

This midweek study will explore why it's important for students to recognize that all humanity has inherited a sin nature that can only be overcome through the power of the Holy Spirit. 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 called to spread the gospel to the world (Ps. 96:3; 2 Cor. 5:18-20).

Option: Invite students to think of a time when they came up with a "Plan A" for something, but ended up having to resort to "Plan B." What happened to make them change their plans?

- ▶ *What is God's "Plan A" for spreading the gospel? Does He have a "Plan B"?*

Read Psalm 96:3 and 2 Corinthians 5:18-20.

- ▶ *What does it mean to say that we have received a "ministry of reconciliation"?*
- ▶ *Who shared the gospel with you when you trusted Jesus as Savior? Are you thankful that person took the church's mission seriously? Explain.*

The church is God's "Plan A" for spreading the gospel, and He has no "Plan B". We have to take our call to impact others with the gospel extremely seriously.

2 The church is called to be a unified body (Rom. 12:4-6; Gal. 3:28-29).

Option: Ask students to think of a time when they had issues with another believer. How did they work out those issues? Ask them if they think it is important for Christians to work out their differences and why.

- ▶ *When Christians are not unified, what does it show the world about the power of the gospel?*

Read Romans 12:4-6.

Only the gospel has the power to unite millions of different people together in love.

- ▶ *Does it undermine the power of the gospel when we allow petty differences to divide us from other believers? What are ways you have struggled with this in your own life?*

Read Galatians 3:28-29.

- ▶ *How does the gospel free us to love and be united with people who are different from us? How has this happened in your life since you became a believer?*

The gospel destroys the boundaries that divide us from other people and frees us to be united to other believers by common faith in Jesus Christ.

3 The church is called to be the visible representation of God's Kingdom (Matt. 5:16; Col. 3:15).

Read Colossians 3:15.

- ▶ *When we joyfully, willingly submit to the rule of God in our lives, what does that show the world about God's kingdom?*

As Christians, we have what the world longs for: hope, joy, and peace. We know these are only found through submission to Christ's lordship. Our submission to Christ visually demonstrates the source of these things to the world.

Read Matthew 5:16.

- ▶ *What reason did Jesus give for us to let our lights shine before men?*
- ▶ *When people see our good works, what does that show them about the power of God in our lives?*
- ▶ *How can you best allow your light to shine before others?*

WRAP IT UP

- ▶ *What does it mean to say the church is the visible representation of God's kingdom?*
- ▶ *What are ways you can pray for God to use your local church to impact the nations with the gospel?*

As the church, believers are God's ambassadors on Earth, set apart to share the gospel, pursue holiness, and love one another.