

Twelfth Grade- Pluralism

This week tackles the idea of religious pluralism. To be very clear, we're not evaluating the truth or merit of religious diversity. Obviously, multiple religions exist and living amongst that cultural milieu is a reality of our world, arguably a refining reality for us as the Church. But that's not what we're talking about this week, this week we are talking about the branch of religious pluralism that upholds the idea that "all roads lead to God". This ideology is very prevalent in our culture and especially in this generation, with all of its emphasis on diversity and acceptance. We don't want to train them to become haughty and proud in having "found the right answer", we want to give them space to process their potential discomfort with the exclusivity of the Gospel, and an opportunity to see in Scripture just how good the news of the Gospel's exclusivity is.

Introducing the Topic:

As always, we want to start off by assessing what students already know and think about the subject, and then turn to what Scripture says on the matter! Students have a unique perspective on our culture, so we want to give them time to process what they're seeing together!

-Have you ever heard the phrase "all roads lead to God"? What do you think of it?

-Have you ever heard Christianity described as an exclusive religion? What do you think of that? What do you think it means to be an exclusive religion?

-Does the claim that Jesus is the only way to God ever make you uncomfortable when it comes to explaining your faith to others? Why do you think that is?

-Have you ever heard of religious pluralism? What do you think it means? *(After you have given students time to discuss what they already know about religious pluralism, provide them with this definition: religious pluralism is the idea that all religions/philosophies offer legitimate paths to God or to ultimate truth.)*

Scripture Study

As you transition to the Scripture Study portion of this session, remind students that Scripture is where we turn for truth. We want to continually reiterate that we study Scripture not just for the "Christian take" on a matter, but God's revealed word, given to us out of love for our good.

-Read John 14:1-7 together.

-What stuck out to you?

-What claim does Jesus make? What does that mean?

-Read Romans 1:19-25 together.

-What stuck out to you?

-What do you think verses 21-24 are saying? Do you see that tendency in humans as well? To come up with their own set of beliefs about the world?

-What does this passage say to the idea that all roads lead to God?

Practical Application

In this practical application, we want to help students internalize what they heard from Scripture today and be able to distinguish between a cultural heresy and biblical truth. We want to give them time to process what Scripture teaches and how that impacts the way they talk with their friends about their faith.

-What does the Bible say about “the path to God”?

-Do you have a hard time believing this claim? What about living out that belief? What other ideas or beliefs do you turn to in order to “save yourself” at times?

-Why do you think our world has such a hard time with the exclusivity of the gospel? (*Be clear that by “exclusivity”, you mean that there is only one way to God, not that some are not welcome on that way.”*)

-What would you say to someone who feels the claim that Jesus is the only way to God is offensive?