

21 CONCEPTS OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD

FOR USE IN CURRICULUM

INTRODUCTION

The following principles (key heart concepts) are not meant to be exhaustive but to inspire the teacher to reveal these aspects of God and his Kingdom in curriculum. It is hoped that many more will be discovered. The scripture references are not intended to be limited to the concept but to help our thinking around the subject. Interpretation of the truths will inevitably vary according to your theology or background. The most important issue is to respond in faith to these broad principles from the Word of God and to unpack them further.

After each truth is a corresponding lie reflecting the world's thinking. We need to expose the lie when using the truth.

Teachers need to discover and explore these aspects of the Kingdom of God. The sentence definitions are obviously not meant to be used repetitively or legalistically but are merely guidelines to the truth which may be applied in a variety of ways and vocabulary adapted according to age.

Seven major ones (applicable to every subject)

MAN CREATED IN GOD'S IMAGE AND REDEEMED BY HIM

(Gen 1:27-28; 1 Peter 1:18-19)

God has given dignity and value to men and women by making them in his own image and by redeeming them through the cross at the cost of his son's life.

Lie: Man evolved by chance and makes his own destiny.

CREATOR AND CREATION

(Gen 1:1; John 1:1; Rom 1:20; Col 1:16)

God is the creator of the universe, and his creation reflects his nature.

Lie: Nature and the universe evolved by chance.

SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD

(Ps 33:10-11; Ps 135:6; Job 42:2; Acts 17:26)

Through Jesus his son as King, God is totally in control of his creation and the events of history and has planned everything according to his good and wise purposes.

Lie: Man is the prime animal continually gaining control of the world. The supremacy of man determines history.

UNITY AND DIVERSITY

(1 Cor 12 esp. vs 12, 27; Rom 12:3-8; Eph 4:4-13)

There is a unity and diversity throughout God's creation; as people we are called to unity but can appreciate and learn from each other's differences.

Lie: There is no overall unity or pattern to the universe; it is random.

ORDER

(Gen 1: Isa 9:7a; 1 Cor 14:33)

God establishes a creation which is purposeful and reveals order; he proceeds in orderly ways to achieve his purpose though at times he intervenes miraculously to

bring about his purposes.

Lie: There is no overall unity or pattern in nature; it is random.

WISDOM

(Prov 2:1-4; 4:7-8; Col 2:2-3; 1Cor 1:24, 30)

Scripture encourages us to value and pursue wisdom which is only found in God; God's wisdom is reflected in all that he is and does.

Lie: Wisdom comes out of man's mind and his experience. It is often (merely) expediency.

INTERDEPENDENCE

(Eccles 4:9-12; 1Cor 12; Gal 6:2)

Throughout God's creation there is a principle of interdependence which means that each part relates to, and has need of, the others.

Lie: We are autonomous, independent beings who may choose to co-operate with each other when it is in our own (self) interest.

Other key concepts

COVENANT LOVE

(Exodus 34:6-7; John 3:16; 1 John 3:1)

God is a God of love who commits himself to love us and to do good to us through his covenant promises.

Lie: We may choose to care for others. Love is the expression of passion based on self-interest. Any covenants are optional, re-negotiable and often temporary.

GREAT COMMISSION

(Matt 28:18-20; Acts 1:8; Acts 17:26-27)

Out of his great love Jesus has commanded us to go with his heart of love and with his truth to make disciples.

Lie: We may influence others by our experience and superior knowledge, but we are under no obligation to do so.

FATHERHOOD AND FAMILY

(Gen 1:28; Ps 68:6; Luke 11:2; Eph 3:14-15)

God is a father who desires and plans to fill the earth with a family reflecting his own nature and glory.

Lie: The world is comprised of autonomous ethnic groups and cultures.

STEWARDSHIP AND SERVANTHOOD

(Gen 1:26; Luke 19:11-27; John 13:2-17; 1Cor 4:1-2; Phil 2)

God has made us in his own image to serve him and one another by stewarding and developing the earth and its resources for his glory and for the good of our fellow man, just as Christ himself did.

Lie: We use the world's resources primarily to maintain ourselves. We may choose to benefit others with our surplus. Conservation is important for self-preservation.

RIGHTEOUSNESS

(Ps 89:14; Ps 119:137; Isa 9:7; Rom 14:17)

Righteousness is personified only in God himself and reflects his holiness and faithfulness. In God's Kingdom everything is meant to be rightly related to him and to every other part.

Lie: There is no absolute right: ("right" is purely personal and communal preference.)

JUSTICE

(Ps 9:16; Ps 11:7; Ps 89:14; Micah 6:6-8; Amos 5:24; Rev 20:11-12)

God is a wise judge who makes just decisions; he is impartial and equitable and calls us to be the same.

Lie: Justice is our right, but it is relative to our individual or communally agreed values.

PROVISION AND RESOURCES

(Gen 22:14; Ps 104; 1 Tim 6:17)

One of God's names is Jehovah-Jireh: God provides resources for all that he has made and for all that he purposes to do.

Lie: Earth's finite resources enhanced by man's creativity are all that are available: their use generates a conflict between conservation and self-interest.

COMMUNICATION

(John 1:1, 14; Eph 4:15; 2Tim 3:16; Heb 1:1-2; 1 John 1:3, 7)

God is a communicating God who reveals himself through scripture and prophecy; he desires that good relationships be formed through honest and accurate communication.

Lie: Communication is a means to an end for our self-satisfaction. A multiplicity of media (sources) enhance(s) the quality of life.

WONDER – WORSHIP

(Ps 8; Job 37-42; Dan 4:3; Rom 11:35-36)

Many aspects of God's creation cause us to wonder at his greatness and to worship him in response.

Lie: We marvel at man's greatness and worship him. Wonder and worship may be lasting but are frequently fleeting and fickle.

PLACEMENT

(Deut 32:8; Acts 17:26)

God has ordained areas and boundaries for the right settlement of all peoples.

Lie: It is an intrinsic right for people groups to have their own protected areas of settlement but these rights frequently conflict and the most powerful take precedence.

GROWTH – MATURITY – FRUITFULNESS

(Ps 1:3; 92:12-15; Matt 13:1-9, 23; John 15:5; Eph 4:15-16)

Everything which has life is created that it might grow to maturity and increasing fruitfulness.

Lie: Self-advancement is a dominate motivation for life but is not intrinsically related to maturity or fruitfulness.

GOVERNING – RULING

(Gen 1:28; Matt 28:18-20; Rom 13:1-5; Eph 6:1-2; Heb 13:17)

Man is made in God's image to govern and rule his creation for him using godly principles; God's rule through others is to be honoured.

Lie: Governments, whether autocratic or democratic, essentially serve selfish interests.

FORGIVENESS – RECONCILIATION

(Ex 34:6; Matt 18:21-35; Eph 2:13-16)

Having been reconciled with Christ we are called upon to exercise forgiveness and to live in harmony with one another.

Lie: Reconciliation is a laudable objective, but apology and forgiveness are generally signs of weakness.

ETERNITY – INFINITY

(Ps 90:1-4; Ecc 3:11; John 17:3; 2Tim 1:10)

God is infinite and eternal, and many aspects of his creation reflect this; through Christ we can share in the gift of eternal life.

Lie: There is no definitive life after death. However, each individual may conceive their own philosophy.

Applying the 21 truths to specific curriculum

Note that the 21 concepts are major heart concepts, and each has many different aspects which can be highlighted using different words and different ways in order to give you the particular heart concept(s) you need in the **Truth - Way - Life** model approach. I would see these 21 as an umbrella under which all other lesson heart concepts can fit. We need to ask God for creative ways to use the concepts, avoiding slavish repetition of the sentences as written which can cause a boring familiarity for the students which will breed contempt.

Questions to be answered during the planning process:

1a. Which of the following 21 concepts apply to this particular aspect of curriculum?

Note: there are 7 of the 21 which apply in different ways to every aspect of the curriculum.

1b. Do I want to use all of the relevant concepts?

Note: the answer to 1b depends on the other lesson/themes being taught in the class in other areas of curriculum. The teacher needs to make value judgements about how much to emphasise well-used concepts (like the major 7) or whether merely to draw attention to them in passing.

2. Pray: what aspects does God want to emphasise – TRUTH - Source)

In this way clarify and prioritise the heart concept(s) you will major on.

3. Which are the lies to oppose?

See list of false beliefs in our culture.

**4. How (in what ways) do the relevant heart concepts apply to this curriculum?
WAY TO TEACH (Way)**

5. How shall I lead the students to discover and then examine the relevant lies and truths? WAY TO TEACH (Way)

6. How and what do I want the students to understand and apply? LIFE WISDOM (Life)