

This midweek study will explore the doctrine of Christ as our substitute sacrifice. Use the following outline, activity, playlist, and video ideas to lead a midweek event for your students.

Essential Doctrine: Christ as Sacrifice

There are several signs, symbols, and pointers in the Old Testament that foreshadowed Christ as being the sacrificial Lamb of God who would take away the sins of the world. However, unlike the sacrificial system of the Old Testament, whose sacrifices were unable to take away sin (Heb. 10:4), Christ's sacrifice on the cross was able to permanently "once and for all" take away sins.

Scripture: *Psalm 51:16; Isaiah 53:3-6; Hebrews 2:17; 10:4; 1 John 2:2; 3:5*

1 The Old Testament foreshadows Christ as being the sacrificial Lamb of God (Isa. 53:3-6).

Jesus' sacrifice wasn't a last ditch effort on God's part to correct the system in the Old Testament. The sacrifice of Christ was God's plan from the very beginning. The Old Testament system was a way of foreshadowing and preparing God's people for the true sacrificial Lamb who would pay our debt once and for all.

2 The Old Testament sacrifices were unable to remove sin (Ps. 51:16; Heb. 10:4).

The Old Testament sacrifices simply appeased God's anger against sin. The Old Testament sacrifices were able to temporarily cover the sin of the people in God's eyes, but Jesus removed our sin by paying it in full.

3 Christ's sacrifice on the cross permanently removes our sin (Heb. 2:17; 1 John 2:2; 3:5).

Where the sacrifices in the Old Testament were temporary, in Christ, the sacrifice was permanent. The difference between the Old and New Testament sacrifices rests in the authority of the One being sacrificed. In contrast with an animal, Christ as God was the perfect sacrifice. Jesus took on the entire weight of humanity's sin and canceled the debt permanently based on His authority and power.

Opening Activity

Begin with an activity showing a credit card statement, or mock credit card statement. You can show some old credit cards as an example. Illustrate how someone may have an incredibly large bill of \$1,000 this month, but the credit card company only requires a payment of, for example, \$30 per month. At this rate, if you didn't buy anything else or accumulate any interest on your bill,

it would take almost 2 full years to pay off! But let's be honest, no interest and no purchases for two years is unrealistic. You can make the best effort to pay the minimum required, but \$30 a month is insufficient to fully pay the debt.

If you are broke, have no job, and can't afford to pay the bill, your only hope is for a generous person to cancel your debt, or pay your debt in full, and give you a clean slate. In the Old Testament, the sacrificial system was similar to paying a small payment on a debt which could never be repaid. The sacrifice was the minimum required, but couldn't cancel the debt. In Jesus, we find the generous One who permanently pays for and cancels our sin debt and starts us over with a clean slate.

Worship/Playlist Ideas

- ▶ "What A Savior" by Laura Story
(*Blessings*, INO Records, 2011)
- ▶ "The Lion and the Lamb" by Big Daddy Weave
(*Beautiful Offerings [Deluxe Edition]*, Word Entertainment, 2015)
- ▶ "Crowns" by Hillsong Worship
(*Let There Be Light [Deluxe Edition]*, Hillsong Music, 2016)
- ▶ "Forgiven" by Crowder
(*American Prodigal*, sixstepsrecords/Sparrow Records, 2016)

Video Idea(s)

- ▶ "He Was" *BluefishTV.com*
- ▶ "Impressions of Love" *Skitguys.com*

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1 The Old Testament foreshadows Christ as being the sacrificial Lamb of God (Isa. 53:3-6).

Read Isaiah 53:3-6.

- ▶ *How does this passage foreshadow Christ and His sacrifice?*
God the Father was not only just to declare our righteousness in Christ, but Jesus also paid an incredible price to purchase it.
- ▶ *What would those living during Isaiah's time understand the Messiah to do when He finally came?*
Christ would live the life we could not, and He would pay the sin debt we were unable to pay.
- ▶ *Why would this cause such a great anticipation for the Messiah in the Old Testament?*
- ▶ *Ultimately, what was God promising His people through foreshadowing the Messiah in the Old Testament?*

2 The Old Testament sacrifices were unable to remove sin (Ps. 51:16; Heb. 10:4).

Option: Show a white canvas to the class. Place a large stroke of paint across the canvas. Ask a student to remove the paint using things like window cleaner, soap, towels, or even painting over the color. Regardless of their attempts, the stain is too deep and permanent to be removed—the canvas needs to be replaced. The Old Testament sacrificial system is similar to attempting to remove paint on a canvas by painting over it. It's not permanent, nor does it remove the stain; at best, it simply covers it up.

- ▶ *Why did the Old Testament sacrifices fail to remove sin permanently?*
While God instructed His people to make sacrifices, it was only a temporary solution that needed to be repeated.

Read Psalm 51:16 and Hebrews 10:4.

- ▶ *According to these verses, why is Jesus' sacrifice superior to the Old Testament animal sacrifices?*
- ▶ *In what ways do these verses provide a glimpse into what God really wants and desires from us?*
- ▶ *Why is it important to know that the Old Testament sacrifices were unable to remove sin?*

3 Christ's sacrifice on the cross permanently removes our sin (Heb. 2:17; 1 John 2:2; 3:5).

While the animal sacrifices of the Old Testament were temporary, Jesus' sacrifice permanently removes our sin because it is God who made the sacrifice.

- ▶ *What difference does it make when God Himself is our sacrifice instead of an animal?*
Jesus' authority as God's Son gave Him the ability and power to die in our place and to forgive our sin.
- ▶ *How does Jesus' authority and power change how we approach Him?*
- ▶ *How does God providing the sacrifice make Jesus' sacrifice permanent as opposed to the Old Testament sacrifices?*

WRAP IT UP

- ▶ *How does the fact that Jesus has permanently removed your sin change how you live?*
- ▶ *How does Christ as our sacrifice cause us to reflect on the way we sometimes attempt to earn our salvation?*
Challenge students to be aware that the Old Testament foreshadows Christ so believers can know that the entirety of Scripture points to Jesus. Challenge them to know that while the Old Testament sacrifices were unable to remove sin, Christ's sacrifice on the cross is sufficient to remove our sin permanently.

This midweek study will explore the biblical teaching of the temple of the Holy Spirit. Use the following outline, activity, playlist, and video ideas to lead a midweek event for your students.

Essential Doctrine: Temple of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit indwells the church, both individually and corporately (1 Cor. 3:16-17; 12:13). As the temple of the Holy Spirit, we live lives differently than before, bearing the virtuous fruit that comes only by the indwelling work of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23). This indwelling work of the Spirit also equips individual members of the church with gifts for the work of the ministry (1 Cor. 12:11).

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 3:16-17; 6:19-20; 12:11,13; Galatians 5:22-23; Ephesians 4:11-12

1 The Holy Spirit indwells the church, both individually and corporately (1 Cor. 3:16-17; 12:13).

The Holy Spirit is not only the Person of the Trinity who indwells people, but the Holy Spirit also indwells the church as a whole. All believers are individually temples of the Holy Spirit and wherever they go, they take the Spirit with them. The church is also the dwelling place of the Spirit. This is one of the reasons believers are commanded to never forsake gathering together as a church body (Heb. 10:25).

2 As temples of the Holy Spirit, we live life differently (1 Cor. 6:19-20; Gal. 5:22-23).

What you find inside certain places indicates the type of activity that occurs there. As temples of the Holy Spirit, the One who is found in us indicates what type of lives we should live and what types of activity should go on in our hearts and minds. When the Holy Spirit indwells our hearts, our lives should reflect the values and heart of God.

3 This work of the Spirit equips members of the church with gifts for ministry (1 Cor. 12:11; Eph. 4:11-12).

Not only does the Holy Spirit dwell in us, but the Holy Spirit also provides the tools for ministering to others. The Holy Spirit empowers believers to develop and use their gifts for the good of the local church and for the kingdom of Christ. The body of Christ has various gifts to reach as many as possible for Christ.

Opening Activity

Bring in a video game system or electronic device that needs a battery or external power to work properly. Remove the battery or unplug the device before the lesson. Ask students to use the device to the best of their ability without plugging in or using the device's battery. They can ad lib something to add humor to the awkward situation.

After the illustrative point has been made that without power, the device is useless, explain to the students that they are also powerless as believers without the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. The video game system, regardless of its processing speed, cannot function without external power. Inform students that they will learn how we function as temples of the Holy Spirit.

Worship/Playlist Ideas

- ▶ "Build Your Kingdom Here" by Rend Collective (*Campfire*, Integrity Music, 2013)
- ▶ "Holy Spirit" by Francesca Battistelli (*If We're Honest*, Word Entertainment, 2014)
- ▶ "Remember" by Passion (*Salvation's Tide is Rising*, sixstepsrecords/Sparrow Records, 2016)
- ▶ "Abide with Me" by Matt Redmon (*Unbroken Praise [Live]*, sixstepsrecords/Sparrow Records, 2015)

Video Idea(s)

- ▶ "The Story of Pentecost" *Skitguys.com*
- ▶ "Amena Brown: He is Here" *BluefishTV.com*

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1 The Holy Spirit indwells the church, both individually and corporately (1 Cor. 3:16-17; 12:13).

Invite students to describe what indwelling means.

- ▶ *What are the primary ways the Holy Spirit indwells the church, both individually and corporately?*

Read 1 Corinthians 3:16-17.

- ▶ *In what ways are you the temple of the Holy Spirit?*

The Scripture says the temple of God is holy. If the temple is holy, then believers are holy.

- ▶ *How does being holy in God's sight change the way you live and think about yourself?*

Read 1 Corinthians 12:13.

This passage makes it clear that the gift of the Holy Spirit is available for all people, regardless of racial, economic, or social standing.

- ▶ *What does it say about the Holy Spirit that this gift extends to all who trust in Christ?*
- ▶ *How can you be more like the Holy Spirit in this regard?*

2 As temples of the Holy Spirit, we live life differently (1 Cor. 6:19-20; Gal. 5:22-23).

Option: Ask students to share about an encounter with an individual that changed their lives. Maybe they met a governor or an official, a famous person, someone they admire, and so on. Instruct them to explain how that experience changed their lives and caused them to see things differently.

Our encounter with Christ and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit changes our lives as well—as temples of the Holy Spirit, our lives are not (and cannot) be the same. Instruct students to make a list of various situations in which they should live differently because they are temples of the Holy Spirit.

Read Galatians 5:22-23.

- ▶ *What fruit of the Spirit comes easy for you? What fruit do you need to rely more heavily on the Spirit to develop?*
- ▶ *As temples of the Holy Spirit, what are called to refrain from doing in this passage? Why is it important to refrain from these things?*

Read 1 Corinthians 6:19-20.

The indwelling of the Holy Spirit is not just a spiritual reality. We are also called to honor God physically, as temples of the Holy Spirit.

- ▶ *How does "honoring God with your body" as temples of the Holy Spirit challenge you? How can you better obey this command?*

3 This work of the Spirit equips members of the church with gifts for ministry (1 Cor. 12:11; Eph. 4:11-12).

Read 1 Corinthians 12:11 and Ephesians 4:11-12.

Having different talents and abilities is a wonderful benefit to the church—a gift given by the Holy Spirit for furthering the kingdom of God.

- ▶ *In what ways are you gifted? In what ways can your gifts be used by the Holy Spirit to spread the gospel?*

God gave the church different types of gifts for a purpose. One of the greatest strengths in the church is in its diversity of gifts, abilities, talents, and ways of serving.

- ▶ *In what ways have you and your church been blessed by the variety of gifts belonging to people in your church?*

WRAP IT UP

- ▶ *How are you living differently as a temple of the Holy Spirit?*

Challenge students to recognize that the Holy Spirit indwells the church corporately and individually. Because of that indwelling, believers are called to live life differently and use their gifts granted by the Holy Spirit for ministry in the local church.

This midweek study will explore the importance of the Lord's Supper. Use the following outline, activity, playlist, and video ideas to lead a midweek event for your students.

Essential Doctrine: Lord's Supper

The Lord's Supper is a symbolic act of obedience whereby members of the church, through partaking of the bread and the fruit of the vine, memorialize the death of the Redeemer, and anticipate His second coming (1 Cor. 11:26).

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 11:20-26

1 The Lord's Supper is an act of corporate obedience (1 Cor. 11:20,24).

The Lord's Supper is an ordinance Christians participate in when they come together (v. 20); this is not necessarily something intended to be done individually, but something to be celebrated together with other saints in the body of Christ. Note that Jesus also commands us to celebrate the Lord's Supper (v. 24). Celebrating the Lord's Supper with other Christians is a mandatory means of our growth in grace.

2 The Lord's Supper memorializes Jesus' death (1 Cor. 11:24-25).

After both the bread and the cup, Jesus affirms we are to do this "in remembrance of Me." The original Lord's Supper was the Passover, when the apostles remembered the slaying of the Passover Lamb for the deliverance of the Israelites. Christians see in the bread the body of Jesus given for us (v. 24), and in the cup we see Jesus' blood which secures the new covenant (v. 25). Both elements look to Jesus' death on our behalf.

3 The Lord's Supper anticipates Jesus' return (1 Cor. 11:26).

By participating in the Lord's Supper, we profess Jesus' death until the time of His return. The Lord's Supper is, quantity-wise, small. The Supper includes a small cup of grape juice and a small cube or wafer of bread—it's not much. However, this meal looks forward to the day Jesus will return and all His people will celebrate the marriage feast of the Lamb. At that point, the Lord's Supper will no longer be necessary, because we will be in His presence forever.

Opening Activity

Pretend your group is a screenwriter's club. One person has a great idea for a romance movie, but needs help with the male character will be leaving for an extended period of time. The character needs something to leave with his fiancé so she will think about him while he's gone, but will also be waiting for the day he'll come home. What item would you suggest this character leave?

Allow students some time to come up with their answers, then let them share or act out the scene. Talk about how the items the students suggested are like the Lord's Supper—symbols to help us to remember Jesus while He's away and to be waiting for the day He will return.

Worship/Playlist Ideas

- ▶ "Behold the Lamb (Communion Hymn)" by Keith & Kristyn Getty
(*Awaken the Dawn*, Getty Music Label, 2009)
- ▶ "Remembrance (Communion Song)" by Matt Maher
(*Alive Again [Extended Edition]*, Provident Label Group, 2011)
- ▶ "Your Glory/Nothing but the Blood" by All Sons & Daughters
(*Live [Deluxe EP]*, Integrity Music, 2013)
- ▶ "The Table" by Chris Tomlin
(*Love Ran Red*, Sixstepsrecords/Sparrow Records, 2014)

Video Idea(s)

- ▶ "The Cross" *Skitguys.com*
- ▶ "Blood Sacrifice" *BluefishTV.com*

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1 The Lord's Supper is an act of corporate obedience (1 Cor. 11:20,24).

- ▶ *What are some events or things (besides family events) that bring lots of people together? (You can suggest concerts or sporting events).*
- ▶ *When people come together for these events, what kind of rituals do they do together (even if they don't call these actions rituals)? (You could suggest things like the wave or holding up lit lighters or cell phones).*
- ▶ *For what kinds of things do Christians gather together?*

Read 1 Corinthians 11:20,24.

- ▶ *According to the text, why should the Corinthians have come together?*
- ▶ *Why was Paul upset with the way the Corinthians came together? What were they doing wrong?*
- ▶ *How is the Lord's supper supposed to be taken? Alone or together with other Christians? Why do you think that is?*
- ▶ *Look at verses 24 and 25. Is the Lord's Supper mandatory or optional?*

2 The Lord's Supper memorializes Jesus' death (1 Cor. 11:24-25).

- ▶ *What are some of your favorite souvenirs? What makes them your favorites?*

Read 1 Corinthians 11:24-25.

- ▶ *What reason did Jesus give for why we participate in the Lord's Supper?*
- ▶ *What did Jesus mean when He said His body is for us? In what sense did He give His body for us?*
- ▶ *What did Jesus say the cup symbolized? (He said His blood establishes the new covenant.) In what sense did Jesus' blood establish the new covenant?*
- ▶ *What historical meal were Jesus and His apostles celebrating at the first Lord's Supper? What happened at the Passover?*
- ▶ *In what sense is Jesus the ultimate Passover Lamb?*
- ▶ *How does celebrating the Lord's Supper help us remember the sacrifice of our Passover Lamb?*

3 The Lord's Supper anticipates Jesus' return (1 Cor. 11:26).

Instruct students to search trailers for upcoming movies on their phones or (if you have them) computers. Ask them to find what they think is the coolest trailer.

- ▶ *What makes this trailer so cool? Do you want to see this movie? Why?*
- ▶ *What is the purpose of a movie trailer?*

Read 1 Corinthians 11:26.

- ▶ *How long should Christians continue the ordinance of the Lord's Supper?*
- ▶ *Why do you think Paul said to continue until Jesus comes? Why would we stop taking the Lord's Supper when Jesus returns?*
- ▶ *Is the Lord's Supper very filling for physical hunger?*
- ▶ *What even better meal does the Lord's Supper point to? When does that meal happen?*
- ▶ *Why would we no longer need the Lord's Supper when Jesus returns and we experience the "marriage feast of the Lamb" (Rev. 19:9)?*
- ▶ *In what sense is the Lord's Supper a "trailer" for Jesus' return? Would you still watch a trailer when you own the movie?*

WRAP IT UP

- ▶ *Imagine your aunt or uncle, who is a Christian, says, "I don't really need to take the Lord's Supper. It's just eating a piece of bread and drinking some juice." How would you respond to him or her?*

This midweek study will explore the doctrine of propitiation. Use the following outline, activity, playlist, and video ideas to lead a midweek event for your students.

Essential Doctrine: Christ as Propitiation

Because of God's righteousness and holiness, humanity's sins must be atoned for in order for people to be reconciled to God. As the propitiation for sins, Christ's death is the appeasement or satisfaction of God's wrath against sin. Christ's propitiation for our sins demonstrates both God's great love toward sinners (1 John 4:10), as well as the necessary payment that results from the penalty of sins (Rom. 3:26).

Scripture: Romans 3:25-26; Ephesians 2:3-7; 1 John 4:10

1 Jesus' propitiation removes us from God's wrath and restores us to God's favor (Eph. 2:3-7).

Propitiation means *to be restored in someone's favor*. The prefix *pro-* means *for* or *toward*. The suffix, *-piti*, has the same root word as *petition*, meaning *to seek or pursue*. Propitiation is seeking for someone in a good sense. This passage doesn't use the word propitiation, but it shows us how Jesus' atonement moves us from being children of God's wrath like all other people (v. 3) into being the eternal recipients of the riches of His grace (v. 7). I'd say that's propitiation: moving from the hopelessness of God's wrath to the eternal hope of His grace.

2 Jesus' propitiation demonstrates God's great love toward sinners (1 John 4:10).

It's important for us to remember that God initiated our propitiation—not us. God's love for us moved Him to send Jesus for us. We did not do anything to earn God's favor and no potential in us caught His eye—nothing about us even hinted to Him that we might be worthy. Our propitiation was entirely based on God's motivation in Jesus the Messiah.

3 Jesus' propitiation upholds God's righteousness in forgiving sinners (Rom. 3:25-26).

Our propitiation before God raises a problem: How can God still uphold justice if He forgives unashamedly guilty people? This may be the greatest difficulty in Scripture but this passage gives us the answer: Jesus. God does not merely overlook sins; He punishes sin in the person of Jesus, so that God might demonstrate His own righteousness (in punishing sin) while still showing grace to those who trust in Him.

Opening Activity

Place students in groups of three to four. Then, ask: What is a great enemy-to-friend story? Tell students they can pick from films, history, books, comics, sports, and so on. Allow about five minutes for discussion. When they're done, allow each group five minutes to create their own story enemy-to-friend story. Ask them to come up with a creative title, characters, and the general plot. Then, allow one person from the group to stand and tell their story.

Then, Ask:

- ▶ What are the reasons these people went from enemies to friends?
- ▶ What changed to make the relationship friendly again?

Connect the reasons and themes they share to how Jesus is our propitiation: His atonement moves us from God's wrath to God's favor. In other words, Jesus is the reason we become God's friends rather than His enemies.

Worship/Playlist Ideas

- ▶ "Rescue" by Ellie Holcomb
(*Red Sea Road*, Full Heart Music, 2017)
- ▶ "Power to Redeem" by Lauren Daigle
(*How Can It Be*, Centricity Music, 2015)
- ▶ "How Great is Your Love" by Passion
(*Worthy of Your Name [Live]*, sixstepsrecords/Sparrow Records, 2017)
- ▶ "Son Was Lifted Up" by Leeland
(*Invisible*, Bethel Music, 2016)

Video Idea(s)

- ▶ "Currency: How Much Is Our Life Worth?" BluefishTV.com
- ▶ "Respond" Skitguys.com

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1 Jesus' propitiation removes us from God's wrath and restores us to God's favor (Eph. 2:3-7).

Option: Imagine you have a friend, Jill, who has done something hurtful toward another friend, Jane. Jill wants to make things right with Jane. Jane tells Jill, "I forgive you, but I don't really care to be friends anymore. The hurt is just too deep." Jill is still pretty upset about the divide between her and her friend. She wants to restore the relationship.

- ▶ *What suggestions might you offer to Jill before she goes to talk with Jane?*
- ▶ *What might you suggest to Jill after Jane said she forgave Jill but didn't want to be friends?*
- ▶ *Imagine Jane and Jill did reconcile. How would you know? What would you see in their relationship that proves propitiation, or moving from being under someone's wrath to being in someone's favor, has happened?*

Read Ephesians 2:3-7.

- ▶ *Before Jesus died for us, how did God view us (v. 3)?*
- ▶ *What is God's plan for all eternity (v. 7)? How does He view us now?*
- ▶ *What changed between verses 3 and 7? How did Jesus make propitiation for us with God?*

2 Jesus' propitiation demonstrates God's great love toward sinners (1 John 4:10).

- ▶ *Consider our previous example with Jill and Jane. Which girl wanted to reconcile?*
- ▶ *How would it be different if Jane were the one who wanted to make things right? Would it be more impressive for Jane or Jill to initiate reconciliation?*
- ▶ *If Jane wanted to pursue reconciliation with Jill, and she asked for your advice on how to go about it, what suggestions would you give her?*

Read 1 John 4:10.

- ▶ *Who initiated our propitiation?*
- ▶ *How does the fact that God started the reconciliation process help you treasure him more?*
- ▶ *What implications do you see in God loving us first? What might this imply about how we treat those who wronged us? How can loving them first show them a picture of God's love?*

3 Jesus' propitiation upholds God's righteousness in forgiving sinners (Rom. 3:25-26).

- ▶ *We've talked about Jesus' propitiation and what it does for us. Does anyone see a potential problem with us being back in God's favor?*
- ▶ *What issue might present itself if God forgives us? If a judge simply forgave a convicted criminal, how might people react? Why would they react that way? Would they be right?*
- ▶ *So what problem exists if God forgives us? What necessary virtue does God seem to be overlooking if he forgives us?*

Read Romans 3:25-26.

- ▶ *How does this text show that God is still just and righteous even when He forgives undeserving, sinful people?*
- ▶ *How does Jesus' propitiation help us see how big, glorious, magnificent, and gracious our God is?*

WRAP IT UP

- ▶ *If you were to try to teach Jesus' propitiation to your club/sports team/musical group/friends, what analogy would you use and why?*

This midweek study will explore the topic of Jesus as our substitutional sacrifice. Use the following outline, activity, playlist, and video ideas to lead a midweek event for your students.

Essential Doctrine: Christ as Substitute

At the heart of the atonement is Jesus Christ substituting Himself for sinners as He died on the cross. This truth is seen against the backdrop of the Old Testament sacrificial system, which provided a picture of humanity's need for sin to be covered and guilt to be removed by an innocent sacrifice. Jesus perfectly revealed and did the will of God, taking upon Himself human nature with its demands and necessities and identifying Himself completely with humankind, yet without sin. He honored the divine law by His personal obedience, and in His substitutionary death on the cross, He made provision for the redemption of humanity from sin.

Scripture: *Leviticus 1:4; 3:2; 5:9; Isaiah 53:4-12; Romans 5:18-21; 2 Corinthians 5:21*

1 Jesus serves as our substitutional sacrificial lamb (Lev. 1:4; 3:2; 5:9).

Sacrifice was a central element of the Old Testament worship practice. Different sacrifices served different purposes: The burnt offering was worship; the peace offering was for fellowship; the sin offering atoned for sin. Just before the sacrifice, the one who offered it would identify himself with the animal by placing his hands on it. In the same way, Jesus has identified with us as our substitute in His sacrifice on the cross.

2 Jesus serves as our substitute in taking our sins upon Himself (Isa. 53:4-12).

Isaiah prophesied about the coming Messiah in this passage, but it's one of the best passages to show how Jesus is our substitute. He was pierced for our sins and our healing comes by those wounds. Put simply: God punished Jesus for the sins of all people. It's difficult to find a more powerful indication of Jesus as our substitute than the fact that "he bore the sin of many" (v. 12). Consider the marvelous glory of God's economy: He appoints Jesus to be our substitute and bear our sin.

3 Jesus serves as our substitute in being our righteousness (Rom. 5:18-21; 2 Cor. 5:21).

Jesus' substitution does not only apply to Him taking our sins upon Himself; He is also our substitute in providing us righteousness. His perfect death pays for our sins; His perfect life provides our righteousness. Romans 5 parallels how Adam's sin passed original sin to all mankind with how Jesus' "perfect obedience" provides righteousness to all believers. It's glorious to think that we not only have a clean slate, but also our new life in Christ is filled with His righteousness

Opening Activity

Your students are going to be an improv/acting group. Place them into groups of two to four. Instruct groups to go into different areas of the room. Each group will come up with a short skit. However, they will also be assigned a different genre. Possible genres include: comedy, drama, romance, tragedy, action, and so on. The common theme for all the skits is *The Switch*. Somewhere in the course of their skit, one person must switch roles with another person.

Allow students time to prepare the skits, and then ask them to present. Talk about the common themes: What happened when people switched? Was it generally a good thing? A bad thing? Was it generally better for the person who got switched out, or for the person who was subbed in?

Worship/Playlist Ideas

- ▶ "Buried in the Grave" by All Sons & Daughters
(*Season One*, Integrity Music, 2012)
- ▶ "No Greater Love" by Colton Dixon
(*Identity*, 19 Recordings, 2017)
- ▶ "Beauty of the Cross" by Jonny Diaz
(*Jonny Diaz*, INO Records, 2011)
- ▶ "It Is Finished" by Matt Papa
(*This Changes Everything*, 2 Citites Music, 2011)

Video Idea(s)

- ▶ "Amena Brown: Jesus Receives All The Honor" BluefishTV.com
- ▶ "Consuming Fire" Skitguys.com

This midweek study will explore the topic of Jesus as our substitutional sacrifice. 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 Substitute

At the heart of the atonement is Jesus Christ substituting Himself for sinners as He died on the cross. This truth is seen against the backdrop of the Old Testament sacrificial system, which provided a picture of humanity's need for sin to be covered and guilt to be removed by an innocent sacrifice. Jesus perfectly revealed and did the will of God, taking upon Himself human nature with its demands and necessities and identifying Himself completely with humankind, yet without sin. He honored the divine law by His personal obedience, and in His substitutionary death on the cross, He made provision for the redemption of humanity from sin.

1 Jesus serves as our substitutional sacrificial lamb (Lev. 1:4; 3:2; 5:9).

- ▶ Why do you think so much of the Old Testament worship consisted of animal sacrifice?
- ▶ What were some of the different kinds of sacrifice? (Hint: Skim Leviticus 1–5 for some examples.)

Read Leviticus 1:4; 3:2; and 5:9.

- ▶ What common practice did the Israelites do regardless of the type of sacrifice?
- ▶ Why do they lay their hands on the animal just before sacrificing it (Lev. 1:4)?
- ▶ What do we mean when we say that the animal was a substitute?
- ▶ John calls Jesus the Lamb who takes away the sin of the world (John 1:29). In what sense is a Jesus a substitute Lamb for us?

2 Jesus serves as our substitute in taking our sins upon Himself (Isa. 53:4-12).

- ▶ What are some of the most heroic substitutions you can think of from history or literature?

For example, think of Katniss volunteering in the place of her sister Primrose, or Sydney Carton taking the place of Marquis Evremonde at the end of *A Tale of Two Cities*.

- ▶ What makes these examples heroic?

Read Isaiah 53:4-12.

- ▶ Consider Isaiah's description of the coming Messiah. Would the Messiah's road be a pleasant or difficult one?
- ▶ Why was the Messiah punished so grievously?
- ▶ Look at verse 4. How is this an example of Jesus being our substitute?
- ▶ List other places in Isaiah 53 where Jesus serves as a substitute for us in some way.
- ▶ What sort of emotional response should we have in light of this grand substitute?

3 Jesus serves as our substitute in being our righteousness (Rom. 5:18-21; 2 Cor. 5:21).

- ▶ Have you ever experienced blessing in your life because someone else did something good? For example, maybe you were a benchwarmer for a team who won a championship, or you enjoyed cake at someone else's birthday party.

Read Romans 5:18-21.

- ▶ What is the "one trespass" that caused condemnation for everyone? (Hint: Adam committed the "one trespass.")
- ▶ Paul paralleled the "one trespass" with the "one righteous act." Who did the one righteous act?
- ▶ It's hard to identify one single act that Jesus did as the righteous act. What do you think Paul was referring to?
- ▶ Whatever the righteous act was (whether Jesus' entire life or His death), what was the result?
- ▶ So in what sense was Jesus our substitute in a positive fashion? How were we blessed by His actions?
- ▶ Look at verse 20. Which is greater: sin or grace?
- ▶ Is it better to stand before God as an innocent person or a righteous person? Because of Jesus as our substitute, which are we?

Read 2 Corinthians 5:21.

- ▶ What was Jesus made to be? For whom did God do this? What happened as a result?
- ▶ How does this summarize the verses in this session about Jesus as our substitute?

WRAP IT UP

- ▶ How does Jesus' as substitute affect the way you look at Him? How does it affect your relationship with Him?
- ▶ How does knowing Jesus is your substitute give you confidence in the gospel?

Encourage students to allow this truth to increase their thankfulness for what Jesus has done for them as their substitute, paying for their sins Himself.

This midweek study will explore the doctrine of glorification. Use the following outline, activity, and playlist to lead a midweek event for your students.

Essential Doctrine: Glorification

Glorification is the final stage in the process of salvation. It refers to the future time when a Christian reaches moral and spiritual perfection at the time of death or at Christ's return (Phil. 1:9-11; Col. 1:22). Glorification also involves the physical perfection that we will have once our bodies have been resurrected. When we are glorified, we will have a fuller knowledge and understanding of God and His Word (1 Cor. 13:12; Phil. 3:20-21).

Scripture: *Matthew 5:9; John 17:24; Romans 6:7, 7:21-24; 1 Corinthians 15:42-44; 1 John 3:2; Revelation 22:4*

1 Our glorification includes moral perfection: We will sin no more (Rom. 6:7; 7:21-24).

The struggle with sin is one of the greatest struggles for believers at this time. Paul described his inner war with sin as intense, saying it made him a wretched man. He said that he wanted to do good but he didn't do good, and the evil that he wanted to stay away from, he ended up doing (7:21-24). The good news for believers is that we will no longer sin after we die. Paul even said we would be free from sin (6:7). If this truth applies as soon as we die, how much more free will we be upon glorification: We will no longer even have the desire to sin.

2 Our glorification includes physical perfection: a resurrection body (1 Cor. 15:42-44, 1 John 3:2).

Our present bodies are fragile and under the curse of sin. Even under the best circumstances, these bodies wither with age and die. But this won't be the case at glorification. Our bodies will be raised as incorruptible (1 Cor. 15:42-44). They will be physical bodies, just like Jesus' resurrection body (1 John 3:2). When Paul said they were spiritual bodies (1 Cor. 15:44), he meant they will be bodies marked by the Spirit, instead of the flesh.

3 Our glorification includes spiritual perfection: seeing God (Matt. 5:8; John 17:24; Rev. 22:4; 1 John 3:2).

Older theologians referred to the greatest blessing of glorification as the beatific vision: seeing God. Consider the grammar of 1 John 3:2's promise: We will see Him because "we will be like him." Our glorification bodies will enable us to see God in a way that we presently cannot. Seeing God is the promise for the pure of heart (moral perfection) in Matthew 5:8, the promise for all believers in Revelation 22:4, and the very peak of Jesus' prayer for us in John 17:24.

Opening Activity

Pass out paper and colored pencils to your students. Tell them they are an advertising firm that has been hired by your church. Their job is to create a pamphlet entitled "Your Best You." The pamphlet is to be an advertisement for how anyone can achieve his or her best self upon glorification (the resurrection of the body for Christians when Jesus returns). Give them some time to make their pamphlets, then let them share.

Note: if your students have the technology and the know-how, you could also ask them to make their brochures on a computer or an app.

After they've shared their pamphlets, debrief what they produced. Is it biblical? Does it focus on God? Make any segue you can into the lesson.

Worship/Playlist Ideas

- ▶ "Call it Grace" by Unspoken
(*Unspoken*, Centricity Music, 2013)
- ▶ "Ain't No Grave" by Crowder
(*Neon Steeple*, sixstepsrecords/Sparrow Records, 2014)
- ▶ "This I Believe (The Creed)" by Hillsong Worship
(*No Other Name [Live]*, Hillsong Music Australia, 2014)
- ▶ "How Long?" by Jordan Feliz
(*The River*, Centricity Music, 2016)

This midweek study will explore the doctrine of glorification. 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: Glorification

Glorification is the final stage in the process of salvation. It refers to the future time when a Christian reaches moral and spiritual perfection at the time of death or at Christ's return (Phil. 1:9-11; Col. 1:22). Glorification also involves the physical perfection that we will have once our bodies have been resurrected. When we are glorified, we will have a fuller knowledge and understanding of God and His Word (1 Cor. 13:12; Phil. 3:20-21).

1 Our glorification includes moral perfection: we will sin no more (Rom. 6:7; 7:21-24).

- ▶ How would you describe your current relationship with sin? Are you comfortable with it? Fighting it? Conquering it?
- ▶ What do you think it would take for you to defeat sin once and for all?

Read Romans 7:21-24.

- ▶ How did Paul characterize his relationship with sin? Do you think his experience is normal or unusual for Christians? Why?

Read Romans 6:7.

- ▶ According to this verse, what is our relationship with sin like after we die?
- ▶ If we no longer struggle with sin once we die, will we struggle with it when we are resurrected?
- ▶ Why do you think we don't struggle with sin in our resurrection body? (Hint: Why do we struggle with sin now? What will we be missing in new heavens and earth? Answer: the desire to sin)
- ▶ How does this news affect you? Explain.

2 Our glorification includes physical perfection: a resurrection body (1 Cor. 15:42-44, 1 John 3:2).

- ▶ What are some of the miracles Jesus performed during his time on earth?
- ▶ Why do you think so many of His miracles included healing?
- ▶ How did Jesus' healing miracles foreshadow our resurrection bodies?

Read 1 Corinthians 15:42-44.

- ▶ How did Paul describe our new resurrection bodies?
- ▶ What kind of physical characteristics will our new resurrection bodies have?

Read 1 John 3:2.

- ▶ How did John describe our resurrection bodies? What was Jesus' resurrection body like? So, what will our be like?
- ▶ Does this news excite you? Why or why not?

3 Our glorification includes spiritual perfection: seeing God (Matt. 5:8; John 17:24; Rev. 22:4; 1 John 3:2).

- ▶ Why do you think God will give us perfect, immortal resurrection bodies? Why wouldn't He just make us eternal spirits?
- ▶ What do you think the single greatest blessing of our glorification will be?

Read 1 John 3:2 again.

- ▶ Look at how John phrased the second part of the verse. Why will we be able to see Jesus as He truly is? So, why will God give us perfect resurrection bodies? Why do you think our current bodies are incapable of seeing Jesus as He truly is?

Read Matthew 5:8 and Revelation 22:4.

- ▶ What do these two verses give as a blessing of the glorified body?
- ▶ Do you get excited at the prospect of seeing God? Why or why not?
- ▶ What do you think Jesus' greatest wish for us would be?

Read John 17:24.

- ▶ What did Jesus pray for us? When will this prayer be answered? Why do you think Jesus prayed this?

WRAP IT UP

- ▶ Imagine one of your friends says, "I'd love to be a Christian, but the idea of an eternal church service sounds so boring." How would you answer this person?

This midweek study will explore the illumination of the Holy Spirit. Use the following outline, activity, playlist, and video ideas to lead a midweek event for your students.

Essential Doctrine: Illumination of Scripture

Because of the vast difference between God’s wisdom and ours, and because of humanity’s sinful state, human beings are incapable, on our own, of fully grasping spiritual truth without being aided by the Holy Spirit through the process of illumination. When it comes to understanding the meaning of God’s Word, Christians do not ultimately rely upon human reason in the process of interpretation, and we do not rely solely upon an institution or body of scholars. Instead, a Christian’s ultimate reliance is upon the work of the Spirit of God who illuminates the Scriptures in the heart and mind (Matt. 13:13-15; Mark 8:18).

Scripture: *Matthew 13:13-15; Mark 8:18; 1 Corinthians. 2:13-14; 1 John 2:27*

1 Humans are incapable of fully grasping spiritual truth without the help of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 2:14; 1 John 2:27).

Not being able to interpret Scripture without the aid of the Holy Spirit doesn’t mean a person cannot pick up the Bible and understand logically what the Bible is communicating. Instead, the illumination of the Holy Spirit impresses upon people their need for a Savior and creates the desire to respond to Christ. This recognition and desire is impossible apart from the help of the Holy Spirit.

2 Christians do not ultimately rely upon human reason in interpreting God’s Word (Matt. 13:13-15; 1 Cor. 2:13).

Christ does not call us to leave our mental abilities and reasoning skills behind when approaching God’s Word. In fact, it is the opposite—we are asked to use these skills in all areas of life. However, when approaching God’s Word we are above all dependent on the Author of Scripture’s leading, even over and above how we might feel about what is written. Our primary guide in Bible interpretation is the Holy Spirit, not our own flawed reasoning abilities.

3 Christians rely upon the work of the Spirit to illuminate the Scriptures in the heart and mind (Mark 8:18).

There is a clear difference between understanding a concept and internalizing a concept to the point that it soaks into our hearts and minds and bringing about true life change. Life-change is only possible through the power and work of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit allows and enables you to not only understand the concepts taught in Scripture, but for them to also become a part of a transformed and renewed heart and mind.

Opening Activity

Invite a volunteer who reads a different language (the more obscure the language the better). Give students various sentences written in the foreign language. Instruct students to read and interpret them. Then, ask the volunteer to interpret the writings and explain the meaning to students. Explain to students that they had no ability to understand or interpret the writing without help from the reader who assisted them. Ultimately, an interpreter, someone who knew the language well, illuminated what was written for them.

Explain that God’s Word is similar: Without the Holy Spirit, we cannot grasp spiritual truth or rely on our ability to interpret God’s Word. Ultimately, the Holy Spirit illuminates Scripture in our hearts and minds. Explain that we will learn about the illumination of Scripture today.

Note: If there isn’t an individual available who can speak a foreign language, you can use Google translator or some other online translation device as a way of illustrating the point.

Worship/Playlist Ideas

- ▶ “Breathe On Us” by Kari Jobe
(*Majestic [Live]*, Sparrow Records, 2014)
- ▶ “Spirit Speaks” by All Sons & Daughters
(*Season One*, Integrity Music, 2012)
- ▶ “On Our Own” by Sanctus Real
(*Run*, Sparrow Records, 2012)
- ▶ “Come Alive” by MIKESCHAIR
(*A Beautiful Life*, Curb Records, 2011)

Video Idea(s)

- ▶ “Lo-Depth Bible Studies” *BluefishTV.com*
- ▶ “Bible Brainstorm” *Skitguys.com*

This midweek study will explore the illumination 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: Illumination of Scripture

Because of the vast difference between God's wisdom and ours, and because of humanity's sinful state, human beings are incapable, on our own, of fully grasping spiritual truth without being aided by the Holy Spirit through the process of illumination. When it comes to understanding the meaning of God's Word, Christians do not ultimately rely upon human reason in the process of interpretation, and we do not rely solely upon an institution or body of scholars. Instead, a Christian's ultimate reliance is upon the work of the Spirit of God who illuminates the Scriptures in the heart and mind (Matt. 13:13-15; Mark 8:18).

1 Humans are incapable of fully grasping spiritual truth without the help of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 2:14, 1 John 2:27).

Invite students to describe things that cannot be done or understood without outside assistance.

- ▶ *Why are humans unable to fully grasp spiritual truth without the help of the Holy Spirit?*

Read 1 Corinthians 2:14.

- ▶ *Why are we unable to understand God's Word apart from the Holy Spirit?*

The Scripture says in our natural state we are unable to understand God's Word.

- ▶ *Based on this passage, why should we always rely on the Holy Spirit to illuminate God's Word?*

Read 1 John 2:27.

This passage teaches believers that the Holy Spirit not only illuminates Scripture, but also assures believers that the Holy Spirit always tells the truth.

- ▶ *Why is understanding that the Holy Spirit never lies vital for understanding God's Word?*

2 Christians do not ultimately rely upon human reason in interpreting God's Word (Matt. 13:13-15, 1 Cor. 2:13).

Option: Give students a random passage from a book. It doesn't have to be much, just a sentence or two. Ask the students to apply their reasoning skills to interpreting what the passage means.

Based on their past, emotional state, attitude, and so on, they could come up with a few different explanations of what that particular sentence could mean. Explain that simply analyzing the text may not ultimately lead you to the right conclusion. You might need some more information, or someone more acquainted with the text to illuminate it for you—maybe even the author.

Explain to the students that reasoning, as good as it is, may not get us to the root of what God's trying to do in our lives through the words in Scripture. For God to truly illuminate the Scripture to your heart and mind, you need the Author's guidance, not only for the meaning of text, but for an accurate application as well.

Read Matthew 13:13-15.

- ▶ *How is it possible to see, hear and understand with one's senses, but not truly understand in the heart? What was Matthew saying about the role of the Holy Spirit in illuminating Scripture?*
- ▶ *What purpose does Matthew's quote from Isaiah give for the Holy Spirit illuminating Scripture?*

Read 1 Corinthians 2:13.

The illumination of the Holy Spirit is necessary because ultimately it is the Holy Spirit who is the author of Scripture.

3 Christians rely upon the work of the Spirit to illuminate the Scriptures in the heart and mind (Mark 8:18).

Read Mark 8:18.

- ▶ *In what ways can you move from having an understanding of what Scripture says to a life transformed by Scripture?*
When believers read and study Scripture, it is not simply for mental purposes, it molds us more into the image of Christ.
- ▶ *What would change in your life, if you read your Bible with the sole intention of being more like Jesus?*
- ▶ *What ways can you be more intentional about relying upon the Holy Spirit to illuminate the Scripture in your heart and mind?*

WRAP IT UP

Challenge students to recognize that we are incapable of understanding Scripture rightly apart from the Holy Spirit.

This midweek study will explore the doctrine of the Trinity. Use the following outline, activity, playlist, and video ideas to lead a midweek event for your students.

Essential Doctrine: God in Three Persons

While the Bible affirms that God is one (Mark 12:29; 1 Cor. 8:4-6), it also affirms that God exists as three persons—Father, Son, and Spirit. Each person of the Trinity is fully divine—the Father is God (John 6:27), the Son is God (Phil. 2), the Spirit is God (Acts 5:3-4)—and each person is distinct from the others (Matt. 11:27; John 10:30; 14:16). This perfect unity within the three persons of the Trinity is a first-order doctrine; departing from it is to abandon orthodox Christianity.

Scripture: *Exodus 3:14; Deuteronomy 6:4-5; Matthew 3:16-17; John 5:22-23; 8:58; Acts 5:3-4; 2 Corinthians 13:13*

1 God is one essence or substance (Ex. 3:14; Deut. 6:4-5; John 8:58).

The monotheism of Judaism and Christianity has long been identified with both religions. Moses mentioned that one God was one of the things that set apart Israel from the surrounding Canaanites. When God revealed Himself to Moses, He said, “I AM,” not “We are.” God’s plagues in Egypt revealed that He is singularly over all the so-called river-gods and demigods of Egypt. When Jesus came to Earth in human form (the incarnation), He did not add a new god to Christianity. He is still the same God as the Father, also claiming I AM for His title (John 8:58).

2 Each person of the Trinity is distinct and divine (Matt. 3:16-17; 2 Cor. 13:13).

Jesus’ baptism provides one of the clearest depictions of the three distinct, co-existing persons of the Trinity. The Son was being baptized, the Spirit descended upon Him like a dove, and the Father spoke from heaven. Each of the three manifests Himself as a display of His divine essence. When Paul said goodbye to Corinthians in his second letter, he gave a distinct blessing from each person of the Trinity, based on his main role in the economy of salvation.

3 The Trinity is an essential doctrine (John 5:22-23; Acts 5:3-4).

Diminishing any Person of the Trinity to semi-divine status is to abandon orthodox Christianity. Jesus powerfully affirmed the necessity of recognizing His divinity (John 5:22-23): Because the Son has the role of judge, one cannot honor the Father unless he also honors the Son. Reducing Jesus to an angel or the first created being is to dishonor the Father. Likewise, when Ananias and Sapphira lied to the Holy Spirit, Peter said they lied to God. Their consequential death demonstrated the severity of their sin affirms the Holy Spirit as God. If one is to adhere to the faith upheld in the Bible, one must hold to the Triune nature of God.

Opening Activity

Ask students to choose their favorite seasons. Next, give each one a note card. Instruct them to write out the following sentence and fill in the blanks:

“My favorite season is like _____ because _____.”

Now, give them a second note card. Instruct them to write:

“The Trinity is like _____ because _____.”

Ask students to share what they wrote on the first card. How are their analogies helpful? How are they insufficient? Point out shortcomings. For example, a student’s favorite season (summer) might be like freedom because school is out. However, is there *really* total freedom in summer, or are they just free from having to take classes?

In the same way that the restaurant analogies are insufficient, our analogies for the Trinity can be helpful, but will always be insufficient. Let them share what they have, and point out what is good about them, and what doesn’t quite capture the very essence of the Trinity.

Worship/Playlist Ideas

- ▶ “How Great is Our God” by Chris Tomlin
(*How Great is Our God: The Essential Collection*, sixstepsrecords/Sparrow Records, 2011)
- ▶ “Remember” by Laura Story
(*Blessings*, INO Records, 2011)
- ▶ “Praise the Father, Praise the Son” by Chris Tomlin
(*Hello Love*, sixstepsrecords/Sparrow Records, 2008)
- ▶ “Trinity” by Matt Papa
(*Your Kingdom Come*, Centricity Music, 2010)

Video Idea(s)

- ▶ “Harmony” *BluefishTV.com*

This midweek study will explore the doctrine of the Trinity. 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: God in Three Persons

While the Bible affirms that God is one (Mark 12:29; 1 Cor. 8:4-6), it also affirms that God exists as three persons—Father, Son, and Spirit. Each person of the Trinity is fully divine—the Father is God (John 6:27), the Son is God (Phil. 2), the Spirit is God (Acts 5:3-4)—and each person is distinct from the others (Matt. 11:27; John 10:30; 14:16). This perfect unity within the three persons of the Trinity is a first-order doctrine; departing from it is to abandon orthodox Christianity.

1 **God is one essence or substance** (Ex. 3:14; Deut. 6:4-5; John 8:58).

- ▶ How many monotheistic religions can you name? Monotheistic means religions that believe in only one God. (Hint: there are only about four major ones: Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.)
- ▶ Would the Jewish/Christian belief in one God be normal in its time?

Read Deuteronomy 6:4-5.

- ▶ Why do you think Moses wanted to strongly emphasize that God is one?
- ▶ Notice how the greatest commandment follows immediately after the declaration that God is one. What's the connection between the declaration and the command?
- ▶ If there were many gods, could they command us to love each one with all our heart, mind, and strength? How does this command differ when there is only one God?

Read Exodus 3:14.

- ▶ How did God reveal Himself to Moses? Was His name singular or plural? Why is that important?

Read John 8:58.

- ▶ Because of this statement, the Jews wanted to stone Jesus for blasphemy. Reread Exodus 3:14. What was Jesus saying?
- ▶ How could Jesus say "I am," when God had earlier said, "I AM"? Why didn't Jesus say "We are"?

2 **Each person of the Trinity is distinct and divine** (Matt. 3:16-17; 2 Cor. 13:13).

- ▶ So if God is one, how is He also three? What do we mean when we say that God is one essence and three Persons?

Read Matthew 3:16-17.

- ▶ Jesus' baptism all three Persons of the Godhead were present, each distinct and simultaneous. Where was the Father? Where was the Son? Where was the Spirit?

- ▶ How would you distinguish the Persons of the Trinity? How does each One relate to us? What passages might support this?

Read 2 Corinthians 13:13.

- ▶ Paul ended his letter with a blessing from each person of the Trinity. What did he wish for each One to give to us? How is each blessing particular to each Person?

3 **The Trinity is an essential doctrine** (John 5:22-23; Acts 5:3-4).

- ▶ What would you consider the absolute minimums of Christianity? In other words, what are the things you must believe to belong to the faith? Would you consider the Trinity one of them? Could you consider any person of the Trinity not fully God and still be a Christian?

Read John 5:22-23.

- ▶ According to this passage, is it essential to consider Jesus fully God? What reason does this passage give for the necessity of acknowledging Jesus as divine?
- ▶ What other reasons would it be essential for one to believe Jesus is fully God?
- ▶ What about the Holy Spirit? Could you still be a Christian if you considered Him less than divine?

Read Acts 5:3-4.

- ▶ This passage is frightening if we are honest. According to Peter, what specific sin did Ananias and Sapphira commit?
- ▶ What did Peter say their sin is?
- ▶ What conclusion can we draw about who the Holy Spirit is? Based on this passage, would you say it's an absolute must that we believe in His divinity?

WRAP IT UP

- ▶ Muslims, with a strong belief in one God, are often confused by the Trinity. How might you try to explain the Trinity to a Muslim friend?

This midweek study will explore the doctrine of faith. 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: Faith

Biblical faith is the resting, or trusting, in Christ alone for salvation (John 3:16-21). More than being simply a mental agreement of historical facts, genuine faith begins with a recognition and confession of the truth of the gospel (1 John 4:13-16), followed by a receiving of Christ as Lord and Savior of one's life (John 1:10-13). Biblical faith is not blind faith, for it rests on the historical life, death, and resurrection of Christ.

1 Biblical faith is the resting, or trusting, in Christ alone for salvation (John 3:16-21).

Invite students to discuss why trust is essential for any good, growing relationship.

- ▶ *Why is it important that Jesus requires trust from us? Why not simply have believers confess Jesus as Christ?*

Read John 3:16-21.

- ▶ *How did Jesus confessing His love for the world invite us to trust Him for salvation?*

Jesus said His plan for the world is not to condemn it, but to save it through the power of the gospel.

- ▶ *Jesus said He didn't come to the world to condemn. How does this cause us to rest in Christ?*
- ▶ *In what ways has Jesus taken the initiative in loving us first? Why should this cause us to love Christ more deeply?*

2 Genuine faith begins with a recognition and confession of the truth of the gospel (1 John 4:13-16).

Option: Bring a box into the group and show it to students.

Invite three students to participate. Tell the three volunteers that there are very strange and good objects in the box. Before they reach in, they have to confess that while the leader is good and would never do anything to hurt them, they have to bring out whatever they find. Place something unique in the box, such as an iTunes card or a five-dollar bill, as a reward for their trust.

Tell them that, like the confession the student had to make about your goodness, believers in Christ have to confess and recognize the truth of the gospel to receive in faith what Christ has for us. Sometimes the journey of faith is scary because we can't see from God's vantage point, but Christ has promised us His goodness and mercy.

- ▶ *Why is recognition and confession of the truth of the gospel essential for saving faith?*

Believers are not called to have a random, blind faith, believers are called to have specific faith in Christ and what He has done for us. The gospel is the work Christ has accomplished on our behalf for our salvation.

3 Receiving Christ as Lord and Savior is a requirement for genuine faith (John 1:10-13).

Believers are commanded to trust Christ in two specific ways: As Lord, meaning master of everything as well as one's individual life, and as Savior, meaning as One who has paid believers' sin debt and rescued people from eternal separation from God.

- ▶ *What is the difference in accepting Jesus as "Lord" and "Savior"? How does this distinction make a difference in your life?*

Genuine faith in Christ requires acknowledgment and trust in both areas. Professing in Jesus as Lord, but not Savior (or vice versa) is, in reality, a rejection of Jesus completely. One has to believe both are true.

- ▶ *How can you deepen your trust in Jesus as both Lord and Savior?*
- ▶ *If you have not received Christ as both Lord and Savior, what holds you from making that decision?*

WRAP IT UP

- ▶ *How are you resting in Christ alone for your salvation?*
- ▶ *How is your confession and recognition of the gospel transforming you today?*

Challenge students to recognize ...

- ▶ biblical faith as resting and trusting in Christ alone for salvation
- ▶ that their salvation begins with a recognition and confession in the truthfulness of the gospel
- ▶ that receiving Christ as both Lord and Savior over their lives is a requirement for genuine, biblical faith in Christ.

This midweek study will explore the doctrine of imputation. Use the following outline, activity, playlist, and video ideas to lead a midweek event for your students.

Essential Doctrine: Imputation

When God pardoned sinners at the cross, our sins were imputed or transferred to Christ, who became sin on our behalf. Our sin was imputed to Christ, and Christ's righteousness was imputed to us (Rom. 5:17; 1 Cor. 1:30). When God the Father looks at those who have trusted in Christ, He does not see their sins, but the righteousness of Christ as belonging to them (Rom. 4:6).

Scripture: *Isaiah 53:4-6; Romans 4:5; 5:18-19; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Philippians 3:8-9; Hebrews 8:12*

1 Through imputation, Jesus takes our sins on Himself (Isa. 53:4-6; 2 Cor. 5:21).

In a previous lesson, we talked about how Jesus was our substitute. One role He fulfilled as substitute was to bear our sins Himself. Consider the powerful descriptions Isaiah gave. He used words like struck down by God, afflicted, stricken, crushed. It is because He himself bore our sicknesses. God punished Him for our iniquity. Isaiah powerfully expanded Paul's concise description of Jesus becoming our sin in 2 Corinthians 5:21.

2 Through imputation, we are credited with Jesus' righteousness (2 Cor. 5:21; Rom. 4:5; 5:18-19).

Paul pointed out the second half of imputation, too: in Jesus, we might become the righteousness of God (2 Cor. 5:21). Not only did Jesus bear our sins, but we have also been credited with His righteousness. Paul also paralleled Adam's original sin being imputed to all people with Jesus' righteousness being imputed to believers. We are credited with righteousness because it was achieved by Jesus, and divinely transferred to those who are in Him (Rom. 4:5; 2 Cor. 5:21).

3 Through imputation God does not see our sins—He sees Jesus' righteousness to our credit (Phil. 3:8-9; Heb. 8:12).

Because Jesus' righteousness has been imputed to those who believe on him, when God looks on a believer, he does not see a history of wickedness. The one who knows all things "forgets," or doesn't hold our sin against us, because it's been imputed to Jesus. Moreover, he doesn't merely see us as "zeroed out;" he sees us as fully righteous as if we had kept every jot and tittle of the Law, since Jesus kept it for us. This is why the near-perfect Pharisee Paul so easily tossed aside his law-keeping righteousness to receive the righteousness that is imputed by faith in Jesus (Philippians 3:8-9).

Opening Activity

Ask students to consider if they want to trade places with someone for one day—anyone in the world. If so, who would it be? Why? What would students do with their twenty-four hours of trading places?

What if the trading places was a real trade? Not only would students take the place of their chosen person, but those people would take the students' place for twenty-four hours. Whatever the person did, good or bad, would be credited to the student. Would the students still want to trade? Would they want to change who their trading-partner is now? If so, why?

Talk about the pros and cons of switching with someone else and receiving all of that person's benefits and responsibilities. Use your discussion to segue into how Christians receive imputation with Jesus; Jesus receives our sins, and we are credited with His righteousness. How is trade like and unlike the examples students came up with?

Worship/Playlist Ideas

- ▶ "On My Side" by Citizen Way
(2.0, Fair Trade Services, 2016)
- ▶ "Saved From" by Jonny Diaz
(*Everything Is Changing*, Centricity Music, 2015)
- ▶ "Made New" by Lincoln Brewster
(*Oxygen*, Integrity Music, 2014)
- ▶ "Coming Home" by Anthem Lights
(*You Have My Heart*, YC Records, 2014)

Video Idea(s)

- ▶ "Club Paradise" *BluefishTV.com*

This midweek study will explore the doctrine of imputation. Use the following outline, activity, playlist, and video ideas to lead a midweek event for your students.

Essential Doctrine: Imputation

When God pardoned sinners at the cross, our sins were imputed or transferred to Christ, who became sin on our behalf. Our sin was imputed to Christ, and Christ's righteousness was imputed to us (Rom. 5:17; 1 Cor. 1:30). When God the Father looks at those who have trusted in Christ, He does not see their sins, but the righteousness of Christ as belonging to them (Rom. 4:6).

Scripture: *Isaiah 53:4-6; Romans 4:5; 5:18-19; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Philippians 3:8-9; Hebrews 8:12*

1 Through imputation, Jesus takes our sins on Himself (Isa. 53:4-6; 2 Cor. 5:21).

In a previous lesson, we talked about how Jesus was our substitute. One role He fulfilled as substitute was to bear our sins Himself. Consider the powerful descriptions Isaiah gave. He used words like struck down by God, afflicted, stricken, crushed. It is because He himself bore our sicknesses. God punished Him for our iniquity. Isaiah powerfully expanded Paul's concise description of Jesus becoming our sin in 2 Corinthians 5:21.

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Paul pointed out the second half of imputation, too: in Jesus, we might become the righteousness of God (2 Cor. 5:21). Not only did Jesus bear our sins, but we have also been credited with His righteousness. Paul also paralleled Adam's original sin being imputed to all people with Jesus' righteousness being imputed to believers. We are credited with righteousness because it was achieved by Jesus, and divinely transferred to those who are in Him (Rom. 4:5; 2 Cor. 5:21).

3 Through imputation God does not see our sins—He sees Jesus' righteousness to our credit (Phil. 3:8-9; Heb. 8:12).

Because Jesus' righteousness has been imputed to those who believe on him, when God looks on a believer, he does not see a history of wickedness. The one who knows all things "forgets," or doesn't hold our sin against us, because it's been imputed to Jesus. Moreover, he doesn't merely see us as "zeroed out;" he sees us as fully righteous as if we had kept every jot and tittle of the Law, since Jesus kept it for us. This is why the near-perfect Pharisee Paul so easily tossed aside his law-keeping righteousness to receive the righteousness that is imputed by faith in Jesus (Philippians 3:8-9).

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Video Idea(s)

- ▶ "Club Paradise" *BluefishTV.com*

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Essential Doctrine: Imputation

When God pardoned sinners at the cross, our sins were imputed or transferred to Christ, who became sin on our behalf. Our sin was imputed to Christ, and Christ's righteousness was imputed to us (Rom. 5:17; 1 Cor. 1:30). When God the Father looks at those who have trusted in Christ, He does not see their sins, but the righteousness of Christ as belonging to them (Rom. 4:6).

1 Through imputation, Jesus takes our sins on himself (Isa. 53:4-6; 2 Cor. 5:21).

- ▶ If you could be anybody else, who would you be? You can choose from history, films, books, and so on. Why would you want to be that person?

Read Isaiah 53:4-6.

- ▶ Would you want to be the person described in these verses? Why or why not?
- ▶ What is some of the suffering Jesus experienced? Why did Isaiah give such detailed descriptions of His suffering?
- ▶ Why did Jesus suffer these things?
- ▶ In what sense did Jesus want to be you? How does he "become us" in this passage?
- ▶ Does this description make you see Jesus as more or less beautiful? Why?

Read 2 Corinthians 5:21.

- ▶ How did Paul summarize the ideas of Isaiah 53:4-6?

2 Through imputation, we are credited with Jesus' righteousness (2 Cor. 5:21; Rom. 4:5; 5:18-19).

- ▶ Imagine a meter like a gas needle on a car's dashboard. One side of the meter reads Evil and the other side reads Good. Where would our needle land without Jesus?
- ▶ Imagine someone has just become a Christian. Where would the needle be?
- ▶ Imagine someone had been a Christian for several decades. Where would the needle be now?

Read 2 Corinthians 5:21.

- ▶ According to 2 Corinthians 5:21, where does the needle go as soon as we trust in Jesus? Can anything increase or decrease the position of our needle in God's eyes?

Read Romans 5:18-19.

- ▶ Why do our needles go to Good or Righteous when we believe? Who should get the credit?

Read Romans 4:5.

- ▶ According to this verse, how do we get our needle to go to Good? Why do you think Paul said his faith was credited for righteousness, rather than he was made righteous?

3 Through imputation God does not see our sins—He sees Jesus' righteousness to our credit (Phil. 3:8-9; Heb. 8:12).

- ▶ We often care a lot about other people's opinions of us. Whose opinion of you matters to you?
- ▶ Whose opinion of you should matter most?
- ▶ What do you think God thinks when He looks at us?
- ▶ If God is omniscient, can God forget anything? Ever?

Read Hebrews 8:12.

- ▶ What can God "forget"? What do you think it means that He will remember our sins no more?
- ▶ How does it make you feel to know that God "forgets" your sins because of Jesus?

Read Philippians 3:8-9.

- ▶ Before he became a Christian, Paul was one of the most moral men on Earth by human standards (vv. 4-6). Why would he say in this passage he traded it all in for the righteousness that comes from faith?
- ▶ When God looked on Paul, whose righteousness did he see?
- ▶ What does God see when he looks on us? Do you find this idea comforting? Glorious? Scary? Explain.
- ▶ How does this knowledge make you want to live?

WRAP IT UP

- ▶ In what sense does Jesus "trade places" with us in salvation?
- ▶ What kind of people should we be if God sees us as clothed in Jesus' righteousness? What should we look like in our families, at school, on the field?

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?

This midweek study will explore the moral influence theory of atonement. Use the following outline, activity, and playlist to lead a midweek event for your students.

Essential Doctrine: Moral Influence Theory of Atonement

According to this theory, Christ's sacrifice should be seen as a demonstration of God's love, a display that produces a change of attitude within humanity. This theory falls short of all Christ accomplished on the cross, since it leaves out God's wrath against sinners and His requirement of satisfaction for sin. Still, it does remind us that the cross is the greatest example of God's love, and this love must provoke gratitude and praise on our behalf.

Scripture: *Romans 5:10-11; 2 Corinthians 4:15; Galatians 3:13-14; Colossians 2:13-14; 1 Thessalonians 5:18*

1 Even though Christ's death demonstrates God love, it is not all that was accomplished (Gal. 3:13-14).

God's love should never be under-emphasized or under-acknowledged. However, the love displayed on the cross was richer and more moving than an emotion or sentimental moment. Christ's death was motivated by much more than a desire to display warm affection. Jesus' death was an act which demonstrated His love by dealing with sin, death, hell, and God's wrath.

2 Christ's death on the cross satisfied God's wrath and paid the price required by our sin (Rom. 5:10-11; Col. 2:13-14).

In addition to revealing God's love to us and serving as an example for Christian living, Christ's death on the cross was the means God used to satisfy the wrath of God against sin. Jesus' death also paid the sin debt which sinners are unable to and incapable of paying. Christ's death is a legal requirement for salvation. Without Christ's substitutionary death, believers are unable to claim any righteousness before God.

3 The cross motivates believers toward gratitude and praise (2 Cor. 4:15; 1 Thess. 5:18).

Because of Jesus' death, both legally and morally, believers should be motivated toward gratitude and praise. Believers praise and display gratitude to Jesus not out of emotion only, but because it is the only fitting response to the God of the universe who loved humanity and His glory enough to pay our debt.

Opening Activity

Instruct students to form groups and assign each group a different theme. Some examples include: describing the significance of the United States Constitution, the rules of basketball, or the significant points and characters of a popular book such as *Romeo and Juliet*.

Instruct students to present their theme to the group. After all groups have presented, ask students what they would have thought if someone described the U.S. Constitution simply as "rules for America," or the rules of basketball as "how to put a ball in a hoop," or *Romeo and Juliet* as an "old teenage love story." Mention that students might agree with those statements, but at the same time agree there is so much more to those things than the simplistic explanation given.

Explain that when Jesus died on the cross it was certainly a demonstration of God's love and it should motivate us in certain ways. However, limiting the cross to a good tale that informs our morals, comes up incredibly short of reality. Share that today we will examine what can be called the moral influence theology of atonement.

Worship/Playlist Ideas

- ▶ "The Distance" by Mandisa
(*Overcomer*, Sparrow Records, 2013)
- ▶ "Your Love Is Mine" by I Am They
(*I Am They*, Provident Label Group, 2014)
- ▶ "The Cure" by Unspoken
(*Follow Through*, Centricity Music, 2016)
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1 Even though Christ's death demonstrates God love, it is not all that was accomplished (Gal. 3:13-14).

Invite students to discuss why it is potentially dangerous to have a superficial view of God?

- ▶ *Why is it important that we know that the cross was more than just an emotional action or an action showing humanity what "good morals" are?*

Read Galatians 3:13-14.

- ▶ *How does this passage emphasize there was more going on in Christ's death than just emotion?*

This verse clearly states how Jesus actually became "a curse for us" (v. 13) through His death on the cross.

- ▶ *How does Jesus becoming a curse for you affect how you think about your sin?*

Jesus didn't become a curse for us because He wanted us to feel guilty. This passage says Jesus became a curse so we could receive the Holy Spirit, as He promised, when we place our faith in Him.

- ▶ *According to this passage, what does Jesus do for us when the curse of sin is removed?*
- ▶ *In what ways does Jesus' death have a greater depth than just emotions and morals?*

2 Christ's death on the cross satisfied God's wrath and paid the price required by our sin (Rom. 5:10-11; Col. 2:13-14).

Option: Show students pictures of the Hope Diamond. Invite students to imagine a museum allowed them to hold the diamond and examine it close up. Ask students to imagine a terrible accident—they dropped the diamond, shattering it into thousands of pieces. The museum was, understandably, very upset and required them to compensate the museum for the diamond. Needless to say, the price would need to be paid in order to satisfy the museum's anger and to repay the museum for the diamond. Explain that they would need someone with the capability to pay the debt and the desire take on the responsibility.

In Christ, we have someone with the capability to pay our debt and willingness be held responsible for sin by God the Father.

- ▶ *Why is Christ's death on the cross the only fitting satisfaction of God's wrath and payment for our sin?*

When humans sin, we earn a debt to be repaid and a reaction from God in the form of wrath. Both must be satisfied in order to purchase our salvation. In Jesus' death, we find God's wrath satisfied and our sin debt paid.

Read Colossians 2:13-14, Romans 5:10-11

- ▶ *According to Colossians 2:13-14, what is our eternal state if we remain in sin?*
- ▶ *What do these verses say God does with us after He pays our sin debt?*
- ▶ *Why is reconciliation to God not only good, but also necessary for salvation?*

3 The cross motivates believers toward gratitude and praise (2 Cor. 4:15; 1 Thess. 5:18).

Christ's death on the cross, in all its depth and richness, motivates believers toward gratitude and praise. Without Christ's atonement, people remain eternally condemned.

Read 2 Corinthians. 4:15 and 1 Thessalonians 5:18

- ▶ *According to 2 Corinthians 4:15, what should motivate believers to increase thanksgiving?*
- ▶ *What is your typical response to knowing you are in Christ? How often do you respond in gratitude for your salvation?*

WRAP IT UP

Challenge students to recognize that even though God's love is wonderful and overwhelming, there is more to Christ's death than emotions. Encourage students that Christ's death satisfies the wrath of God and the legal requirements for their sin; because of that we should respond and be motivated toward greater gratitude and praise.

This midweek study will explore what it means for the church to be the body of Christ. Use the following outline, activity, playlist, and video ideas to lead a midweek event for your students.

Essential Doctrine: Body of Christ

The New Testament describes the church as the body of Christ. The church lives and operates as Christ's representatives here on earth, with Christ as its head (Col. 1:18). This means that the church is an extension of Christ's ministry, carrying out His work by fulfilling the Great Commission (Matt. 28:18-20). In addition, the picture of the church as the body of Christ shows us the interconnectedness of individual Christians, with each member dependent upon one another for growth and sanctification (1 Cor. 12:12).

Scripture: *Matthew 28:18; 1 Corinthians 12:12; Colossians 1:18*

1 The church operates as Christ's representatives on earth, with Christ as its head (Col. 1:18).

In Christ's physical absence on earth, the Church functions as Christ's representative. The church follows Jesus' lead in Scripture and through prayer. The church functions as Christ's body on Earth. This is why our personal holiness and the holiness of the church body are of the highest importance.

2 The church is an extension of Christ's ministry by fulfilling the Great Commission (Matt. 28:18).

Before Christ ascended into heaven, He gave the church the charge of fulfilling the Great Commission. Whatever and wherever the church is active—teaching, preaching, feeding and clothing people, or taking care of others in Jesus' name—it is with the motivation of fulfilling the Great Commission. The church is the tool God uses in the world to be Christ's hands and feet.

3 The body of Christ is interconnected, with each member dependent upon one another for growth and sanctification (1 Cor. 12:12).

Christians are not supposed to do the Christian life on their own; in fact, believers are commanded to gather together and encourage one another. Christians are dependent on other Christians to execute the Great Commission and invest in other believers. It is also every believer's job to grow others in sanctification and teach the next generation what it means to be a Christ-follower.

Opening Activity

Begin with an activity that requires one student to perform a task using only one arm or one leg. For example, using a video game controller, typing a certain amount of words a computer keyboard, playing the guitar, and so on. The point is the action being performed is extremely difficult to do using just one arm or leg—another part of the body must be used to be successful. Maybe, further the illustration by asking students to perform a task that can only be accomplished using two or more people.

Explain to students how the body of Christ is composed of interconnected believers who perform different functions. It is impossible to perform certain functions and ministries of the church without others' gifts and abilities. Continue the application by emphasizing how certain ministries are near-impossible unless multiple Christians unite together to accomplish the task. Explain that the body of Christ functions as Christ's representatives on earth who fulfill the Great Commission and are dependent on other believers for growth and sanctification. Tell the students that today they will be learning about the body of Christ.

Worship/Playlist Ideas

- ▶ "All the People Said Amen" by Matt Maher
(All the People Said Amen [Live], Provident Label Group, 2013)
- ▶ "With Every Act of Love" by Jason Gray
(Love Will Have the Final Word, Centricity Music, 2014)
- ▶ "The Saints" by Andy Mineo
(Heroes for Sale, Reach Records, 2013)
- ▶ "Heal Our Land" by Kari Jobe
(The Garden, Sparrow Records, 2017)

Video Idea(s)

- ▶ "The Body of Christ" *BluefishTV.com*
- ▶ "Help" *Skitguys.com*

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1 The church operates as Christ's representatives on earth, with Christ as its head (Col. 1:18).

Invite students to discuss what it means to be an ambassador for someone or an organization.

- ▶ *Why is it important for Christians to understand we are not only followers of Christ, we are also His ambassadors to the world?*

Read Colossians 1:18.

- ▶ *How does this passage describe Jesus' relationship to the church?*
- ▶ *Why is the preeminence of Christ necessary for the church to function as it is supposed to?*

If Christ is the head of the church, then we are to function as He would here on earth.

- ▶ *How does the world interpret the church when it does not function as Christ's representatives on earth?*
- ▶ *How would the church look like if every member took seriously the truth of Jesus as its head?*

2 The church is an extension of Christ's ministry by fulfilling the Great Commission (Matt. 28:18).

Option: Talk about similarity of franchise stores. Show examples of some franchise stores from various parts of the nation/world and show their similarities. What is the purpose of a franchise? Basically, they provide the customer with a similar, positive experience with a company or product. When we talk about franchises, we usually have images of machine assembly line meals, but when franchises are done with quality, they provide consumers a certain level of confidence in their product. Ask students to reflect on what each church would look like if it were a "franchise" of God's heart, mind, and will for the world? In reality, that's the idea behind the church with each church functioning where they are as an extension of Christ's ministry by fulfilling the great commission.

- ▶ *How might the church serve as an extension of Christ's ministry in His physical absence?*

In Christ's physical absence the church is called to act as His ambassadors and be an extension of what Christ accomplished during His earthly ministry.

Read Matthew 28:18.

- ▶ *According to this verse, why are we called to be an extension of Christ's ministry? Why do we accomplish His will rather than our own?*

Believers are an extension of Christ's ministry because He has all authority both in heaven and on earth.

- ▶ *What happens when the body of Christ forgets they are an extension of Christ's ministry? What could be the result?*

3 The body of Christ is interconnected, with each member dependent upon one another for growth and sanctification (1 Cor. 12:12).

Read 1 Corinthians 12:12.

All members are individually responsible for their own salvation and sanctification; however, they are also commanded to evangelize and grow others in Christ. Believers have responsibility to both themselves and to the church.

- ▶ *Why are believers interconnected? How do we help others grow in Christ?*

It is important for believers to not only watch over their own lives, but to also care for the sanctification and growth of other believers.

- ▶ *What does it reveal about Christians when we encourage, evangelize, and disciple others in their walk with Christ?*
- ▶ *What are some ways you can play a greater role in growing believers in their sanctification?*

WRAP IT UP

Challenge students to be aware that the church, with Christ as its head, operates as God's representatives on earth. The church is an extension of Christ's ministry by fulfilling the Great Commission. Not only that, but the body of Christ is also interconnected because believers should depend on one another for growth and sanctification.