

## Why is Sin Such a Big Deal? – Seventh Grade

*In this session, we want to look at what students already believe about sin, and then we want to hold that understanding up against the truth of God's word. We want to help students move away from a very "church" answer for what sin is, where it is defined by certain actions or behaviors. And we want them to understand sin as Scripture defines it, as the consequence of the fall, as a state of our heart, as a posture of rebellion, as death.*

### Introducing the Subject

*Sin is a word we use a lot in church, and even in our culture. Which means our students probably already have a pretty well-developed idea of what sin is. We want to start off by giving them a chance to share what they already know and believe about sin. Encourage as much sharing as possible during this time!*

-When you hear the word sin, what comes to mind?

-What things would you consider "sin"?

-If someone asked you to define sin, how would you do it? *(You might encourage students to write down their answers here. That way they can still be thinking through the question even if they don't feel comfortable sharing out loud.)*

-Why is sin such a big deal?

### 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.*

-So we talk about "sin", we typically think of "bad things we do". And because we do so many bad things, Jesus had to come and die for us. But when the Bible talks about sin, or other words we sometimes think of as synonyms, "church words" like iniquity and transgression, it isn't just talking about good or bad actions, it's describing the state of our souls. We want to look at Scripture, and at those three words it uses, sin, iniquity, and transgression, to learn why God thinks it's such a big deal.

-First lets study what the Bible says about "sin". Watch this Bible Project video together:  
<https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/khata-sin/>

-How does this video say sin is defined? *(missing the mark, failing to fulfill a goal, in the Bible, this goal is to love God and love others.)*

-Is that the same way we defined it earlier?

-With this definition of sin, what are some things that seem good to us, but are actually sin?

-Read Romans 3:23. This verse uses the word sin a lot. What is the good news for all of our “missing the mark”?

-Now let’s look at another word we think of when we think of sin, “Transgression”.

-How would you define “transgression” if someone asked?

-Watch this Bible Project video together: <https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/pesha-transgression/>

-How does this video define “transgression”? (*Ways people violate trust and break relationship*)

-How is this different than how we normally think of the word, “transgression”?

-What are ways people in the Bible “break trust or relationship” with God?

-Why is breaking relationship such a big deal to God? (*He loves us and desires an intimate relationship with us*)

-If God is our source of life, what happens when we break relationship with Him? (*We die, death enters the scene*)

-What did God do in response to our betrayal?

-Now let’s look at one last word we think of when we think of sin, “iniquity”.

-How would you define “iniquity” if someone asked?

-Watch this Bible Project video together: <https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/avon-iniquity/>

-How does this video define “iniquity”? (*to be bent, or crooked, the Bible uses this word to describe the way our hearts are bent out of shape, and unable to discern what is right*)

-How is this definition different than what we said earlier?

-How does this video say God responds to our crookedness?

### Practical Application

*During this portion of the session, we want to give students a chance to flesh out this new, more robust, understanding of sin together. We want them to see their own hearts, choices, and actions through a biblical definition of sin. And ultimately, we want them to be pointed back to their desperate need for Jesus.*

-To summarize, what is the definition for sin? *(To fail to meet the standard, to fail to love God and love others)*

-For transgression? *(To violate trust and break relationship with God or others)*

-What about for iniquity? *(The crookedness of our hearts, which breeds more and more brokenness)*

-So, is sin as simple as what we do? *(No, sin includes what we do, what we think, and what we don't do)*

-Why is sin such a big deal to God? *(Some reasons include: because it breaks relationship with Him, because it hurts those He loves, because it violates what we were created for, because we are made to reflect His image, and sin is directly against who God is, because it brings death and brokenness into the world.)*

-What is the end result of sin if we leave it unchecked? *(death)* Does sin still have consequences for the believer? *(yes, even though we are saved from eternal death, sin still brings death, death of relationships, death of our self confidence, death of intimacy with God. These are all things that God can step in and make beautiful again, but sin still has consequences)*

-How do we fight sin? *(We need Jesus! Only by having our hearts restored by Jesus can we even begin to really understand right from wrong and have the power to live that out. By continuing to walk with Jesus, we understand more and more how not to sin, and what holy living actually looks like)*

-Knowing what God actually considers sin, what are some things that our culture accepts that are actually missing the mark, breaking our relationship with God and others, or are broken ways of thinking?

-What is the good news for our sin?