

Church: building or body?



Introduction:

The aim of this session helps young people to explore the purpose of Church. At a later date, it might be useful to follow up this session with a tour of the church to explain the different parts of the building, their historical significance and the purpose they play in worship and church life.

Aims & objectives:

- To gauge the young people's understanding of the Church.
- Explore Church as more than just a building.
- To reflect on the Church as a body.
- To explore key functions of the Church in context to the young people and local community.

Materials: Lots of Lego for the group to make models.



Activity...

Model Church

This session begins with a fun activity that will get the group thinking about and discussing the purpose of the Church.

Divide the young people into small groups (or pairs) and give each group a bag of Lego. Each bag must have a large assortment of Lego bricks for this activity to work well. Explain that each group has to make a model that interprets the word 'church'.

Try not to give the young people too much guidance on what to make as their models will provide an interesting reference point in the next activity. After several minutes invite each group to explain their models to the rest of the young people, describing what they have made and why.



Activity...
Model Church



Engage...
What is the Church?



Explore...
One body many parts



Going deeper...
Is Church relevant?



Pause...
We are one in Christ



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Engage...

What is the Church?

Materials: Laptop/equipment to play a You Tube clip.

What is the purpose of Church? After watching the clip 'What is the Church?' encourage the young people to compare and contrast their Lego models with the suggested explanation of Church described in the short film:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ifnJtkAnBq4>



Explore...

One body many parts

Materials: Pens and spare Bibles incase the young people forget to bring their own.

Inform the group that they are going to look up a Bible passage that describes the early church. Ask the young people to find a space to read through 1 Corinthians 12: 12-27 - 'One body with many parts' - writing down or underlining key words in their Bibles that they think are relevant (or confusing) to their understanding of Church. After several minutes, bring the group back together for feedback and comments.

1 Corinthians 12:12-27 One body with many parts (NLT)

The human body has many parts, but the many parts make up one whole body. So it is with the body of Christ. Some of us are Jews, some are Gentiles, some are slaves, and some are free. But we have all been baptized into one body by one Spirit, and we all share the same Spirit. Yes, the body has many different parts, not just one part. If the foot says, "I am not a part of the body because I am not a hand," that does not make it any less a part of the body. And if the ear says, "I am not part of the body because I am not an eye," would that make it any less a part of the body? If the whole body were an eye, how would you hear? Or if your whole body were an ear, how would you smell anything?

But our bodies have many parts, and God has put each part just where he wants it. How strange a body would be if it had only one part! Yes, there are many parts, but only one body. The eye can never say to the hand, "I don't need you." The head can't say to the feet, "I don't need you." In fact, some parts of the body that seem weakest and least important are actually the most necessary. And the parts we regard as less honourable are those we clothe with the greatest care.

So we carefully protect those parts that should not be seen, while the more honourable parts do not require this special care. So God has put the body together such that extra honour and care are given to those parts that have less dignity. This makes for harmony among the members, so that all the members care for each other. If one part suffers, all the parts suffer with it, and if one part is honoured, all the parts are glad.

All of you together are Christ's body, and each of you is a part of it.



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Going deeper...

Is Church relevant?

Materials: Copies of the 'Going deeper' worksheet.

In small groups the following questions will help the young people unpack the Bible passage from the previous activity and make connections with their own understanding of Church:

- 1) Do you think the metaphor of the Church as a body is relevant to the Church of today?
- 2) In what ways does your church function as a body?
 - If the group are struggling, try using the following example: the human body is full of organs which have different functions, and similarly, people have different gifts they can use in the life of the Church.
- 3) What do you think are the key elements of the Church?
- 4) How can the Church be relevant to you and your local community?



Pause...

We are one in Christ

Materials: A selection of images of your church.

This reflection encourages the young people to think about their place in their Church. Collect images of your church including pictures of activities, outreach, people etc. that illustrate the life of the Church. Place the images on the floor and invite the young people to sit down to look at the images. The images can also be passed around in a circle. Whilst everyone is focussing on the images, say the closing words on the next page:



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We all have a place in God's Church...

We are many,
God's great diversity,
yet we are one in Christ.

Different faces,
different races,
yet we are one in Christ.

Butchers, bakers, website makers,
bankers, tailors, teachers, sailors,
yet we are one in Christ.

Fathers, mothers, sisters, brothers,
single, married, broken, carried,
yet we are one in Christ.

The happy, the clappy, the barely out of nappies,
the ancient, the modern, the famous, the forgotten,
yet we are one in Christ.

Some hopeful, some hopeless,
some cope well, some cope less.
Some sure and some doubt,
some whisper, some shout,
yet we are one in Christ.

Those with abundance, those with need,
those who are generous or wrestle with greed,
yet we are one in Christ.

Elbows, tummies, knees and noses,
kidneys, femurs, teeth and toeses.
Some unmentionable, some protected,
some accepted, some rejected,
yet we are one in Christ.

A broken body, torn apart,
mars God's image, breaks God's heart.

And yet our Father knows how the end will be,
when all his kids will sing in harmony,
the bride will dazzle, her branches bloom,
so add your voice to hymn the tune;
that we are one in Christ.



(source: www.engageworship.org)

