

THE INVISIBLE CHURCH

THEOLOGICAL QUESTION

What is the church, and why should I be involved?

BIG IDEA

The church is more than a building; it is the people who belong to God. The church, which is also called the Body of Christ, is meant to train Christians to be ambassadors of the gospel to a lost and dying world. Every person is invited to be a part of the church and be people who belong to God.

SCRIPTURE USED

2 Corinthians 5:18-21 *And all of this is a gift from God, who brought us back to himself through Christ. And God has given us this task of reconciling people to him. For God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, no longer counting people's sins against them. And he gave us this wonderful message of reconciliation. So we are Christ's ambassadors; God is making his appeal through us. We speak for Christ when we plead, "Come back to God!" For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ.*

1 Corinthians 12:12-17 *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?

For this lesson you will need:

- Paper and colored pencils
- Several sets of 25 piece puzzles for a team challenge. One puzzle for every four to five students.

OPENER

Draw it Out: Pass out paper with colored pencils (or just pencils) to each student. Give them five minutes to design what they think a beautiful church looks like. Tell them that they will be primarily judged on the ideas the drawing communicates and not just on their sketching abilities. Also mention that no words can be used to communicate their ideas.

Have each student show their drawing to the entire group one by one without providing any explanation or commentary. Invite the other students to share what they think each particular drawing is trying to communicate.

Most of your students will likely draw out a building. Make a point of this as you open in prayer and then transition into your lesson—that a building doesn't represent the true church.

EXPLAIN

Interestingly, many of you envisioned a church building when you thought of the word church.

Have you ever heard of a country club before? There are all sorts of country clubs out there. Basically, a country club is a privately owned, exclusive organization with multiple members in it. Country clubs usually have tennis courts, pools and golf courses that you can use. Sound pretty great, right? But you can't just walk into a country club and start using the pool. In order to be a part of the club, you have to pay money—and in some cases, a lot of money.

Sometimes when we hear the word church, we think of it like a country club. Certain people are "members" who pay regular money (tithes and offering) in order to be a part of an exclusive club. The perks to the church club is salvation and a one-way ticket to heaven. And of course, let's not forget one of the best perks—youth group. But is this what church is really about? Is the church really like a country club? Or is there a greater reason why the church exists and, more specifically, why you should be a part of it?