

This midweek study will explore the doctrines of church and kingdom. 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: Church and Kingdom

The church and the kingdom of God are closely related, though not identical. When the Bible speaks of the kingdom of God, it is referring to the reign of God in the world. The church is the people of God who live under His loving rule now, anticipating the full manifestation of God's kingdom in the future. The church's mission is to witness to God's kingdom, proclaiming God's message of salvation through Christ and demonstrating the power of the gospel through good works so that others may be brought to live under God's reign.

1 The kingdom of God refers to God's reign over the world (Matt. 6:9-11; John 18:36).

Option: Invite students to think about different kings and queens they have studied in history class. Ask them to name the most powerful king/queen who has ever lived and explain why they think this person is the most powerful.

- ▶ *How does it feel to know even God's "weakness" is stronger than the strength of any person who has ever lived (1 Cor. 1:25)?*

Read John 18:36.

- ▶ *What can we learn from this passage about the nature of Christ's kingdom?*

Read Matthew 6:9-11.

- ▶ *What does it mean when we pray for God's kingdom to come? Where is it coming from?*
- ▶ *What should believers do while we wait on God's kingdom to arrive?*

2 All believers are members of God's kingdom (Matt. 19:24; John 3:5).

Option: Ask students to name some clubs or organizations they are a part of. How did they gain membership in these clubs? Did they have to pay membership fees? Write an essay? Get a teacher's recommendation or be invited by someone else in the club/organization?

Read John 3:3-5.

- ▶ *Has your mom or dad ever shared with you the story of when you were born? How did they describe the scene?*
- ▶ *What does it mean to be born again, even as a teenager?*

Read Matthew 19:24.

- ▶ *The eye of a needle is the little loop through which you feed a thread, located at the opposite end from the point. How easy is it for a camel to fit through this space?*
- ▶ *What was Jesus really saying here? What comparison was He really making?*

Just as it is impossible for a camel to fit through a space that small, it is equally impossible for a person obsessed with their material belongings to accept Christ. Following Jesus is costly, and unless people are willing to see and embrace Jesus as more valuable than anything this world offers, they are not worthy to be called His disciples.

3 Our job is to spread the rule of God's kingdom all over the world (Acts 1:8; 28:30-31).

Read Acts 1:8 and 28:30-31.

- ▶ *When your parents or teachers give you a chore or task to do, do you immediately go and do it, or do you stall a little bit and wait until later? How are your parents' commands both similar to and different from God's commands?*
- ▶ *Define the word hinder." What hinders you from sharing the gospel with your friends and/or family?*

WRAP IT UP

- ▶ *What are some ways you can become more mindful about your role in expanding God's kingdom? What part can you play now?*