

BIG IDEA

Confession is coming to the Father to ask for forgiveness.

SCRIPTURE

Matthew 6:12; Ephesians 3:12; James 5:16; Psalm 139:23-24

ICE BREAKER & OPENING THOUGHT

1. Think about a time when you got busted as a kid that you can look back on now and laugh? What happened?
2. Frederick Buechner said, "To confess your sins to God is not to tell God anything God doesn't already know. Until you confess them, however, they are the abyss between you. When you confess them, they become the Golden Gate Bridge." What do you think of that statement?

BIBLE DISCUSSION

3. Read Matthew 6:12. Jesus expected we would need to go on asking for forgiveness from God and also to grant forgiveness to others. What does this say about God, and what does it mean for us as Christ-followers?
4. Read Ephesians 3:12. What is the significance of being able to approach God with confidence? How confident do you feel approaching God in prayer?
5. Read James 5:16. In what ways might confessing our sins to one another be a healthy community dynamic?

LIFE APPLICATION

(Consider breaking the group into smaller groups for this portion of the small group meeting).

6. Confession is a vital spiritual practice, but we may be tempted to deny the wrong we've done or to dwell on it without going to God or others. Which of these two (deny or dwell) are you more tempted to practice instead of confession?
7. We can think of confession as a three-step process. The first step is to reflect on our lives and what we've done wrong. The second step is to repent or turn from the behavior that isn't God's best for us. Third, we realign with God's purpose for our lives. Is there any area of your life where you need to repent or realign your life with God's purpose?
8. Let's pray for each of us to turn our lives back to God's and be realigned with his purpose for our day-to-day life. See the leader's guide for some ideas for how to do this well.

CHALLENGE

Take the following quote by Richard Foster to heart. *"All who have walked with God have viewed prayer as the main business of their lives. For those explorers in the frontiers of faith, prayer was no little habit tacked on to the periphery of their lives; it was their lives. It was the most serious work of their most productive years."*