

THE STRUGLE

Week 6 - Reconciliation

THE MAIN POINT

Over the past few weeks, we've gone over different ways to handle conflict. Hopefully you've grown deeper in relationship with your students and have been able to help them process through how they deal with conflict.

Everyone will deal with conflict in a broken world. However, God is a God whose heart beats for reconciliation. This week we will challenge students to pursue reconciliation in their relationships. We will share with them how God sent His Son Jesus for that very purpose. This meeting gives you the opportunity to present the Gospel.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Slips of Paper
- Bowl

GETTING STARTED

Welcome everyone. Ask them how their week is going. Thank them for joining the group. Go over the rules before jumping in to the discussion

RULES FOR SMALL GROUP:

Commitment - Commit to being at every group meeting (make it a priority!)

Confidentiality - What is shared here stays here.

Be honest or be silent - don't make up an answer just to have one. Sometimes the most honest answer is no answer, so if you need to, just say pass.

Respect - for one another, their thoughts/ideas/opinions (no put downs).

ACTIVITY

Empires

Have each student in your group write down the name of someone powerful. It could be a superhero, a historical figure, or TV character that everyone in the room would be able to recognize. Make sure no one shows what they wrote. Put all of the slips of paper into a bowl and mix them. As the leader, read all of the slips of paper out loud twice.

Choose a student to guess first. Their job is to try and guess who wrote what character. They can guess once by asking another student if they are ____ character. If they get it right, the student joins their "empire," and they can guess again. If they get it wrong, the student they asked becomes the guesser. At the end of the game, the student who was able to get the entire room in their empire wins.

GOING DEEPER

I can't believe we are at the end of our small group series! I hope you've had fun and maybe learned a few things along the way about conflict. Conflict is awkward and painful, but it's a part of our lives. We can't run away from it, we shouldn't act out in rage or resentment, and we shouldn't just respond immediately like a thermometer. Even though conflict is painful, it can bring healing, like the scalpel from a surgery.

Last week we talked about how life is messy and conflict just exposes our mess. We talked about how most conflict comes from sin. Sin is when we miss the mark God laid out for us. Sin has a cost. It hurts others. It hurts ourselves. Worst of all, it hurts our relationship with God.

- What are some things you've learned about yourself over the last few weeks?
- How has this group changed your view of conflict? Has it changed the way you handle it?
- Why is it so important to talk about how we handle conflict?
- Do you feel like people in your school and family handle conflict well? Why or why not?
- What could your world look like if you handled conflict God's way?

I believe that God is passionate about reconciliation.

- What do you think the word reconciliation means? Why might God be passionate about reconciliation?

According to the Cambridge Dictionary, reconciliation means "the process of making two people or groups of people friendly again after they have argued seriously or fought and kept apart from each other..." In other words, when there is a break in relationship, reconciliation is the process of putting it back together. This should be the goal when we get into a conflict with someone else.

- What do you think it takes to get reconciliation with someone in a conflict?

When our goal is to "win" or "get even" in a conflict, destruction happens. When there's reconciliation, something better is built. Selfish conflict results in broken friendships, tense parental relationships, and drama. Reconciliation can bring healed friendship, strong families, and far less relational stress/drama.

- Share a time when you experienced a conflict where the goal was to win or get even. How did that go? Where is that relationship now?
- Share a time when you experienced a conflict where the goal was to work it out and become friends again. How did it go?

Like we said before, God is extremely passionate about reconciliation. Last week we talked about how sin creates conflict with God. I believe we were created by God to be in relationship with Him. He also created us with the desire and capacity for relationship with each other. When we sin, we create conflict between us and God, between us and other people, and within ourselves. Sin has a cost. We know when someone does us wrong that we want for there to be consequences. We think "justice must be served!" The same is true for us. We owe a debt for our sin. As stated in Romans 6:23 "The wages of sin is death..."

Read 2 Corinthians 5:18-19 NLT

This is some heavy stuff so let's work together to make sense of it. Our sin might have brought conflict and separation between us and God. But God's love for us was so great that He wanted to make us right with Him. (Read Romans 5:8)

Jesus' death on the cross makes it possible for our relationship with God to be restored. God loved

us so much that He sent His son so that our relationship could be reconciled (2 Corinthians 5:21). God freely offers us reconciliation and a right relationship with Him. You simply need to respond by saying yes to Him.

- Where are you at with God right now? Would you say that you have a relationship or do you need reconciliation? What questions do you have?

You might be thinking, "What does this have to do with the conflicts I have with my friends and family?" The truth is that because God gave us that opportunity to be forgiven and to have right relationship with Him, He asks us to do the same with others. (Optional: read Colossians 3:13 and/or Ephesians 4:32). Jesus literally gave everything--His very life so that we could be given relationship with the Creator of the universe. He didn't have to do that. He could've easily "won" that argument. He could have made us pay or "got even." This is called grace.

In the same way, we have to be willing to go that extra mile to show grace to a friend who did us wrong. The cool thing is, when we forgive and pursue reconciliation with our friends and family, it helps us appreciate God's forgiveness and reconciliation that much more.

- What does it look like to show grace to a friend or family member the way that Jesus showed grace to us?
- Is there someone right now that you need to show grace to?

TAKE AWAY

Our final challenge to you is two things:

- Consider saying "yes" to a relationship with Jesus. There is so much joy to be found in a relationship with Him. It's what we were made for.
- Remember next time when you get in a conflict, that the goal is reconciliation. Romans 12:18 says "If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all" (ESV). This means that we should do our best to be the kind of people who make peace wherever we go.

We hope you enjoyed being in this group. Just because this series is over, doesn't mean we have to stop meeting! Let's stay in touch.