

This midweek study will explore the doctrine of reconciliation. 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: Christ as Reconciliation

Ever since the fall of the first man and woman in the garden of Eden, God and human beings have been estranged. Sin resulted not only in an estranged relationship with God, but also in enmity (hostility) between God and humanity. Sin is an infinite offense against an infinite God. Thankfully, God loves His enemies and has sent Christ to be the reconciler between us and God. Through Christ's death, God provides the means by which that broken relationship is restored and renewed (Rom. 6:23; 2 Cor. 5:18-19).

1 Jesus reconciles our enmity with God (Rom. 3:26; 5:10; 2 Cor. 5:18-21).

- ▶ What do you think is the worst crime a person could commit?
- ▶ What do you think is the worst thing in the universe a person could do?
- ▶ What makes these crimes so horrible?
- ▶ How is our sin against God even worse than what we just came up with? How do the wrong elements we identified get multiplied even further when we think of our sin against God?

Read Romans 3:26 and 5:10.

- ▶ According to these verses, what was our relationship with God? How did Jesus deal with our guilt?

Read 2 Corinthians 5:18-21.

- ▶ Pay special attention to verse 19. What problem had to be dealt with for God to reconcile us to Himself through Christ? How did Jesus deal with that problem?
- ▶ Now that Jesus has reconciled us to God, how would you describe our relationship with God?

2 Jesus reconciles our estrangement with God (John 14:23; 1 Pet. 3:18).

- ▶ Have you ever done something that caused a break in your relationship with a friend or family member? If you're comfortable sharing, what was it?
- ▶ What steps did you take to reconcile the relationship?
- ▶ What parallels do you see in how Jesus reconciles us to God? When you reconcile, you first have to set things right, if possible. Then, you have to regain the person's trust.
- ▶ How did Jesus "set things right" between us and God?

Read 1 Peter 3:18.

- ▶ Why did Jesus die? How did Jesus win us back to God?
- ▶ When Jesus reconciles us to God, how deep does that restoration go? Is God neutral toward us? Does He tolerate us? Does He find us acceptable? Does He love us?

Read John 14:23.

- ▶ Thanks to Jesus' reconciliation, how intimate is our relationship with God?

3 Jesus reconciles us with one another (2 Cor. 3:16; Col. 3:12-13).

- ▶ How should Jesus' reconciliation affect our desire to reconcile with others?
- ▶ What are some of the most common relationships that need reconciliation, whether big or small? What causes these relationships to be strained or broken?

Read 2 Corinthians 3:16.

- ▶ This verse comes right before the reconciliation-with-God discussion. How does it say we should look at other people?
- ▶ When our relationship with Jesus was broken, whose fault was it? Who made the first move to reconcile? What does this fact imply about what we should do in broken relationships, even if it isn't our fault?

Read Colossians 3:12-13.

- ▶ Why should we forgive others (v. 13)?
- ▶ What kind of people does Paul say we ought to be toward one another now that we have been reconciled to God?
- ▶ Think back to the strained or broken relationships we mentioned. How does Colossians 3:12-13 invite us to reconcile these relationships?

WRAP IT UP

Read Matthew 5:9.

- ▶ How was Jesus our peacemaker?
- ▶ How can we pursue peace and reconciliation with one another this week? With our families?
- ▶ How can we pursue our friends' (or enemies') reconciliation with God this week?