

Christ Our Peace Small Group Guide

Warm-up Question: (Choose one, make up your own, or skip this part all together, depending upon the nature of your group.)

1. Can you remember a time when you were embarrassed by a family member? Explain.
2. Have you ever been given a nickname? Explain.

Read the following passages: Ephesians 2:11-22.

God's goal is not just a world reconciled to himself; it's a world in which we are reconciled to one another. In fact, Paul tells us in Ephesians 1:10 that God's goal is "to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ." But how do we do this? Three things emerge in this passage: 1) We need to deal with our pride; 2) We need to embrace a new identity; and 3) We need peace with God.

Questions for Discussion (Choose several that are relevant for your group):

1. Generally speaking, do you find it difficult to navigate relational conflict? Explain.
2. Why would it have been such a big deal to Jewish believers when Paul wrote, "[Christ] made the two groups one... by setting aside in his flesh the law..." (Ephesians 2:14-15)? What are some ways our pride impacts our ability to reconcile with others? How can we humble ourselves in our relationships without becoming a doormat that selfish or abusive people walk all over?
3. Do you verbally apologize and seek reconciliation when you have done something to negatively affect a relationship or do you try to smooth things over in other ways without actually talking about what happened? Why is it important to clearly acknowledge and seek forgiveness when we have done something wrong?
4. Have you ever felt "shame by association" because of a family member or the actions of someone in a group you are associated with (e.g. a religious group, an ethnic group, your employer, your university, your nation of origin, etc.)? How might our desire to avoid feeling shame make it harder for us to acknowledge "the bad" in a group we are associated with?
5. Read Galatians 6:15, Acts 16:1-3, and 1 Corinthians 9:19-22. Although Paul thought it was critical for believers to understand that circumcision played no role in salvation, he also chose to circumcise Timothy. In our individual lives, families, church, workplace, and community, what are some ways we may need to sacrifice something important so that we can have what is *most* important?
6. Many different things shape our identity: our families, our ethnicity, our personality type, our gifts and talents, our education, our nation of origin, our life experiences,

and many more. What does it mean for Christ to be the most central part of our identity? How does that impact our ability to live out our value of “reconciled diversity”?

7. Why is peace with God critical for living in peace with others? What are some ways anxiety surfaces in your life and how might that affect your relationship with others?
8. Read Romans 12:18. What should we do if we want to reconcile with another person, but that person is unwilling?

Pray