

Did a Disciple Really Become a Pope?

Description: How did Jesus' message to a small group of Jews end up helping to form the "Catholic" Church? Is Roman Catholic teaching faithful to God's Word? Do they preach the Gospel? How did they get so big? Are you "born" Christian in that church?

Prompt: Catholicism is on the receiving end of many caricatures, from confession to scandal to Sister Act to Friday night Vespers. Most everyone knows a Catholic, or experienced a Catholic church service. Ask the students to share stereotypes about Catholicism as a segue into the Power Track on the topic.

Play: Video of Randy Smith, "Did a Disciple Really...?" buildmomentum.org/resources

Process: Select from the following questions to help students remember, rekindle and reengage.

- ⏪ Much of Randy's discussion revolves around the idea of "adaptation." ***Does the gospel change culture or culture change the gospel?*** Explain.
- ⏪ Randy stresses, "If you are going to understand an ancient Roman, you must understand what was on newsstands and in their theaters." ***What influence did these media have on ancient Roman culture? How did dress and money communicate their values? How does media shape the values of American culture? What other forces shape our cultural values?***
- ⏪ **Read** Romans 16:1-26. ***What is significant about Paul's roll call of names?***
- ⏪ ***Why did the gospel initially thrive in the countryside, but struggle in the city?***
- ⏪ Randy mentions the powerful effect of the gospel on the Roman slave class. ***Why did they meet for worship so early? How did their treatment of the dead differ from the host culture?***
- ⏪ ***What are four problematic doctrines of the Catholic faith Randy lists?***
- ⏪ ***What did early Catholic leadership carry over from the Roman government after it fell?***
- ⏪ Randy teaches, "Salvation isn't about how much you know. It's about how much you give. It's always been about that." **Read** Luke 23:39-43. ***How does this story prove Randy's point? What are common conditions evangelical churches add to salvation? What do Catholics add?***
- ⏪ ***What is the role of theology in Christian life? How theologically informed are you?***
- ⏪ Randy ends with the observation that "Americans on the mission field have a difficult time separating their Americanism from their Christianity. Democracy does not save, Jesus does." ***How might you be guilty of adapting the gospel to your American values?*** Be specific.

Pray: Break students into pairs or groups. Have them name at least one unsaved person to pray for. Give them a minute to ask God to draw that person to Jesus by faith (not works).