

This midweek study will explore our adoption in Christ. 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: Adoption

Adoption into God's family is one the positive benefits of justification. We are pardoned from the judgment against us through justification and experience a change of identity—we become children of God (John 1:12; Gal. 4:5). Adoption restores our relationship with God, which was once lost through the fall. Adoption also gives believers the benefits of being heirs of God and coheirs with Christ (Rom. 8:16-17).

1 Adoption means perfect peace with God our Father regardless of our works (Rom. 8:15).

- ▶ Do you have any relationships in your life in which you know you will be loved and accepted no matter what? What are they like? What are they based on?
- ▶ What are most human relationships based on?
- ▶ What is the basis for our relationship with God?

Read Romans 8:15.

- ▶ Why would a slave have reason to fear? Why would we have reason to fear God if we saw ourselves as His slaves?
- ▶ What does the word Abba mean? What is the significance of this name if we use it to address God?
- ▶ If we are adopted sons of Abba Father, then do our sins or shortcomings lessen our status before God? Do our shortcomings make us any less the children of our parents?
- ▶ If we are adopted sons of Abba Father, then does our success increase our status before God? Does our success make us any more the children of our parents?
- ▶ What joy and freedom is there in being adopted children no matter what? How does this help us when we sin? How does it keep us humble?

2 Adoption means a guaranteed inheritance (Rom. 8:16, Gal. 4:1,4-7; 1 John 3:3).

Option: Recall (or watch) the clip of The Lion King where Mufasa tells Simba that all that the light touches will one day be his. How would you react if you were Simba? Would you spend your childhood planning how to use your kingdom to please yourself? Would you study to be a good king?

Read Romans 8:16.

- ▶ Once Paul has established that we have God as Abba regardless of our actions, where did his thought proceed next? Why do you think he moved in that direction?

Read Galatians 4:4-7.

- ▶ What parallels do you see in this passage with Romans 8?

Read Galatians 4:1.

- ▶ According to the text, what might the heirs' life be like in childhood? What might we expect our lives to be like right now, before Jesus' return?

Read 1 John 3:3.

- ▶ How should we be spending our time now in preparation to receive our inheritance? What specific things are you doing in your life to prepare to receive your inheritance? What specific things can you start doing this week?

3 Adoption means an ever-deepening relationship with our Father (Ps. 27:4; Eph. 1:5,17).

- ▶ Imagine your family is going to adopt a child in a foreign country. You visit your new sibling, who has lived in the orphanage his or her entire life. He or she is terrified at leaving the orphanage. What would you tell him or her the best thing about being adopted is?
- ▶ What do you think the best thing about being adopted by God is?

Read Ephesians 1:5,17.

- ▶ After Paul noted the Ephesians' adoption, what was the first thing he prayed for?
- ▶ What (or who) is the best thing in the world for us?
- ▶ If we relate to God—the best thing in the world—as Father, what degree of intimacy and joy should we expect from Him?

Read Psalm 27:4.

- ▶ What was the one request the psalmist had?
- ▶ How do you think the psalmist would respond if he had considered God as Father? How should we respond?

WRAP IT UP

- ▶ What one thing did you learn about adoption?
- ▶ What are two changes you can make to your lifestyle this week?
- ▶ Who are three people whom you could encourage with the idea of adoption as children of God?