

Module Six: Family and Culture- Talk Outline

1 Orthodoxy is not about *belief* but about *identity*

Orthodoxy and Culture are intertwined

Salvation comes through Orthodox Culture

2 Our response

Sympathise and Listen

Not even Israel is saved through Culture: Philippians 3

Share your story

Following Jesus is more important than Family

Module Six: Family and Culture- Group Time

The Orthodox View of Sin and the Cross	What do our Orthodox friends need to hear?
• Orthodoxy is about identity, not belief • Orthodoxy, culture, nationality and family are one • Salvation comes through Orthodox culture • “The Church” is the author and steward of truth	Discuss what you would say to them

1 In pairs, practice your testimony explaining how your belief is not simply an expression of your culture or upbringing

Include:

how you needed to make a decision for Christ

how that sometimes conflicts with your culture, society, family and friends but that being a Christian means following Christ above all other loyalties

2 God's View of Family and Serving Jesus

Read Matthew 10:32-39

1 What guarantees does Jesus give in vv32-33?

2 What is the cost of following Jesus in vv34-36?

3 What does v 37 tell us is the choice facing all of us?

4 How does Jesus acknowledge the cost of serving Him above family (and all else) in v38?

5 What wonderful promise is there in v39?

In **Matthew 19:29** Jesus also promises that all who follow Him will have a new family and community in Christ. It will be a family united in the same service of Jesus and committed to loving and serving one another. They will welcome us into their homes here on earth and we will spend eternity with them.

3 Pray

For your friends that they may recognise that following Jesus is more important than serving culture or complying with family

That they overcome their fear of offending family by recognising the greater penalty of denying Jesus

Before Session Seven

The study questions on Matthew 10 above can be used with your Orthodox friends to discuss why serving Jesus is more important than complying with family

Chapter 1 in *Certainty for Life: Questions, Answers* discusses "Familial Loyalty" Chapter 12- "Come and Follow" in *Certainty For Life: An Invitation* uses Orthodox baptism as an example of fulfilling parent's hopes for their child to follow Jesus.

Questions you might be asked (Information to aid evangelistic conversations)

In this module we discussed how one of the reasons for allegiance to Orthodoxy is the conviction that it is the sole guardian of truth and salvation. Understanding this will help you answer this common Orthodox question.

Q: In which Church/denomination can I discover the truth/be saved?

A:

- Commend their desire to know the truth so they can have certainty about God.
- Explain that no human institution has a monopoly on the truth. Instead, God has made his truth clear to all in his Biblical word.
- Neither will God restrict entry to heaven to members of one group. Rather he guarantees salvation to those who repent *personally*.

Module Six: Family and Culture– Leader's Notes

The Orthodox View of Sin and the Cross	What do our Orthodox friends need to hear?
• Orthodoxy is about identity, not belief • Orthodoxy, culture, nationality and family are one • Salvation comes through Orthodox culture • "The Church" is the author and steward of truth	Discuss what you would say to them 1 Serving Christ is independent of culture 2 Not even membership of Israel guaranteed salvation 3 Following Jesus means obeying him before culture and family 4 The greatest honour to parents is for us to follow Jesus

1 In pairs, practice your testimony explaining how your belief is not simply an expression of your culture or upbringing

Include:

how you needed to make a decision for Christ

how that sometimes conflicts with your culture, society, family and friends but that being a Christian means following Christ above all other loyalties

2 God's View of Family and Serving Jesus

Read Matthew 10:32–39

1 What guarantees does Jesus give in vv32–33?

assurance that Jesus will advocate for those who serve him ie guarantee salvation but equal assurance that those who serve others before him will have no defence before God

2 What is the cost of following Jesus in vv34–36?

families will be split

there will be division in those relationships that should be the closest

Jesus enters the world to be God's King and calls on all people to turn their back on their independence and follow Him

yet some will continue to fight against His rule producing hostility and discord between those who fight against and those who serve Jesus

This should not be surprising: people will hate us because they hate Jesus (John 15:18).

3 What does v 37 tell us is the choice facing all of us?

we must love Jesus *more* than our family

this is an extraordinary statement from Jesus especially as the fifth commandment is to "Honour your Father and Mother" and those who do not care for their own family are condemned in God's word (1 Tim 5:8)

and family must still be honoured, supported and loved– yet Jesus must be loved more

4 How does Jesus acknowledge the cost of serving Him above family (and all else) in v38?

Jesus acknowledges the cost of following Him by describing it as "taking up your cross." those who carried their cross were always on the way to their death following Jesus always involves living for him instead of for ourselves

5 What wonderful promise is there in v39?

"anyone who loses his life because of me will find it"

in turning our back on living for ourselves we find real, eternal life in Jesus

In **Matthew 19:29** Jesus also promises that all who follow Him will have a new family and community in Christ. It will be a family united in the same service of Jesus and committed to loving and serving one another. They will welcome us into their homes here on earth and we will spend eternity with them.

3 Pray

For your friends that they may recognise that following Jesus is more important than serving culture or complying with family

That they overcome their fear of offending family by recognising the greater penalty of denying Jesus

Before Session Seven

The study questions on Matthew 10 above can be used with your Orthodox friends to discuss why serving Jesus is more important than complying with family

Chapter 1 in *Certainty for Life: Questions, Answers* discusses "Familial Loyalty" Chapter 12- "Come and Follow" in *Certainty For Life: An Invitation* uses Orthodox baptism as an example of fulfilling parent's hopes for their child to follow Jesus.

Questions you might be asked (Information to aid evangelistic conversations)

In this module we discussed how one of the reasons for allegiance to Orthodoxy is the conviction that it is the sole guardian of truth and salvation. Understanding this will help you answer this common Orthodox question.

Q: In which Church/denomination can I discover the truth/be saved?

A:

- Commend their desire to know the truth so they can have certainty about God.
- Explain that no human institution has a monopoly on the truth. Instead, God has made his truth clear to all in his Biblical word.
- Neither will God restrict entry to heaven to members of one group. Rather he guarantees salvation to those who repent *personally*.