



Reasons

SESSION 1 - IS JESUS THE ONLY WAY?

SERIES BIG IDEA

Even when facing big questions that don't have easy answers, we can find solid reasons to move forward in faith, believing that the message of Christianity is true.

MESSAGE BIG IDEA

Salvation can only be found in the grace offered to us through Jesus; and that truth should make Christ-followers the most inclusive, reconciling, agents of peace the world has ever seen.

SCRIPTURE JOHN 14:1-7

ICE BREAKER AND OPENING THOUGHT

Use this time to get everyone comfortable with the topic and ease into discussing their lives.

BIBLE DISCUSSION

The truth is many of us struggle with the exclusive claim that Jesus is the only way. Some of us not only struggle for HEAD reasons or HANDS reasons or HEART reasons; we actually reject the claim. In fact, a study done by the Pew Research Center a number of years ago found that when Christians in the United States were asked, "Which religions lead to eternal life?" only 29% of American Christians say, "Only my religion does." While 65% of American Christians say, "Other religions can too."

There are lots of reasons the claim that Jesus is the only way could offend us. First of all, this can offend our sense of political correctness. Second, parts of Christian history have been offensive. After all, Christians have been responsible for oppression, abuse, and even violence. Third, we can be offended personally as we think about the implications: What does this mean for my friend who isn't a Christian?

But Jesus claims to be the way. Not a way. The way. He claims to be the exclusive connection between sinful humanity and God. Every other person God used to record the New Testament also believed Jesus is the only way. If there were another way, why would Jesus have gone through what he went through to provide the way?

For a few other passages on this topic, see John 3:16-18, Acts 4:12, Romans 3:21-26, and 1 Timothy 2:5.

LIFE APPLICATION

Question five will help you gauge the temperature of your group on this topic. Allow space for people to feel however they feel. This can be an uncomfortable truth for people, especially if they have loved ones who are not believers.

In today's world, we get nervous to claim there is one right way because our culture has become pluralistic rather than exclusivist. But in reality, everyone has a set of exclusive beliefs. The question becomes: Who are you going to trust? Which set of beliefs are you going to put your faith in? Everyone has to make that decision.

When Jesus says, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me," it is an exclusive claim. Yet his call is unmistakably inclusive. No one can get to God on their own; but everyone can get there through Jesus. God's deepest desire is that no one would perish, but that all people would find their way back to him. God longs to be in relationship with you, your neighbor, your mom, your son, your sister, your boss. Jesus being the only Way is not meant to exclude anyone; it's meant to be the way for everyone to be included.

CHALLENGE

There may be some in your group who haven't yet made the decision to follow Jesus. Make space in your group to answer any questions they may have, explain to them what it means to follow Jesus, and provide any helpful next steps (Your small-group director can help!).