

This midweek study will explore the biblical teaching of the mission of the church. 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: Mission of the Church

The church is a sign and instrument of the kingdom of God, a people united by faith in the gospel announcement of the crucified and risen King Jesus. The mission of the church is to go into the world in the power of the Spirit and make disciples by proclaiming this gospel, calling people to respond in ongoing repentance and faith, and demonstrating the truth and power of the gospel by living under the lordship of Christ for the glory of God and the good of the world.

1 The church is the collective people who savor the lordship of Jesus in the present-and-coming kingdom of God (Ps. 16:3; Matt. 4:17; Eph. 1:15-19).

- ▶ What is the coolest or best group you've ever been part of? What made (or makes) it so great?
- ▶ What is the kingdom of God?

Read Matthew 4:17.

- ▶ What was Jesus saying about the kingdom of heaven? When did it arrive?
- ▶ Who is the king of the kingdom of heaven? What would you call the group of people who recognize Jesus as king, even on this earth?

Read Psalm 16:3.

- ▶ How did David describe the citizens of the heavenly kingdom? In light of this, how should we view other Christians?

Read Ephesians 1:15-19.

- ▶ What was the main point of Paul's long prayer? What did he want God to help us know?
- ▶ Why do we need spiritual help to see what are the riches of God's magnificent inheritance in the saints?
- ▶ How does it make you feel to be part of this people?

2 The church seeks to make disciples of all nations (Matt. 28:19; Eph. 2:19-22; 4:16).

- ▶ If you were in charge of public relations for the church, what would you propose as the church's slogan?

Read Matthew 28:19.

- ▶ What task did Jesus leave for the church? What do you think He meant by that command?
- ▶ At what point do you start becoming a disciple? When are you finished in your discipleship? When is the church's work finished, in the world and in an individual's life?
- ▶ What are some ways you are making disciples in your life right now? In what ways are you working on your own discipleship?

Read Ephesians 2:19-22.

- ▶ What imagery did Paul use to describe the church here? Why?
- ▶ How does it make you feel to know you're no longer a stranger, but a member of God's household? How does it make you want to treat Christians and non-Christians?

Read Ephesians 4:16.

- ▶ Who is builds up the body of Jesus? What does this imply about our behavior and attitudes toward one another?

3 The church is a living demonstration and promoter of God's peace in a world plagued by sin (Acts 2:47; 2 Cor. 2:15; 1 Thess. 4:11-12; 1 Tim. 3:7).

- ▶ How do most non-Christians think of the church today? What public image or reputation does the church have?

Read Acts 2:47.

- ▶ How did outsiders view the early church? Why?

Read 1 Timothy 3:7.

- ▶ How did Paul want non-Christians to view church leaders? Why do you think he commanded this? What is the implication for us today as we relate with non-Christians?

Read 2 Corinthians 2:15.

- ▶ What should we be toward the non-believing world?
- ▶ What are some practical, real-life ways we could demonstrate "the fragrance of Christ" to the world around us?

WRAP IT UP

- ▶ A common complaint against Christianity is, "I like Jesus, but I can't stand his people." Based on today's lesson, how would you respond to that complaint?