



Group Session



Small Group Study

Volume Overview

Why is my church family important?

“For where two or three gather together as my followers, I am there among them.” (Matthew 18:20)

As Christians, we follow Jesus, but we were never meant to follow Jesus by ourself. God gave us a spiritual family to walk with through the highs and lows of life. That family is called

the Church! Why is the Church important? What role does the Church play in our life, and what role does each of us play in the Church? This volume will explore questions like these as we investigate what the Bible says about the Church.

You Will Need

- Two 50-piece (or more for larger groups) puzzles
- Optional: Small prizes or pieces of candy for the winning team

Getting Ready

- First time leading Learn for Youth? Look here for the Facilitator Guide.

To access the Bible Engagement Project library from a computer, visit App.BibleEngagementProject.com.

Engage

Welcome

Take this time to welcome everyone, introduce new students, learn names, and thank everyone for coming.

QUESTION

What do you most enjoy about getting together with other Christians?

Opening Prayer

Prayer thoughts: Use the Lord’s Prayer (Matthew 6:9–13) as a prayer template to open. You don’t have to read it word-for-word; use it as a guide.

Introduction

Did you know that being connected to the Church is extremely important? But when the Bible says “church,” it isn’t talking about a building. Instead, it’s talking about either all Christians or a local gathering of Christians. And that gathering is so important because God wants us to be connected to other believers. Being a part of a church family is necessary to grow into who God has called us to be. Let’s look at the different ways we can grow together as a church.

Group Activity

Better Together!

You Will Need

- *Two 50-piece (or more for larger groups) puzzles*
- *Optional: Small prizes or pieces of candy for the winning team*

No prep is needed for this activity.

Let’s kick things off with a challenge. I’m going to split you up into two evenly divided teams. Each team will have a puzzle. The challenge is simple—use whatever strategy you can to be the first team to put your puzzle together.

- *Divide the group into two teams and distribute the puzzles.*
- *If you’re crunched for time, consider setting a time limit. The team that has fewer pieces left when time is up is the winner.*
- *Optional: Give a prize to the winning team.*

QUESTION

What strategy did your team use to put the puzzle together?

QUESTION

Did anyone in the group feel left out or like you didn’t contribute much? How did that make you feel? (Be careful to ensure this doesn’t become a divisive issue.)

QUESTION

Do you think it would have taken you longer to do the puzzle by yourself rather than with a team? Why or why not?

Simple challenges like this remind us that we’re better together! If you’re working toward a goal, it can be better to have a team to help you. When we work together well, we can accomplish more results, better results, and faster results. It’s the same in our Christian life, too. When our goal is to grow spiritually, we need a team. Today, we’ll find out that God has already given us a spiritual family of people to help. Let’s watch the video.

Watch



Consider What the Bible Says

Ensure each student has access to a Bible, preferably the same version.

To learn what the Church should be like, let's go all the way back to the birth of the Church in the New Testament. About a month and a half after Jesus' death and resurrection, the disciples began to share their faith with others. These early believers helped birth the Church—the community of everyone who follows Jesus. As people accepted Jesus as their Savior, the Church grew. Let's take a look at some of the things the Early Church enjoyed together.

Believers Are Devoted to Growing

Read Acts 2:42–43.

QUESTION

What do you think it means to be devoted to something?

QUESTION

Think of something that you want to get better at, like sports, playing a musical instrument, or writing. What types of things could you do to grow and improve?

Just like we might devote our time to improve at these skills, as Christians, we should constantly be growing in our faith. But our relationship with Jesus won't magically grow overnight. Our relationship with God requires devotion to grow, just like practicing sports or playing an instrument.

QUESTION

According to Acts 2:42, what specific things were the believers devoted to?

QUESTION

What are some creative, practical ways we can devote to prayer, teaching, and fellowship as a group?

QUESTION

According to verse 43, what happened as a result of their devotion to each other?

The believers were devoted to growing in their faith, but they didn't try to grow alone. Let's keep reading to see just how devoted they were to each other.

Believers Are Devoted to Each Other

Read Acts 2:44–47.

QUESTION

How often did they meet together in the Temple and in each other's homes?

These early believers really operated like a close family. Every single day they were meeting to connect with each other as well as with God. While we don't assemble every single day, it's a great idea to connect with other Christians this often. It can be a big encouragement to be around people who believe like you do.

QUESTION

What did the believers do to show how much they cared about each other?

As Christians, we have a responsibility to care for others and to put other people's needs above our own (Philippians 2:3–4). This can be so hard in a world that tells you to look out for yourself! But to really be the Church that Jesus wants us to be, we have to be devoted to helping believers in need and sharing what we can.

QUESTION

Have you ever had someone outside your family take care of you when you needed it? What happened?

QUESTION

What could keep you from being as devoted to other Christians as the early believers were?

Did You Know?

The idea of communal living was ingrained in a large part of the Jewish world in the days of Jesus. Archaeology has shown that extended families often lived together in large villa-style houses known as insula homes. These homes connected multiple homes together as large singular units. Many of those living in these locations shared not only space but also food and finances. This way of life would work perfectly with what is seen of the Early Church in the Book of Acts.

Believers Are Devoted to the Mission

QUESTION

According to verse 47, how often were people being saved?

QUESTION

What do you think was so appealing about the Early Church that resulted in people getting saved daily?

Notice how people weren't just saved and left to figure it out on their own. God's Word tells us that they were saved and "added to the fellowship" (verse 47). When someone becomes a Christian, we should do our best to help them quickly become a part of this spiritual family!

QUESTION

How does the growth of the Early Church challenge you to share your faith with people who don't know Jesus?

Reflect

We Grow Together

Too often, we think of church involvement as something we do for an hour or two on Sundays and Wednesdays. But God wants our engagement with His Church, all followers of Jesus, to be so much more than that! When we're fully devoted to each other, we'll see more of what we read about in Acts: people saved, lives changed, and a growing connectedness between all who follow Jesus.

Listen to God

Let's pause and listen to what God might want to say to us about what we have read and shared. These questions are meant to serve as a conversation between you and God. However, you may want to share your response with the group, but no one should feel obligated.

- *Optional: Pause for a few moments of silent reflection before asking students if they want to share.*

QUESTION

What's the biggest challenge for you when it comes to being as committed to the Church as the early Christians were?

QUESTION

By looking at the Book of Acts, we can see that believers were focused on receiving teaching, fellowship, and prayer. What steps can you take to be more devoted to growing your faith?

Activate

Like the Early Church believers, each of us needs to be a part of a Christian community growing together through prayer, learning His Word, worshipping, and connecting with each other.

As we consider today's discussion, it's important that we put into action what was said. So here's the challenge to each of us. We have three more sessions about why the Church is important. I want to challenge everyone to do everything they can to be here for the next three times. This is a way to commit to being a part of this community. In addition, I want to challenge everyone to bring at least one person with you!

Conclusion

The New Testament gives us a picture of what the Church was like when it started. That helps us to know what the Church should look like today. God wants His people to be marked by a deep devotion to growth, to each other, and to His mission. We have the opportunity and the responsibility to be part of that Church now! As we pursue this together, we'll see people come to Jesus.

Salvation Opportunity

Include this if you think there may be some in the group who do not have a personal relationship with Jesus.

Everyone who has received Jesus' forgiveness and placed their faith in Him is part of the Church. God made a way for us to choose to be part of this family through Jesus. He lived a sinless life, died a sinner's death on a cross, and rose from the dead three days later in order to restore our relationship with God. To receive the benefits of what Jesus did, we have to put our trust in Him and make Him the Leader of our life.

Is there anyone here that we can pray for who doesn't have a relationship with Jesus or wants to renew their relationship with Him?

Take a moment to acknowledge those who respond, and thank them for their desire to make things right between themselves and God. Pray with them as we close in prayer or after the group time is over. Following group time, talk more about where they are in their walk with God and how you might be able to help.

Prayer

Father, thank You for making a way for us to join Your family. Thank You for showing us what the Church should be like. Help us to be devoted to growth—in our faith and in our relationships with each other as the Church. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Remember that the app provides personal devotions for you to use throughout the week. These let you dive deeper into what we've discussed. Consider doing them with other people this week, and grow together like the Early Church. I can't wait to see you next time!