

Instructions (suggest play in groups of 2 or 3)

Deal out the slips between you

Each person turn over one slip and read out what it says about 'the atonement'.

Compare and discuss what is on each player's slip.

Choose a slip between you that helps you best understand why Jesus died on the cross

Then each person turn over their next slip, read it out and again compare and discuss. Also compare to the slip you chose from the previous round

Continue until you have discussed all the slips. How would *you* explain the why Jesus died to someone else?

The Atonement: Ransom Theory

Each time we do wrong we incur a debt – which just gets bigger and bigger.

Jesus pays off our debt by dying on the cross. Our slate is therefore wiped clean – we can go free!

It is similar to someone sold into slavery. If a generous person paid the slave owner the price for the slave, they could set the slave free. Jesus dying pays that price!

Questions you might ask ...

But who is the price paid to? Is it God, the devil or someone else?

If it is God, how can God effectively pay Himself?

The Atonement: Satisfaction Theory

Each time we do wrong, we dis-honour God. Above all, God wants us to honour him.

The deficit of honour due to God is too much for us to make up.

Jesus dying on the cross fulfils the Father's will, and *honours God* on behalf of all of us. It is like Jesus paid God the ultimate honour.

In believing in Jesus, we are now counted as one who has honoured God.

Questions you might ask ...

What was the original level of honour required?

The Atonement: Moral Theory

Jesus sets an example through his whole life of how we should live: servant-hearted and self-giving. This example is supremely shown in giving his life – dying on a cross. This sets the example for us all to aspire to.

Questions you might ask ...

Does this not reduce Jesus to being 'just a good man', albeit an exceptionally good one?

What is the actual standard to live up to?
Should I have to be martyred too?

The Atonement: Substitution Theory

In the Old Testament there are various sacrifices. Each conveys a sense of 'totally giving over to God', i.e. giving it up from ourselves or normal human use. They also convey a sense that whatever is sacrificed is given over *in our place*, or *on behalf of us*.

The death of Jesus is therefore also seen as a sacrifice, his life given over totally to God. This is done *in our place* – something we could not achieve ourselves, but Jesus does it for us (hence as a 'substitute').

Questions you might ask ...

Why is death of a person required as the sacrifice?

The Atonement:

Penal Substitution Theory

We know from our culture and law that if you commit a crime then there is a penalty to pay (e.g. a fine or prison sentence). This is known as a 'penal code'.

The penalty for all our wrongdoing is our own death sentence. Yet Jesus pays that penalty for us (dies on our behalf), so that we can go free.

Questions you might ask ...

Does that make Jesus the victim in a some kind of celestial system of rigid justice?

In our law the penalties are arguably arbitrary (e.g. so many quid for a parking ticket). So how can that be a good analogy for our wrongdoing against God?

The Atonement: Christus Victor

Jesus' death on the cross defeated the power of the enemy and evil domain. This is proven by his resurrection – death had no hold on him and is therefore defeated: hence Chris is Victor!

Everything else follows from this victory over death and darkness – we can be set free, forgiven, restored.

Questions you might ask ...

Does this mean that Jesus dealt with the consequences of our wrongdoing (i.e. death), rather than the wrongdoing itself?

The Atonement: Cosmic Hoover

Jesus' death on the cross is not just a man dying a horrible death, but is God in Himself taking all the hurt and wrong in the world (in fact the whole universe) upon himself.

Jesus is absorbing it all. It is therefore kind of like a cosmic hoover taking up all that is wrong in the world.

Questions you might ask ...

But how does one death achieve all this?
Why isn't just like the death of any other person?

The Atonement: Exhausting a Toddler Tantrum

We all know what it is like when a toddler gets into a right stew and throws a tantrum. Of course there are times when it is right to tell that toddler off, but we also know there are times when they end up kicking and screaming and don't even know why – and all we can do is love them until they are exhausted and done.

Jesus' death on the cross is like the world throwing a tantrum at God – and all He can do is keep loving us until it is all exhausted.

Questions you might ask ...

Does this explanation account for our wrongdoing and culpability sufficiently?