



YOUTH
session page

Non-Reactionary Love

Romans 5:1-11 | Session 8.48

Before the Session

Facilitator: In advance of the session

- Review today's scripture text and the session activities to help better facilitate the discussion.
- Have the Bible Background Video ready to view.
- Have paper, pens and an envelope available for each person (See Closure)
- Listen to the FaithElement podcast for this session.
- Use the social media prompts on this session's webpage to help youth begin engaging the session ahead of their gathering.
- Find web links for underlined items on this session's webpage at faithelement.net.

Intro

Play the [John Cena video](#) and ask:

- How did you feel about what John Cena had to say and why?
- Why is it so hard to love those who are different from us?
- Why might God want us to love those who are different or disagree with us?
- What does it look like for us to love those we disagree with?

or

Play the Growing in Your Faith video and ask:

- Did this video make you think differently about growing in faith? If so... how?
- Why do you think the video suggests that caring for “the least of these” helps us grow in faith?
- The video also suggests that our sufferings and hardships can lead to growth in faith. How might that work?

Context

Play a game of “Never Have I Ever” by having everyone seated in a circle, with a volunteer in the middle and having the volunteer start by saying something they have never done by saying, “Never have I ever....” followed by an action. Once they have said something that they have never done, everyone else who has done what the volunteer has never done, must get up from their seat and try to find a different seat. The volunteer in the middle will also try to find a different seat. Whoever is left without a seat goes to the middle and says something they have never done, and the process continues. Remind the group to keep their “never have I ever” statements clean and respectful of others.

After playing for some time, ask:

- How did you feel about playing this game and why?
- In what ways were you surprised by the things that the others had never done?
- How would you evaluate your level of life experience based on the things you have done or never done?
- In what ways have your experienced helped to form you into the person that you are?
- How might God use your experiences, especially some of the more difficult experiences, to shape you?
- How might our sufferings help us to grow closer to God?

Content

Read Romans 5:1-11, then watch the Bible Background Video.

Ask your group:

- Why would Paul tell the readers to rejoice in their suffering?
- What makes such rejoicing possible or impossible?
- What does suffering lead to according to this passage?
- What role does suffering play in giving us hope?
- Who in your life might you die for if an emergency situation called for it?
- What have they done that you would consider them worthy of that sacrifice?
- Why would Christ die for sinners and not just for the righteous?
- How should that affect the way we treat others around us who might not seem to be worthy of our acceptance?

Closure

Continue by asking:

- When have you experienced suffering in your life, whether personally or through someone close to you?
- In what ways has suffering contributed to making you who you are?
- How do you think you will handle it when you have to go through another tough experience?
- How do you see that tough experience shaping you when it happens?

Distribute pieces of paper, a pen, and an envelope to each person, and tell the group:

Unfortunately each of you will undoubtedly suffer through some tragic situation in your life. When you go through it, it will be tough to see God producing anything good, but God's word tells us that God will take suffering and produce perseverance, character, and eventually hope in that situation. Take a few minutes to write yourself a letter, to remind yourself when you are suffering that God can bring good through your suffering. Tell yourself to look up Romans 5:1-5 in your letter.

After each person has written their letter. Tell them to put it in their envelope, seal it, and write on it the envelope "Do not open until you need it." Instruct everyone in the group to put it someplace where they can find it when they need it to remind themselves of the hope that is in Christ.

Close this session in prayer

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