

The Ishbane Conspiracy

The Occult pt.2: Strongholds

Ice Breaker/Game:

Book Study:

Breaking Strongholds

Time: about 60-90 minutes

Students will learn about the themes of “The Ishbane Conspiracy” by Randy Alcorn, more specifically how we can break the habitual sin and strongholds in our lives.

Supplies: Bibles, *The Ishbane Conspiracy* by Randy Alcorn, White board, marker, 2 rolls of plastic wrap, a stop watch, and one copy of the Scripture Handout for each student.

Start the study out in gender specific groups and discuss the students’ reactions and insights of chapters 13-15. Allow time for discussions and questions. **(15 min)**

Ask: **What did you think about this week’s reading?**

Do you have any questions about the content so far?

Come back together into the big group. **(15 min)**

Say: **Last week we talked about what the occult is and how we can resist the temptation to let Satan into our lives. But what if we already have? What then? When we participate in what seems to be “innocent” entertainment, we are opening a door for Satan to develop strongholds in our life.**

Ask: **How would you define a stronghold?**

What are some examples of strongholds in people’s life?

Write the following definition of strongholds on the white board:

“Stronghold – A negative mindset or action, saturated with hopelessness, which forces us to accept ‘unchangeable situations’ that are contrary to the will of God.”

Ask: **What part of that definition do you identify with?**

Share an example in your life where this was true for you.

Break into 2 groups and discuss the following scriptures: **(20 min)**

Say: **Here is what the Bible says that we can do about strongholds in our lives.**

Have a student read *Isaiah 61:1*

The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners,^[a]

Ask: **What tool is this scripture saying we have at our disposal?**

What is the promise that God gives us in this passage?

Read *2 Corinthians 10:4-5*

⁴The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. ⁵We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.

Say: **It is our job to make sure that we are vigilant in watching for Satan's schemes in our lives, but it is only in the power of the Holy Spirit that we can be set free from the strongholds that the devil has built in our lives.**

Ask: **Share an example of a time that the Holy Spirit broke an addiction or a stronghold of sin in your life.**

Come back together as a big group but have them stay in the two teams.

Illustration - All Tied Up **(25 min)**

(Illustration based on Innovative Tools by Group Publishing)

Give each team a roll of plastic wrap. Instruct each team to tightly wrap one member with plastic wrap from head (not face) to toe. The wrapped member's arms should be down at his or her sides, and the wrap should inhibit movement of any kind. Each team should use the same amount of plastic wrap.

When you say go, teams will unwrap their wrapped members as quickly as possible. Time each team and then repeat the game, challenging the teams to try to improve their times.

Ask: **When we're struggling with sin, how can prayer help us and set us free?**

When have you been "tied up" with fear and lack of faith, even though you knew God was ready to meet your needs?

What are some ways we can equip ourselves for effective prayer?

How does Satan try to discourage us from meeting with God in prayer?

Read Example IC – Page 89, paragraph 5.

Say: **The spiritual battle between God and Satan is not an equal fight, despite how it seems on earth. Because of sin on earth, Satan has ground, but God is always bigger and victorious. The end has already been written, and God wins.**

Give students the Scripture handouts. Have them find a quiet place in the room to read the scriptures and pray. Tell them that this is a time to let the Holy Spirit show them places in their own lives that may be strongholds of sin. Tell them that the scriptures are promises of God's victory over Sin and the Devil. After about 10 minutes, end with a prayer.