

Series: Why?

Series Overview: Life is full of tough questions, and sometimes, faith doesn't feel like it has easy answers. In this series, we'll address tough questions high schoolers may wrestle with. These are questions about truth, trust, mental health, grace, and God's presence. Through Scripture, we'll see that God isn't afraid of our doubts, and He invites us to seek Him even when we don't have everything figured out. No matter what questions we face, Jesus is the answer that holds everything together.

Series Graphics: [to be provided by Benj – link to graphics will be included here]

Memory Verse: "If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you." James 1:5

Week 1: Why Does Christianity Seem So Exclusive?

Message Overview: Many people struggle with the idea that Jesus is the only way to God. This message will address the "exclusivity" of Christianity; specifically, the question "Isn't it arrogant to say Jesus is the only way to God?". In this message, we'll explore why Jesus' claim in John 14:6 is not arrogant but the most loving truth. Christianity isn't exclusive because God wants to keep people out. It's exclusive because Jesus is the only one who can truly save us. Students will learn how to share this truth with others with both confidence and compassion.

Key Scripture: John 14:1-7; supporting Scripture: Acts 4:12, 1 Timothy 2:5

Key points:

- Introduction:
 - A few options for illustrations...
 - Imagine being sick and there is only one cure that actually works. Nothing else will work – this is the ONLY cure. Would you want the doctor to tell you about this cure? Would it be unkind to say, "This is the only cure"? Or is it the most loving thing to do?
 - Imagine a group of people stranded on a high cliff with no way down. A rescue team builds one secure bridge to safety, but some people refuse to use it, demanding that there should be other ways. Would it be fair to say the bridge-builders were narrow-minded for only providing one bridge? Or would it be gracious and loving that there is a way at all?
 - Many people think Christianity is narrow minded because Jesus claims to be the only way to God.
 - But if Jesus is truly God and the only one who can save, then the most loving thing we can do is share the truth.
- Jesus' Exclusive, Loving Claim (John 14:1-7)
 - In John 14, Jesus is preparing His disciples for His departure. They are worried and confused about what comes next. Jesus comforts them by explaining who He is and where He is leading them.
 - John 14:1-3

- He is preparing a place for them in His Father's house; He will come back to bring them there.
 - Jesus says, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." John 14:6
 - Not one way among many – He is the way. The ONLY way. He is the BRIDGE to God.
 - Jesus isn't limiting our options – He's offering the only real solution.
 - Truth is exclusive – 1+1=2 (no matter how much someone may want it to be 3)
 - The question shouldn't be "why is there only one way?" The question should be **"why is there any way at all?"**
 - Regardless...let's address the question, because it's what people ask.
- Why Only One Way (Acts 4:12, 1 Timothy 2:5)
 - "Salvation is found in no one else" (Acts 4:12)
 - "There is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus" (1 Timothy 2:5)
 - Why only one way?
 - Sin separated us from God (Romans 3:23); our sin creates a barrier between us and God.
 - Jesus is the only one who could fix it (Romans 5:8)
 - No one else lived a perfect life, died for our sins, and rose again.
 - No other religion deals with sin like Christianity.
 - Every other faith teaches that people must earn their way to God.
 - Christianity is the only belief system where God comes to us and provides salvation as a free gift.
 - Saying "all religions lead to God" ignores the uniqueness of Jesus.
 - Illus: Imagine being lost in a maze with only one correct exit. Some signs point the wrong way – they look convincing but lead to dead ends (other religions). Would it be unloving to insist on the correct exit? Or would it be loving to point people to the right way?
- How do we Share this Truth with Others?
 - Always be ready to answer with gentleness and respect (1 Peter 3:15)
 - Common questions people ask
 - "What about good people who don't believe in Jesus?"
 - Romans 3:10-12: No one is truly good on their own.
 - Good works can't erase sin – only Jesus' sacrifice can.
 - "What about people who never hear about Jesus?"
 - God is just and works in ways we don't see
 - Romans 1:20 – God makes Himself known through creation.
 - God is just and merciful – He will judge fairly.
 - "Isn't it unloving to say other religions are wrong?"
 - The most loving thing is to share the truth. The most unloving thing would be to let someone believe a lie that leads them away from eternal life.
- Jesus is the only way, But He's open to everyone
 - Christianity isn't exclusive because it keeps people out – it's exclusive because Jesus is the only one who saves.
 - The invitation is for everyone – God wants all to come to Him.

- John 3:16 – God’s heart is for all people to be saved – but we must come through Jesus.
- If we really believe He is the only way, we should:
 - Make sure our own faith is rooted in Him.
 - Lovingly share the truth with others.
 - Who in your life believes that “all religions lead to God”?
 - This week, memorize John 14:6 and pray for an opportunity to share Jesus with someone who doesn’t know Him.
- **Gospel Proclamation:** If Jesus really is the only way, what will you do with that truth? Have you put your full trust in Him? Trust Him as your only way to salvation.

Key question/application: Ask yourself this question: How can I share the truth about Jesus in a way that is loving and respectful?

Community Group questions:

- Read John 14:1-7. What was Jesus trying to teach His disciples in this passage? What does it mean that Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life?
- How can we answer someone who says Christianity is too exclusive or there are multiple ways to God?
- How can you share Jesus with someone in a way that is both loving and truthful? Practice doing this with each other!