

REALLY?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR THE WEEK OF DECEMBER 9, 2013

BIG IDEA:

Junior High is the time when in a person's life when they transition from being a child to being a young adult. It's the time for them to make up their mind about who they really are and what their life is really going to be about. This series will challenge students to tackle the foundational questions about their identity and the Christian faith. This week's question: Is Jesus really the only way?

DISCUSSION:

Last week we looked at our own relationship with Jesus. We asked the question, "Am I really a Christian?" Do I really know Jesus? What does it take to become a Christian? In light of that truth, this week we're going to ask "Is Jesus Really the Only Way to Heaven?" During the Christmas season, these are important questions to ask about this child that came into the world on that silent night.

Work through the following challenging questions and objections in your Small Group. Give them a chance to discuss how they would respond to it. For the older/more mature kids, play devil's advocate and challenge them a little more.

Rick Smith, our guest speaker, answered the question: Is Christianity REALLY the only religion that leads to eternal life?

Rick's 3 points were-

I. You can trust the bible:

Look up and read 2 Timothy 3:1-16 and then 4:3-5 together.

1. In both these passages what does it say "society/the world/ the population" will want to hear?
2. In chapter 3 of 2 Timothy what speaks to the "inherency" of scripture? *verse 16*
3. The bible is a text that was written by God's voice, over 40 different men scribed the words on the pages, the writers spanned 1500 years, and were spread through 3 different continents. The bible is the #1 published and printed book today and it has been translated into hundreds of different languages.
4. Still why might some people say you shouldn't trust the bible?

Consider this Argument from skeptics: *Thinking you know the truth is arrogant and intolerant.*

If you were about to eat an undercooked chicken breast with salmonella and I told you that it contained salmonella and was dangerous to eat, would that be arrogant or intolerant of me to tell you the truth? If there was a jar of gumballs and I claimed it contained 100 gumballs, would I be arrogant or intolerant if I could back up my claim with evidence? Would you give me a chance to provide evidence for the truth I claim?

You are only arrogant if you don't carry and communicate truth with gentleness and respect. Never be cocky, proud, or rude about the understanding that you possess. You're only intolerant if you hold firmly to a truth without offering any evidence to support your position. 1 Peter 3:15-16

II. You can trust what Jesus did on the cross:

Look up and Read Hebrews 5, Hebrews 9:11-14, John 14:6

5. What did Jesus do on the cross? What was the work accomplished?
6. John 14:6 in light of Hebrews- do other sacrifices or works work?

Consider this argument from skeptics: *Truth is whatever you sincerely believe...Truth is whatever works for you. Truth for me may be different.*

Can you make something true just by believing it? If I were to have a jar full of gumballs could you make the number of gumballs be 200 if you really, really believed that it was 200? No. No matter how much you believed, the number would still actually be 100 gumballs. You cannot change reality with strong beliefs. If you truly believed you were a Diet Coke, would that make you a Diet Coke?

If you believe that there are many ways to God and I believe Jesus is the only way, how could we both be right? One is right and one is wrong...Or we're both wrong...But we can't both be right. Finally, what if someone sincerely believed that stealing or killing were right? Would that make killing okay for them?

III. You can trust Jesus with the forgiveness of your sins:

Read and discuss: Ephesians 2:8-9, Hebrews 7:22-26, Hebrews 8:7-13, Galatians 1:6-16

7. If we, as it says in Romans 10:9, confess with our mouths and believe in our hearts that Jesus is Lord are we forgiven? Why?
8. Why would God love or chose to forgive people that turned their backs to Him?
9. Does forgiveness run out

Consider how skeptics might say: *All people are good deep down. It should be possible to know God without knowing Jesus. Forgiveness of something isn't necessary.*

While it is true that man was made in the image of God (Genesis 1:27), it is also true that we have all made the decision to sin and turn away from the perfection of the one in whose image we were made. We have turned away from goodness and done evil. We were born sinful, yet Ecclesiastes 3:11 says God set eternity in man's heart, so yes, there is good deep down- God implanted all of us with desire for eternity but it is covered by our sin. We need someone to take away our sins. Romans 3:10-12, Romans 3:23, Ephesians 2:1-3

Lastly- *What about people who never hear about Christ? That isn't fair.*

There is really a much more difficult question beneath this challenge: Will God be God on His terms or ours? God knows what he is doing and we have to trust that he is indeed both loving and just in all his dealings with humanity. We see the clearest picture of how God deals with those who have never heard the name Jesus in Romans chapter 1 & 2 Peter 3:9.

APPLICATION:

Spend some time thinking about this question. Do I believe Jesus is the only way to God? That is not a popular stance in our culture. By saying Jesus is the only way you are being exclusive, in the sense that we are saying other beliefs won't be welcome? Why is that ok to not be inclusive in this one area? You need to know what you believe and why you believe it.

Resources:

<http://www.persecution.net/download/onlyway.pdf>

<http://www.carm.org/objections.htm>