiders being baptized in Jesus' name?

Read Acts 19:4-5.

▶ Before this baptism, in what name had these people been baptized? According to Paul, in what name would they baptized? Why do you think Paul insisted they be baptized specifically in Jesus' name?

▶ So what does it mean to be baptized in Jesus' name? How does being baptized in Jesus' name publicly identify us with Him?

▶ In what ways is it risky to be identified with Jesus' name? In what ways is it glorious?

3 Baptism unites us to the body of Messiah, believers everywhere (1 Cor. 12:13; Eph. 4:5).

▶ Does baptism unite us to anything else besides Jesus?

Read 1 Corinthians 12:13 and Ephesians 4:5.

▶ What are some of the different groups Paul mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12:3? How would they have related to one another?

▶ According to 1 Corinthians 12:13, what relationship did these different people have once they were baptized?

▶ So besides Jesus, with whom else are we united in baptism?

▶ What point did Paul emphasize in Ephesians 4:5 (you may need to look before and after this verse) in pointing out that we all have one baptism?

▶ If all Christians are united to one another in their baptism, how should we treat one another? How should we act toward one another when we wrong one another?

WRAP IT UP

▶ Imagine you meet someone who believes in Jesus but hasn't been baptized (maybe this is true for you). Would you advise them to get baptized? Why or why not? If yes, what would you say to them?