

This midweek study will explore what hell is like and the eternal punishment that awaits unbelievers there. Use the following outline, activity, playlist, and video ideas to lead a midweek event for your students.

Essential Doctrine: Nature of Hell

For those who are not found in Christ at the time of their death, the Scriptures say that God's condemnation remains upon them (John 3:36) and that they will be judged according to their deeds done on earth (Heb. 9:27). The punishment that awaits unbelievers in hell is an eternal, never-ending suffering that comes from sins committed against an infinite God (Matt. 25:41,46). In hell, sinners are forever separated from God.

1 In Hell, God's condemnation remains upon sinners (John 3:36).

While there is always hope on earth for the unbeliever to repent and turn to Christ, in hell this reality (so often taken for granted on earth) is no longer an option. God's condemnation rests on sinners eternally in hell.

- ▶ *How does hell being eternal remind you of the urgency of the gospel and encourage you to evangelism?*

Read John 3:36.

- ▶ *Why does rejection of Jesus merit the punishment of hell for eternity?*

The only hope for escaping hell is not in our works or charity, but in our relationship with Christ. Jesus is the only one who has the ability to remove the wrath of God from sinners.

- ▶ *Why is it impossible to spend enough time in hell for our sin debt to be paid?*

Because God's condemnation rests on all unbelievers in hell, it is extremely important to take our task as evangelists seriously.

- ▶ *How does God's condemnation affect the way you interact with those you encounter on a daily basis?*
- ▶ *Does this reality change how you view your time on earth?*

2 Those who are not in Christ will be judged according to their works on Earth (Heb. 9:27).

Read Hebrews 9:27.

- ▶ *According to this verse, what occurs immediately after death?*
- ▶ *If you were to be judged according to your earthly works what could you possibly offer God to earn your salvation? How does this make you feel?*

We will ultimately be judged on one of two things: our works, or the work done by Christ on our behalf.

- ▶ *Who's work are you most trusting for where you spend eternity?*

3 Hell is eternal separation from God (Matt. 25:41,46)

Read Matthew 25:41,46.

Hell isn't a temporary holding spot until you've learned your spiritual lesson, like a glorified "time out." Hell is the eternal and conscious punishment for sin and rejecting Christ.

- ▶ *What effect does hell being eternal have on how you think about your relationship with Christ?*

Hell is a conscious state—it's not a place where you are separated from God but are in a coma-like state. Nor does hell have its "not so bad" times and places. Hell is the place where everything God has deemed good is completely removed, along with His Spirit.

- ▶ *Why is the removal of everything God deems good a frightening prospect in light of eternity?*
- ▶ *How does hell being more than a glorified "time out" affect your thinking about it?*

WRAP IT UP

- ▶ *If you're a believer, what urgent steps are you taking to be a light to those who don't know God's forgiveness in Christ?*

Challenge students to realize if they were to be judged on their good works, instead of Christ's work on the cross, God's condemnation would remain on them in a conscious, permanent, and eternal place called hell.