

The Church—God’s Plan from the Beginning

Main Ideas

- God planned the church from before the world began.
- The church is the chosen, blessed, redeemed, holy people of God.
- The Old Testament progressively reveals God’s plan for His chosen people.
- Jesus’ church is the fulfillment of God’s promises to His people.

Memory Work

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,

(from the Apostles’ Creed)

Scripture for the Lesson

1. Ephesians 1:3-4
2. Genesis 12:1-3
3. Genesis 35:10-11
4. Exodus 6:6b
5. Leviticus 11:45
6. Isaiah 1:4
7. Ezekiel 36:26
8. 1 Peter 2:9

Curriculum Resources

- Building Blueprint (2A, see Preparation)
- The Church is... (2B)
- God’s Plan Clue Cards 1-4—Front (2C-2F, see Preparation)
- God’s Plan Clue Cards 1-4—Back (2G-2J, see Preparation)
- Living Stone (2K, cut out)
- Parent Page for Lesson 2 (for each student)

Other Supplies

- Large stone or brick (from Lesson 1)
- Tape

Preparation

- **Building Blueprint**—Note that this visual is to be displayed in landscape (short and wide, not portrait or tall and narrow) orientation.
- **God’s Plan Clue Cards**—Cut out the **God’s Plan Clue Cards 1-4** and attach the front pieces to the back pieces to make them double-sided visuals.

Materials for Optional Activities

1. Apostles’ Creed Memory Activity

- See the "Bible and Memory Work" section in the Appendix to help your students learn the next portion of the Apostles’ Creed: *I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,*

2. The Church Word Find

- For each student
- The Church Word Find (OA-2)
- Pencil

3. I Will Build My Church Buttons

- For each student
- I Will Build My Church Buttons
- Supplies to work on button requirements

Large Group Lesson

Building Blueprint, tape

(Display the **Building Blueprint** visual, and **tape** it to the wall. Ask the students if they know what it is. Quickly explain that before a building is constructed, an architect creates a plan. He or she decides how big the building will be, how it will look, how many rooms it will have, what materials it will be made of, and more. Every detail is carefully thought through ahead of time, and then the architect makes a detailed drawing of the building—a blueprint.)

In our last lesson, we learned that Jesus is building His church. The church is not an actual building. The church is a spiritual house made of God’s people.

But, knowing about real buildings and how they are made can help us understand important things about Jesus’ church. For example, just like a real building begins in the mind of an architect, Jesus’ church has an “architect,” who made a type of blueprint.

(Have the students listen carefully as you read **Ephesians 1:3-4** to them. See if they can identify an architect in the verses—someone who decided to choose a special people to be members of Jesus’ church.)

Ephesians 1:3-4—Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, ⁴even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him...

? *These verses begin by telling us who planned the church—its architect. Who is it? [God the Father]*

The verses also tell us when God the Father chose the people who would be blessed and redeemed—people who would receive salvation.

? *When did God choose the members of the church? [before the foundation of the world, before the world was created]*

These verses also tell us that it is through Jesus that God’s people are redeemed, so that they can receive His blessing.

? *And what should these chosen, redeemed, and blessed people be like? [holy and blameless before God]*

The Church Is... visual, tape, God’s Plan Clue Cards 1-4

(Display **The Church Is...** visual, and **tape** it to the right of the **Building Blueprint** visual. Explain that the Old Testament reveals more of the details of God’s plan. We are going to look at just a few of these. Hand the **God’s Plan Clue Cards 1-4** to four students. Call on them, one at a time, to read the front of the card, and then read the statement with the missing word on the back of the card. Then, see if the students can supply the missing word that should go on the blank line. Make the brief comments that follow each card. Next, tape each card to the Building Blueprint, backside facing out, and write in the correct missing word/letters on the blank line. When finished, the Building Blueprint will be covered.)

God's Plan Clue Card 1

Front: Who did God say this to: "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. ²And I will make of you a great nation...³...in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed" (Genesis 12:1-3)?

Back: God chose Abraham to bless the world.

In the very first book of the Bible, we learn that God's plan included choosing a man named Abram, who was later named Abraham. God was making a covenant promise to Abraham—a promise far into the future.

God's Plan Clue Card 2

Front: Abraham had a son named Isaac, and Isaac had a son named Jacob. God gave Jacob a new name. It would be the name of God's special people, His chosen nation. What did God change Jacob's name to (Genesis 35:10-11)?

Back: God chose Israel to be His special people.

For a time, the nation of Israel lived in the land of Egypt. While there, Israel became more and more numerous. This displeased the Egyptians, so the Egyptians made the people of Israel slaves and would not let them return to their own land. Israel was held captive.

God's Plan Clue Card 3

Front: Who said this to Israel: "I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will deliver you from slavery to them, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great acts of judgment" (Exodus 6:6b)?

Back: God redeemed His people.

God's Plan Clue Card 4

Front: God said this to Israel: "For I am the LORD who brought you up out of the land of Egypt to be your God. You shall therefore be _____, for I am holy." What's the missing word (Leviticus 11:45)?

Back: God's people are to be holy.

God chose a people to bless. He redeemed them. He called them to be holy. God gave Israel His law and commands so they would know how to live as holy people.

(Have the students carefully look at the messages that are now side-by-side on the wall.)

- **God chose Abraham to bless the world.**
- **God chose Israel to be His special people.**
- **God redeemed His people.**
- **God's people are to be holy.**

**The Church is the
Chosen, Blessed,
Redeemed,
Holy People
of God**

? Do you see things that both visuals have in common? What?
[chose/chosen; bless/blessed; redeemed; holy; God's people]

- ? So, why did Jesus come to build the church? Is the church the same as Israel, or is it something different? (Allow a few responses.)

(Explain that the rest of the Old Testament provides the reason for the coming of the church.)

Toward the end of Old Testament times, this is what God said to His chosen people through the prophet Isaiah:

(Quickly read **Isaiah 1:4** to the students.)

***Isaiah 1:4—Ah, sinful nation,
a people laden with iniquity,
offspring of evildoers,
children who deal corruptly!
They have forsaken the LORD,
they have despised the Holy One of Israel,
they are utterly estranged.***

By the end of the Old Testament, Israel was no longer a great nation. The people of Israel were not experiencing God’s special blessing. They were not living as a holy people. This was not a surprise to God. It was all part of God’s plan—a plan to show His chosen people that they needed a special kind of redemption.

Large stone or
brick

(Display the **large stone** or **brick** from the previous lesson.)

Can this stone love me? Can it obey me if I tell it to move? Of course not. It is not alive. It is cold and hard. That is something like a “heart of stone.” A heart of stone is cold and hard toward God—a heart that does not love, trust, and obey Him. That is the natural condition of every human heart. It is a sinful heart.

The redemption Israel needed most, and the redemption we need most is heart redemption.

(Ask the students to recall the previous lesson.)

- ? Do you remember learning about stones? What kind of stones were these? [living stones, as in 1 Peter 2:5]

Tape, and the
Living Stone and
The Church is...
visuals

(Lightly **tape** the **Living Stone** visual within the outline on **The Church is...** visual.)

That is what Israel was waiting for and needing most. So, long before the coming of Jesus, God made this promise to His chosen people...

(Read Ezekiel 36:26.)

Ezekiel 36:26—“And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.”

(Explain that the church was God’s plan from the very beginning. The Old Testament provides a type of blueprint for the coming of Jesus and His church. The church is the fulfillment and completion of the promises God made to His chosen people. The coming of Jesus brought God’s chosen people the heart redemption they so desperately needed so that they might live as the blessed and holy people of God forever. The church is the true Israel, the true people of God.)

The Apostle Peter made this clear when he described the members of Jesus' church in this way,

(Read **1 Peter 2:9** to the students.)

1 Peter 2:9—But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

The Old Testament chosen nation of Israel was pointing forward to the coming of Jesus and the building of His church. The church is the one, chosen, blessed, redeemed, holy people of God.

Small Group Application

Choose one or more of the following suggestions for interacting with the students during this time.

- **Workbook**—Have the students complete the Old and New Testament portions of the workbook page using the Word Key. *Why is it important to know that the church was God's plan from the very beginning? Does God just make things up as events unfold? Does God say, "Oh no, Israel has messed everything up so I need a new plan"? How does God keeping His promises from the very beginning show Him to be trustworthy and dependable? Why should this matter to you?* Next, have them look up Ezekiel 36:26 in their Bibles and fill in the missing words. Have them draw within the two boxes a "heart of stone" and a "heart of flesh." *What do you think is meant by "a new spirit" within? [The Holy Spirit] Who is promising to do this work? [God] Why would this be impossible apart from God? [He alone is almighty; a "stone" cannot change its condition; etc.] In what ways might a "heart of flesh" act toward God? Without answering out loud, does your heart feel, think, and act like a "new heart," or is it more like a "heart of stone"?*
- **God Blesses the World through Abraham**—Have the students turn to Genesis 12:1-3 in their Bibles. *How did God plan to bless all the families of the world through Abraham? Do you know who Abraham's most famous and important descendant was? [Jesus] In what way is Jesus a blessing to the whole world?* Read and talk about Revelation 5:9 ("Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation,").
- **God Chooses a Special People for Himself**—Read and talk about Deuteronomy 7:6-8 ("...The LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for his treasured possession, out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth. ⁷It was not because you were more in number than any other people that the LORD set his love on you and chose you, for you were the fewest of all peoples, ⁸but it is because the LORD loves you and is keeping the oath that he swore to your fathers..."). Ask: *Did Israel have any right to boast about being God's chosen people? Why not? If you are a Christian, and a true member of Jesus' church, have you any right to boast? Why not?* Read and talk about Ephesians 2:8-9 ("For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, ⁹not a result of works, so that no one may boast.").
- **God's People, His Treasured Possession**—Ask the students if they have a treasured possession. What is it? Point out that God called the nation of Israel His treasured possession (Exodus 19:5). God blessed them—they received God's special love, provision, protection, and care. *Can you think of examples from the Old Testament of how God showed His special love, provision, protection, and care of Israel? Because of this, how should they have responded to God? Did they always love, honor, trust, and obey Him as they should? How do we know that they didn't do this? What does this show us about their hearts? Do we ever*

act like the people of Israel? What does this show us about our own hearts? Just like Israel, do we need “heart redemption”? How did God provide heart redemption for His people?

- **God Calls His People to Be Holy**—Review Leviticus 11:45. *Why does God expect His people to be holy? What did God give to the people of Israel to show them how to live as holy people? [His law, the Ten Commandments] Did they succeed in being holy? How do we know they failed? What about the church? Does God expect His people to be holy? Review Ephesians 1:3-4. How has God provided a way for His people to be truly holy? What did Jesus do that Israel or you and I could never do? How is this a fulfillment of the promises God made to Abraham and the nation of Israel?*
- **Sin Is Our Inborn Condition**—Have the students turn to Isaiah 1:4 in their Bibles. *How many different words does God use to describe the sinfulness of His people? Do you believe that they deserved to be God’s chosen people? Why not? How do you think God felt about their sinfulness? Read and talk about Isaiah 59:2 (“but your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you...”) and Romans 1:18 (“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men...”). Ask: Do you think these verses are true just for Israel and other “really bad” people? Do you know of any verses that describe the natural, inborn condition of all people? (e.g., Romans 3:10-12, 23; Ephesians 2:3) So what do we also deserve?*
- **The Church is the Fulfillment of God’s Promises to Abraham and Israel**—Review and talk about 1 Peter 2:9. Explain that the terms “chosen race,” “royal priesthood,” and “holy nation” all come from the Old Testament and are describing Israel. But Peter is now using these terms to describe the church. This is important: God does not have two separate kinds of chosen people—Israel (the Jewish people), and the church. Jesus came to fulfill God’s promises in making one people of God, which includes both Jews and non-Jews (Gentiles). *What does it mean that this chosen race, royal priesthood, and holy nation have been called “out of darkness” and “into His marvelous light”?* [The true people of God includes everyone saved by Jesus through His death on the cross.]

Optional Activities

1. Apostles’ Creed Memory Activity

- Use the Scripture memory ideas in the Appendix to help the students memorize the next portion of the Apostles’ Creed: *I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,*

2. The Church Word Find

- Have the students find the words in the **Church Word Find** activity, and then use those words to fill in the missing words from Ephesians 1:3-4 and 1 Peter 2:9. See the answer key for this word find on the next page.



3. I Will Build My Church Buttons

- Give the students the opportunity to work on the requirements to earn the I Will Build My Church Buttons, helping when needed.

Send Home

- Parent Page for Lesson 2 (for each student)



The Church—God’s Plan from the Beginning

MAIN IDEAS

- God planned the church from before the world began.
- The church is the chosen, blessed, redeemed, holy people of God.
- The Old Testament progressively reveals God’s plan for His chosen people.
- Jesus’ church is the fulfillment of God’s promises to His people.

MEMORY WORK

*I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth,
and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
—from the Apostles’ Creed*

SCRIPTURE

- | | | | |
|--------------------|---------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| 1) Ephesians 1:3-4 | 3) Genesis 35:10-11 | 5) Leviticus 11:45 | 7) Ezekiel 36:26 |
| 2) Genesis 12:1-3 | 4) Exodus 6:6 | 6) Isaiah 1:4 | 8) 1 Peter 2:9 |

HERE’S WHAT TO DO NEXT

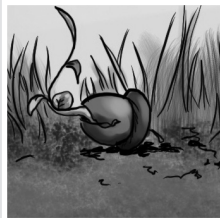
On the next page, use the Word Key to complete the Old and New Testament portions. (Note: “Redeemed” is used twice.) Next, draw pictures showing a “heart of stone” and a “heart of flesh.” Then use your Bible to complete Ezekiel 36:26.

Think About It: Why is it important to know that the church was God’s plan from the very beginning? How does God keeping His promises from the very beginning show Him to be trustworthy and dependable? Do you know who Abraham’s most famous and important descendant was? In what way is Jesus a blessing to the whole world?

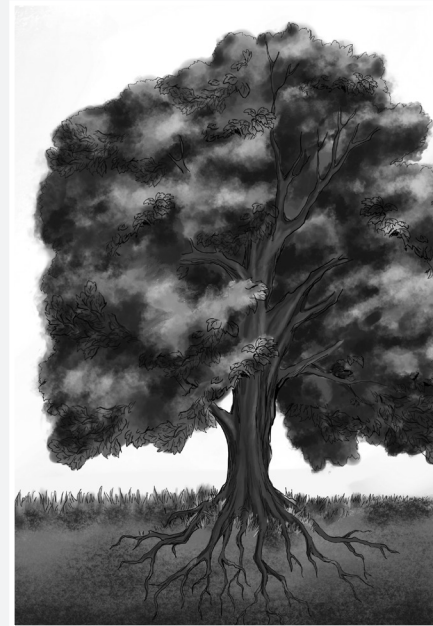
Look at Ezekiel 36:26 again. What do you think is meant by “a new spirit” within you? Who is promising to do this work? Why would this be impossible apart from God? In what ways might a “heart of flesh” act toward God? Does your heart feel, think, and act like a “new heart,” or is it more like a “heart of stone”? Who alone can help you?

Ezekiel 36:26—“And I will give you a new _____, and a new _____ I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of _____ from your flesh and give you a heart of _____.”

- God _____ Abraham to bless the world.
- God chose _____ to be His special people.
- God _____ His people.
- God's people are to be _____.



- The _____ is the _____, blessed, _____, holy people of God.



OLD TESTAMENT → **NEW TESTAMENT**

Word Key: CHOSEN, CHURCH, ISRAEL, REDEEMED, HOLY, CHOSE

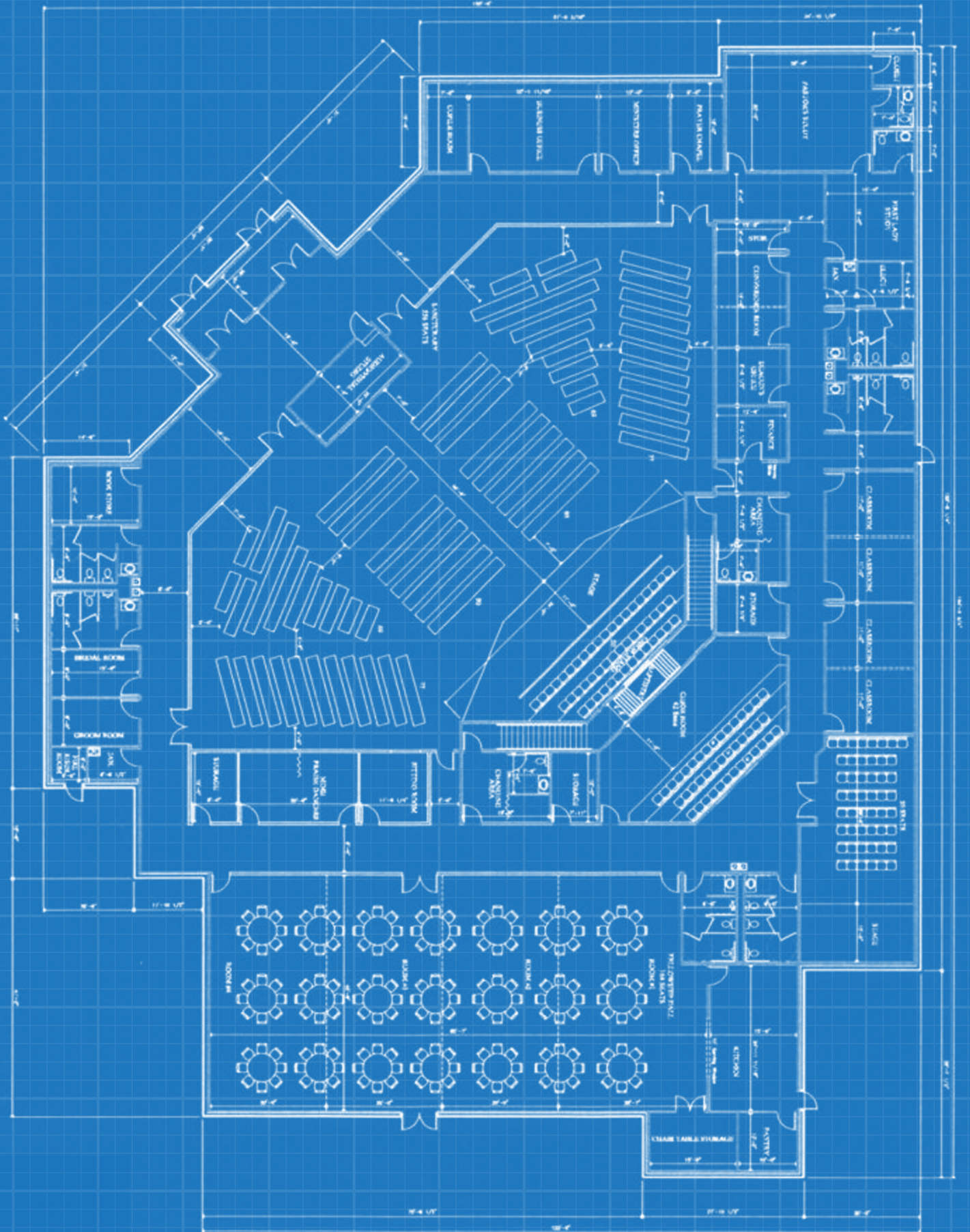
HEART OF STONE



HEART OF FLESH



Sample Lesson



**The Church is the
Chosen, Blessed,**

**Redeemed,
Holy People
of God**

Sample Lesson

God's Plan Clue Card 2 (Front)

Abraham had a son named Isaac, and Isaac had a son named Jacob. God gave Jacob a new name. It would be the name of God's special people, His chosen nation. What did God change Jacob's name to?

—Genesis 35:10-11

2D

God's Plan Clue Card 1 (Front)

Who did God say this to: “Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you.² And I will make of you a great nation...³ ...in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed”?

—Genesis 12:1-3

Sample Lesson

God's Plan Clue Card 4 (Front)

God said this to Israel: “For I am the LORD who brought you up out of the land of Egypt to be your God. You shall therefore be _____, for I am holy.” What’s the missing word?

—Leviticus 11:45

2F

God's Plan Clue Card 3 (Front)

Who said this to Israel: “I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will deliver you from slavery to them, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great acts of judgment”?

—Exodus 6:6

2E

God's Plan Clue Card 4 (Back)

**God's people are
to be**

2H

God's Plan Clue Card 2 (Back)

**God chose
to be His special
people.**

2J

God's Plan Clue Card 3 (Back)

**redeemed His
people.**

2I
Sample Lesson

God's Plan Clue Card 1 (Back)

**God chose
to bless the world.**

2G





The Church—God’s Plan from the Beginning

MAIN IDEAS

- God planned the church from before the world began.
- The church is the chosen, blessed, redeemed, holy people of God.
- The Old Testament progressively reveals God’s plan for His chosen people.
- Jesus’ church is the fulfillment of God’s promises to His people.

MEMORY WORK

*I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth,
and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
(from the Apostles’ Creed)*

SCRIPTURE FOR THE LESSON

1) Ephesians 1:3-4
2) Genesis 12:1-3

3) Genesis 35:10-11
4) Exodus 6:6

5) Leviticus 11:45
6) Isaiah 1:4

7) Ezekiel 36:26
8) 1 Peter 2:9

AS YOU WALK BY THE WAY

Read the verses listed above in the order in which they appear. Explain that the church was God’s plan from the very beginning. The Old Testament provides a type of blueprint for the coming of Jesus and His church. The church is the fulfillment and completion of the promises God made to His chosen people. The coming of Jesus brought God’s chosen people the heart redemption they so desperately needed. The church is the true Israel, the true people of God.

Review Leviticus 11:45 and ask your child: *Why does God expect His people to be holy? What did God give to the people of Israel to show them how to live as holy people? [His law, the Ten Commandments] Did they succeed in being holy? How do we know they failed? What about the church? Does God expect His people to be holy? (Review Ephesians 1:3-4.) How has God provided a way for His people to be truly holy? What did Jesus do that Israel, or you and I could never do? [Jesus perfectly obeyed God’s holy and righteous law. Jesus never sinned.] Are you trusting in Jesus to save you and make you holy? If you are, how is this shown in your life?*

ACTIVITY

On the next page, use the key to complete the list of some “excellencies” of Jesus.



But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.—1 Peter 2:9

Some excellencies of Jesus: He is...

Cr+ + t+ r

M+ rc+ f+ l

+ t+ rn+ l

+ mn+ sc+ nt

F+ + thf+ l

R+ ght+ + s

G+ + d

S+ v+ r

H+ ly

S+ v+ r+ gn

K+ ng+ f k+ ngs

W+ s+

L+ v+

KEY

★	+	+	+	+
A	E	I	O	U

The Church Word Find

F D T J F S G H B K P R F D F
 E U J P E S P I R I T U A L O
 I X B T R S B R B B X H T E U
 H Q C L U O U L J V W Q H R N
 O R P E E N C S A J W M E D D
 L O A E L S A L C M S H R V A
 Y Y M Y O L S T A H E O L L T
 V A A J U P E E I I R L C M I
 P L R H M X L N D O M I E Y O
 Z N V W V F U E C T N D S S N
 K U E Q N B G X P I M E E T S
 N T L V J X N T E S E S J C C
 V K O H E A V E N L Y S C P R
 K U U V V M G U W A D C G C M
 G S S U P O S S E S S I O N L

Find the underlined words from the verses below.

Ephesians 1:3-4—Blessed be the God and _____ of our Lord _____, who has _____ us in Christ with every _____ blessing in the _____ places,⁴ even as he chose us in him before the _____ of the world, that we should be _____ and _____ before him.

1 Peter 2:9—But you are a chosen race, a _____ priesthood, a holy _____, a _____ for his own _____, that you may _____ the _____ of him who called you out of darkness into his _____ light.

God's People Gather to Hear the Word

Main Ideas

- The Bible is necessary for Christian growth.
- Scripture should be read when God's people gather together to worship.
- The preaching of God's Word provides God's people with spiritual food for growing in the Christian life.

Memory Work

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried. The third day he rose from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence he shall come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit,

(From the Apostles' Creed)

Scripture for the Lesson

1. Ephesians 4:15b
2. 1 Peter 2:2
3. 1 Timothy 4:13
4. 2 Timothy 4:2
5. 2 Timothy 3:15-17

Curriculum Resources

- God's People Gather (8A)
- See Preparation
 - The Church Gathers to Worship (9A)
 - 6 Church Worship Strips (9B-9G)
 - Christian (9H)
 - Jesus Sign (9I)
- Verse 1-2 (9J-9K, cut out)
- God's Word (9L, see Preparation)
- Parent Page for Lesson 9 (for each student)

Other Supplies

- Paper (see Preparation)
- Tape
- 3 plates
- Tiny piece of toasted bread
- Bag or box of candy
- Tiny slice of apple or other fruit
- Bag of potato chips
- 1 green bean or other small vegetable
- Box of cookies
- A large healthy food item (uncut)

Preparation

- **The Church Gathers to Worship**—Cut apart the **6 Church Worship Strips** and cover all the lines of text below the "Worship God" on **The Church Gathers to Worship** visual. You will reveal the covered lines one by one starting with the presentation of this lesson.
- **Christian Visual with Jesus Sign**—Cut out the **Jesus Sign** visual as indicated. You will attach it to the **Christian** visual during the lesson to label the large silhouette representing Jesus. You will need these two signs for a lesson to come, so keep them attached to each other for use in Lesson 15. (Note: The **God's Word** visual will also be added to the **Christian** visual.)

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Materials for Optional Activities

1. Interview Your Church's Preaching Pastor

- Invite your church's preaching pastor to come to your class to be interviewed. Prepare some questions and be ready to encourage the students to ask questions of their own.

2. My Church Notebook

- My Church Notebook (Volume 1 or 2, from Truth78.org, for each student)

3. I Will Build My Church Buttons

For each student

- I Will Build My Church Buttons
- Supplies to work on button requirements

Large Group Lesson

God's People Gather visual, tape, and The Church Gathers to Worship visual prepared as described in the introduction

(Display the **God's People Gather** visual that was introduced in the previous lesson.)

God's People Gather Together to...

1. **Worship God**
2. **Love One Another**
3. **Proclaim the Gospel to the Lost**

(Remind the students that in our last lesson we learned that Jesus wants His church to gather together on a regular basis to do these three important things. Next, **tape The Church Gathers to Worship** visual to the wall.)

The Church Gathers to...

1. Worship God

- Sing**
- Read & Preach God's Word**
- Pray**
- Baptize**
- The Lord's Supper**
- Give**

(The most important and regular gathering of the church is the weekly worship service. During this time, the church worships God through a variety of ways. In our last lesson, we talked about the importance of singing to God during our weekly worship service. Remove the top or first **Church Worship Strip** from **The Church Gathers to Worship** visual to reveal the word, "Sing." Today we are going to learn about another important part of the weekly worship service.)

2 Plates, toast, bag of candy, slice of apple or other fruit, bag of potato chips

(Choose two students to come to the front and give each a **plate** to hold. Present the following scenario)

*Suppose that every morning [first student] was given this for breakfast (place a tiny piece of **toast** on the first student's plate) and [second student] was given this for breakfast (place a **bag of candy** on his the plate).*

Then for lunch [first student] *was given this* (place a tiny **slice of apple or other fruit** on his plate) *and* [second student] *was given this* (place the **bag of potato chips** on his plate).

Green bean
or other small
vegetable, box of
cookies

Finally, at dinner time [first student] *was given this to eat* (place a **green bean or other small vegetable** on his plate) *and* [second student] *was given this to eat* (place the **box of cookies** on his plate).

? *Do you think that either of these students would be receiving a diet that would help them grow up to be strong and healthy? Why not? What is wrong with the first diet?* [There is not enough food.] *What is wrong with the second diet?* [It's all junk food and is not healthy.]

(Have the students return to their seats. Point out that in order for children to grow up to be strong and healthy, it's not only important to have enough food but also the right kinds of food. Both things are important. Additionally, you need to eat enough food and healthy food on a regular basis.)

Christian visual,
Verse 1-2, tape,
Jesus Sign

(Display the **Christian** visual. Point out that for Christians there is a special kind of growing up that they do. Hand a student **Verse 1** to read.)

Ephesians 4:15b –...we are to grow up in every way into him...into Christ.

(**Tape** the **Jesus** sign onto the larger figure depicted in the **Christian** visual.)

? *What do you think that means?* (Allow a few responses.)

- Every Christian is to grow and become more and more like Jesus—more like Jesus in our thoughts, desires, feelings, words, and actions.
- The entire church is to grow more like Jesus.

We said that in order for a child to grow, he must have a diet with the right kinds of food. What about Christians, what kind of diet do they need in order to become more like Jesus? Is there some kind of special food that we eat?

(Hand a **Verse 2** visual to a student to read.)

1 Peter 2:2—Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation—

? *What do you think is meant by “pure spiritual milk”?* (Allow a few responses.)

God's Word visual

(**Tape** the **God's Word** visual where indicated on the **Christian** visual. Explain that “pure spiritual milk” refers to God's Word—God's truth that is revealed in the Scriptures. Just as babies need milk in order to grow up and become adults, Christians, and the church as a whole, need God's Word in order to grow up and become like Jesus.)

Think for a moment of our weekly worship service. Can you think of two main ways that we are “fed” God's Word?

(Divide the class into two groups and assign each group one of the following to look up **1 Timothy 4:13** and **2 Timothy 4:2**. Choose a student from each group to read the verse at the appropriate time.)

1 Timothy 4:13—Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, to teaching.

- ? *According to this verse, there is something that Jesus' church is supposed to devote itself to doing—something that we are to do in public, meaning we are to do it in front of the whole church when it gathers together? What is the first thing this verse mentions? [reading of Scripture]*

Why should the Bible be read out loud in front of the whole church when we meet together? (Allow the students to respond.)

- The Bible is the God-breathed Word of God. God speaks to His people through the words of the Bible. So, when the Bible is read in the worship service, it is God speaking to us.
- God's Word is powerful and has the ability to change our minds and hearts in order that we become more like Jesus.
- God's Word is necessary for people to come to faith in Jesus (Romans 10:17).

2 Timothy 4:2—preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching.

- ? *What does it mean to “preach” the word? (Allow a few responses.)*

(Explain that the word “preach” means to proclaim and explain something. It means to proclaim and explain the Word of God—not simply read it. This is usually done through something we call the sermon.)

- ? *Why is the sermon an important part of our weekly worship service? How is it meant to help us?*

Plate, large healthy food item

(Have a student come up front and hand him a **plate**. Next, place the **large healthy food item** on the plate. Point out that this food is good for a strong, healthy body.)

But would your mother serve you the food like this, as one giant portion? Why not? What would be a better way to serve it?

(Point out that as good as this food is, you can't swallow it as one big piece. It is meant to be served a little at a time so that you are able to chew and swallow it. It is meant to be cut up in bite-size portions.)

This illustration can help us understand what a pastor does when he preaches a sermon. He takes a small portion of God's Word and “serves” it to us for our nourishment. Preaching is meant to give us the right kind of food for growing as a Christian. It is training and equipping us for the Christian life.

(Quickly read **2 Timothy 3:15-17** to the class.)

2 Timothy 3:15-17—...from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. ¹⁶All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, ¹⁷that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

The Church Gathers to Worship visual

(Remove the next **Church Worship Strip** to reveal the words “Read & Preach God's Word” on the **The Church Gathers to Worship** visual.)

Suppose your mom provides you with a plate full of wonderful, delicious, and healthy foods for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. At each meal, you pick at the food and move it around on your plate, but you don't eat any of it. Will the food help you? Why not?

The same thing can happen when people sit in a weekly worship service. God's true and powerful Word can be read. A pastor can preach God's Word—giving us good food from God's Word—that can help us to grow, but if we don't take and eat it, will it help us? How could you take and "eat" God's Word when it is read and preached? (Allow a few responses and tell the students that they can discuss this question further in their small group time.)

(Briefly summarize the main ideas of the lesson.)

- God's people are to gather together on a regular basis to worship God.
- The weekly worship service is the most important gathering of God's people.
- The Bible should be read and preached from during the weekly gathering.
- The Bible is necessary for coming to salvation and for Christian growth.
- The preaching of God's Word provides God's people with spiritual food for growing in the Christian life.

Small Group Application

Choose one or more of the following suggestions for interacting with the students during this time.

- **Workbook**—Have the students write in the words "read" and "preached" on the lines above the open Bible. Then, read and talk about the verses listed toward the top of the second page: Matthew 4:4; Romans 15:4; Romans 10:17; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; Psalm 119:11; Hebrews 4:12. *How does the reading of God's Word when we gather together encourage us to see God's Word as precious, important, powerful, etc.? In what ways does the preaching of God's Word train a person for righteousness and serve to equip us? Do you pay attention when God's Word is read in church? Do you pay attention when God's Word is preached? Why or why not? What might hinder you? Is there a way that you could grow in being more attentive? Have the students use the Key to fill in the missing letters for the four steps. [1 = listen; 2 = write down; 3 = think; 4 = respond] Talk about the four steps and encourage the students to do these in the coming weeks.*
- **Pastors Have an Important Role in Nourishing Us with God's Word**—Read and talk about portions of Ephesians 4:11-16. *Why did Jesus give His church pastors and teachers? How do pastors use the Word of Truth (the Bible) to "equip" us and help us to grow? Can you think of an example of something from a recent sermon—something the pastor said and explained that helped you? How does he help us to have more "knowledge of the Son" (Jesus). If the church is working properly, what should it look and act like? Why is the reading of the Bible and preaching the Bible necessary for this to happen? Review 2 Timothy 3:15-17 and the other verses listed on the left side of the workbook page. (Also, compare a steady diet of junk food to that of healthy food. What will be the difference in a person's well-being?)*
- **Christians Are to Long for and Feed on God's Word**—Review 1 Peter 2:2. Point out that young babies crave milk. That's all they want to eat. They want it often and will drink until they are full. Ask the students to think about their own "spiritual diet." *Do they crave spiritual food? How would this be shown in a person's life? How would this be demonstrated during the weekly worship service? During the sermon, do you really*

listen, think about, and respond to the message? What can distract us from doing this? Are there things that you can do to help you listen better? How could you prepare your heart for hearing and responding to God's Word being read and preached?

- **Hearing the Reading and Preaching of God's Word is Good for Children, Too**—Read and talk about Paul's words to Timothy from 2 Timothy 3:14-15, "But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it ¹⁵and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus." *When did Timothy first become acquainted with the Bible? Why is it a good thing to hear, listen to, read, and be taught from the Bible at a young age? Are sermons just good for grownups? Are there ways even children can benefit from a sermon even if they don't understand everything being said?*
- **Preaching Is to Be Based on the Truth of Scripture, the Foundation Laid by the Apostles and Prophets**—Point out that a pastor is a man called by Jesus and empowered by the Holy Spirit to "shepherd" the flock of Jesus—meaning he is to care for and "feed" the members of Jesus' local church spiritual food from the Bible. The pastor is not to preach his own ideas or words, but the words of Jesus. All that a pastor preaches must be compared to the Bible. The Bible is the highest authority and has the final say about what is true and right.
- **Tips for Paying Attention to the Sermon**—Encourage the students to bring paper and something to write with when they attend the next worship service. Tell them to try to listen very carefully to the sermon. What is the main verse or verses that the pastor is preaching from? What key words does the pastor use? Is there a word or phrase that he repeats often? Instruct them to write these down even if they can't spell them correctly. Does the pastor use a picture illustration to help you understand something from the Bible? Draw a simple picture of this. Did you learn something new about God? Did the pastor challenge you to think about doing something in response to God's Word?

Optional Activities

1. Interview Your Church's Preaching Pastor

- Prepare a few questions and encourage the students to ask their own questions. For example: How long does it take to prepare a sermon? How do you decide what part/s of the Bible you are going to preach on? How did you learn to preach God's Word?

2. My Church Notebook

- Provide each student with a *My Church Notebook* (Volume 1 or 2 from Truth78.org) and talk about the benefits of taking sermon notes. Show them how to use the notebooks.

3. I Will Build My Church Buttons

- Give the students the opportunity to work on the requirements to earn the I Will Build My Church Buttons, helping when needed.

Send Home

- Parent Page for Lesson 9 (for each student)



God's People Gather to Hear the Word

MAIN IDEAS

- The Bible is necessary for Christian growth.
- Scripture should be read when God's people gather together to worship.
- The preaching of God's Word provides God's people with spiritual food for growing in the Christian life.

MEMORY WORK

*I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth,
and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,*

*who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried.*

The third day he rose from the dead.

He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.

From thence he shall come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,

—from the Apostles' Creed

SCRIPTURE

- | | | |
|-------------------|-------------------|----------------------|
| 1) Ephesians 4:15 | 3) 1 Timothy 4:13 | 5) 2 Timothy 3:15-17 |
| 2) 1 Peter 2:2 | 4) 2 Timothy 4:2 | |

HERE'S WHAT TO DO NEXT

On the next page, write in the words “read” and “preached” on the lines above the open Bible. Look up and read the verses listed. Then use the Key to fill in the missing letters.

Think About It: How does the reading of God's Word when we gather together encourage us to see the Bible as precious, important, powerful, and good? Why is it a good thing to hear, listen to, read, and be taught from the Bible at a young age? In what ways can a child benefit from a sermon even if you don't understand everything being said? Can you think of an example from a recent sermon in which the pastor said something that really helped you? Did you act upon it and put God's Word into practice in your life?

God's Word is and _____

Matthew 4:4 Romans 15:4 Romans 10:17 2 Timothy 3:15-17 Psalm 119:11 Hebrews 4:12



KEY

+	✂	≡	☁	☁
E	I	O	N	T

1. L__S_____
✂ ☁ + ☁

CAREFULLY

2. WR____D__W_____
✂ ☁ + ≡ ☁

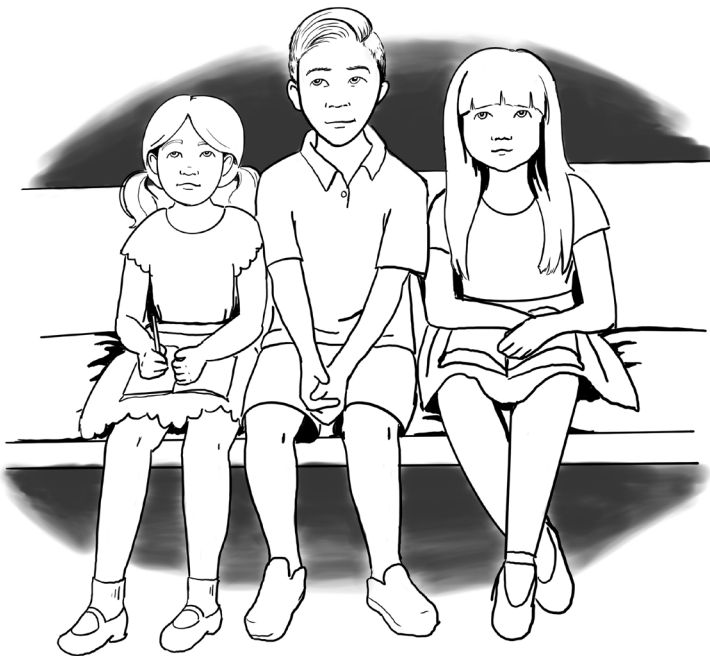
IMPORTANT WORDS

3. __H__K ABOUT
☁ ✂ ☁

THE MESSAGE

4. R__SP____D TO
+ ≡ ☁

GOD'S WORD



God's People Gather Together to...

 1. Worship God

 2. Love One Another

 3. Proclaim the
Gospel to the Lost

The Church Gathers to...

1. Worship God

Sing

**Read & Preach
God's Word**

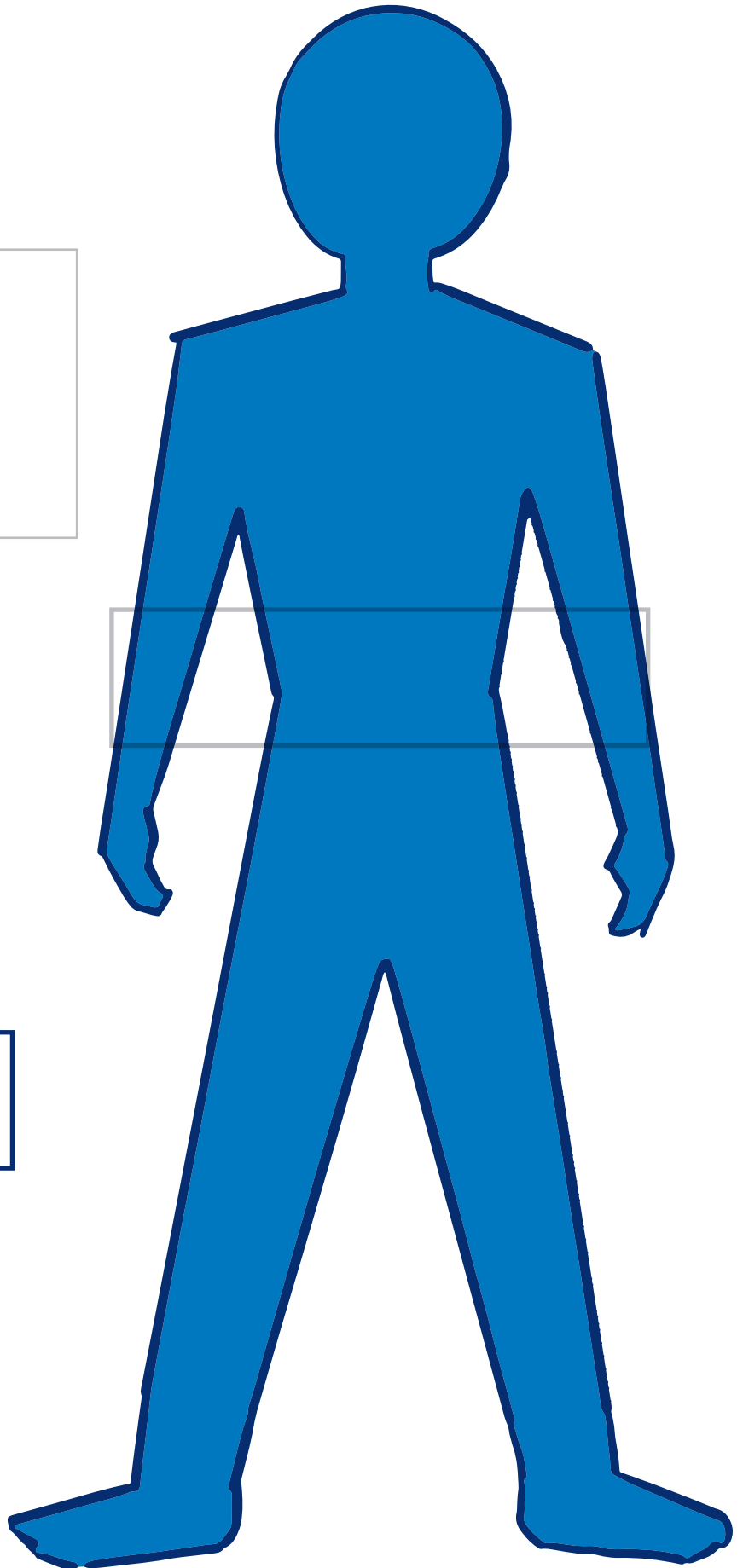
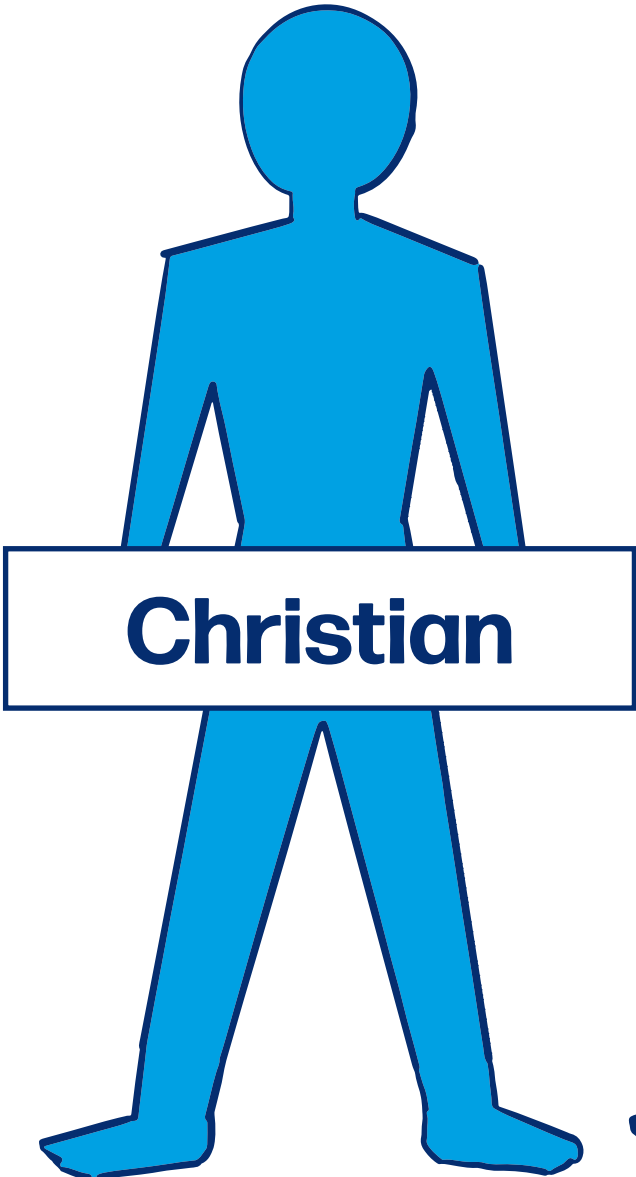
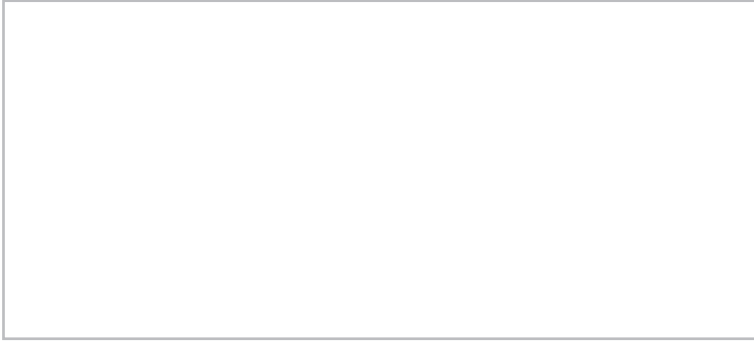
Pray

Baptize

The Lord's Supper

Give





Jesus

9I

God's Word



9L

Verse 1

**...we are to grow up in
every way into him...into
Christ.**

—Ephesians 4:15b

9J

Verse 2

**Like newborn infants,
long for the pure
spiritual milk, that by it
you may grow up into
salvation—**

—1 Peter 2:2

9K



Lesson 9

I Will Build My Church

God's People Gather to Hear the Word

MAIN IDEAS

- The Bible is necessary for Christian growth.
- Scripture should be read when God's people gather together to worship.
- The preaching of God's Word provides God's people with spiritual food for growing in the Christian life.

MEMORY WORK

*I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth,
and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,*

*who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried.*

The third day he rose from the dead.

He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.

From thence he shall come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,

(From the Apostles' Creed)

SCRIPTURE FOR THE LESSON

1) Ephesians 4:15b

3) 1 Timothy 4:13

5) 2 Timothy 3:15-17

2) 1 Peter 2:2

4) 2 Timothy 4:2

AS YOU WALK BY THE WAY

Read the verses listed above. Ask: *How does the reading of God's Word when we gather together encourage us to see God's Word as precious, important, powerful, etc.? In what ways does the preaching of God's Word train a person for righteousness and serve to equip us? During the sermon, do you really listen, think about, and respond to the message? What can distract us from doing this? Are there things that you can do to help you listen better? How could you prepare your heart for hearing and responding to God's Word being read and preached?*

Read Ephesians 4:11-16 and ask: *Can you think of an example of something from a recent sermon—something the pastor said and explained—that helped you? How does he help us to have more knowledge of Jesus? Why is the reading of the Bible and the preaching the Bible necessary for the church? Review 2 Timothy 3:15-17 and the other verses listed above. (Also, compare a steady diet of junk food to that of healthy food. What will be the difference in a person's well-being?)*

ACTIVITY

The next two times you are in the weekly worship service, use the next page to take notes on the sermon.

My Sermon Notes

What is the title of today's sermon?

What is the main verse or what are the main verses that the pastor is preaching from?

What key words does the pastor use?

Is there a word or phrase that he has repeated often?

Does the pastor use a picture illustration to help you understand something from the Bible? Draw a simple picture of this.

Did you learn something new about God?

Did the pastor challenge you to think about doing something in response to God's Word?

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