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# THE LOCAL CHURCH



## *What is the Church?*



### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To explain that the church is not just a building.
- To teach that Jesus is the Head and the believers are the Body.
- To motivate children to serve the Body of Christ.



### SCRIPTURE PORTIONS

Ephesians 1:22-23, 5:23-24; 1 Corinthians 12:17-27



### MEMORY VERSE

**1 Corinthians 12:27:** “Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.”



### RECAP

- What did we learn about last week?
- Recite the Memory Verse for last week.



## INTRODUCTION

The Bible uses the word ‘ekklesia’ to describe the church. Ekklesia literally means the “called out ones.” So the church, according to the Bible, is a body of believers who have been called out from the world by God to live as His people under the authority of Jesus Christ (Ephesians 1:22-23). Over the following weeks we will find out more about why God wanted us to have a church and what our role in it should be.

### Note to Facilitator

In Lesson 1 we have covered different aspects of the Church of Christ:

- **Primary Level:** Church as the Body of Christ.
- **Junior Level:** Church as the Family of God.
- **Senior Level:** Church as the Bride of Christ.



## ATTENTION GETTER

### Head and Hands

Ask for a volunteer and have her fold her hands behind her back. Request another shorter child to stand behind the volunteer and act as her hands. The shorter of the two stands behind and thrusts her arms forward under her companion’s armpits. This will make it look as though the hands of the back person really belong to the front person.

Have the front person use her ‘hands’ for different tasks:

- Pick up a book and hand it to the teacher.
- Shake hands with other students.
- Drink water from a glass, etc.

Ask the other children to observe whether the front person performs all the tasks given to her efficiently or not.

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## Explain

'X' (the front person) wanted to do many things, but she had to depend on her hands to get the job done. Sometimes her hands cooperated with her and helped her do a good job. But at other times her hands let her down. Keep this object lesson in mind even as we study about the church today.



## TEACHING CONTENT

The Student Workbook contains three pictures of a 'church.' Ask the children for the picture which correctly shows what a church is.

## Explain

According to the Bible, the 'Church' is NOT the building where people meet on Sundays. Rather 'Church' is the community of believers who have accepted Jesus as Lord and Saviour.

In the first picture we see a church-building. The building is called a 'church,' but in reality it's the believers who gather inside this building who should be called the 'church.'

In the second picture we see a small group of believers worshipping in a home. They are not in a church-building. But we must call this group a 'church' too, because they have accepted Jesus as Lord and Savior and belong to His family.

In the third picture we see a group of friends having dinner together. All of them are believers and they attend different church-buildings on Sundays. They get together sometimes just to chat and share a meal; they don't conduct any kind of church service. But they too can be called the 'church' because they have been called out by Jesus to follow Him.

In other words, the 'church' is basically all the believers on this earth who have chosen to follow Jesus. Together they make up the 'Church'

of Jesus Christ. They are God's church even during the week, when they are at school studying or at home having dinner. So the church is not a building; it is the people of God.

Let us now look at various Bible verses that describe the church in greater detail.

### **Discuss**

#### **How is the church described in Ephesians 5:23?**

As the Body of Christ.

#### **How is Christ described in Ephesians 5:23?**

As the Head of the Body.

#### **According to Ephesians 5:24 what should the church do?**

Submit to Christ.

#### **In the human body, does the brain control the body? Or does the body control the brain?**

The brain controls the body. It orders the legs to stop when there is danger. It orders the fingers to pick up food during a meal. It's always the brain that gives orders to the whole body.

#### **If the Bible compares the church to a human body and declares Jesus to be the head, who should be in control? Should we submit to Jesus or should Jesus submit to us?**

The body must always listen to the head. This is why Ephesians 5:24 says that the church must submit to Christ.

#### **How does 1 Corinthians 12:27 describe us?**

We are the body of Christ, and each one of us is a part of it.

#### **According to 1 Corinthians 12:17-20 why has God made us different from one another? Why can one person sing well but another can't?**

Just as the human body has different parts, all of which look different, the body of Christ too has many different parts. Not all believers are alike. We are all different from one another.

This difference is necessary for the body to function properly. For instance, if your body was covered with eyes, and you didn't have any hands and legs, would you be able to function? How would you be able to think if you had no brain? How would you breathe if you had no nose? How would you eat if you had no mouth? How would you manage if you had only lots of eyes and nothing else? You wouldn't be able to survive. You'd die! But in His great wisdom, God has given you just two eyes and a lot of other useful organs.

In the same way, in the body of Christ different people have been made differently. Some become worship leaders with beautiful voices and great skill in playing musical instruments. Some have the ability to show deep love and concern for others and be a great blessing to them. Some have the ability to get jobs done in a neat and organised way, and they are all of great help to the rest of the church.

But if God had made everyone exactly alike, giving everyone a lovely voice, then what about all the other talents that are needed to serve God? Who will share the Gospel with school friends? Singing beautifully alone cannot bring your friend to Christ! And who will present Gospel skits? A person who cannot act but can only sing will not be useful in a skit! God has made us different so that each of us can play a different role in the body of Christ. All of us are different, so that the church can benefit from all our different abilities and talents.

**According to 1 Corinthians 12:25-26 how should we treat each other?**

We must treat each other with love and concern. We must not fight with one another or be jealous. Rather we should be united and willing to help.

In the human body if the leg gets hurt, the hands immediately go to it, to help it in any way possible. The hands show deep concern for the leg, even though the leg is very different from them. In the same way, in the body of Christ, we too must have deep love and concern for others. If we see someone hurting or in need, we must immediately reach out to help them.



## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

**Note:** *All discussion questions must be answered by the children, and NOT by the teacher. The guidelines given here are only meant to assist the teacher during the discussion.*

### **Do we always have to submit to Jesus? What if He asks us to do something that we hate?**

In the human body, the body always trusts the brain and listens to it—even when it is inconvenient or unpleasant. For example, let’s assume that you pick up a glass of your favourite hot chocolate and your brain immediately commands you to drop it. Will your hand hesitate to obey? Will it argue and say, “I don’t want to drop the glass because I love hot chocolate.” Or will it argue, “It’s all very well for you to ask me to drop this glass. But I’m the one who has to clean up the mess when it splatters all over the floor. Is it fair on your part to put me through so much inconvenience?”

But in reality your hand will not argue with your head. The hand will immediately drop the glass without asking any questions. It’s only many seconds later that you will even begin to realise that the glass was scorching hot and would have badly burnt your palm. Your body obeys your brain in a micro-second. The obedience is immediate.

This is the kind of obedience that Jesus expects from His body, from all of us. He doesn’t want us to argue when He requests us to do something. He doesn’t want us to sulk or complain that He is being too strict or unfair.

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In the example we used earlier, the only reason why your head asked the hand to drop the glass is because it was too hot. Your head wasn't trying to deprive you of your favourite drink. Your head wasn't trying to make your life extra difficult by giving you extra cleaning chores. Rather your head was trying to protect your hand from getting severely burnt. The head always does only what's best for the body.

In the same way, Jesus always does only what's best for His body of believers. He will never ask us to do something just to make life unpleasant for us. So we must be willing to obey Him cheerfully even if He asks us to do something that feels unpleasant. We must be willing to obey Him by honouring our parents, even when we find this unpleasant. We must be willing to study sincerely even if we hate doing it. We must do all these things because the head alone knows what's best for the body. Jesus alone knows what's best for us.

### **To what extent must I love the believers in the Body of Christ? Should I show love even to someone who treats me in a rude and unchristian manner? Why?**

Let's assume that you run carelessly down a slope and fall and hurt yourself badly. Let's assume that the skin gets scraped right off your knees. Will your hands argue and say, "Legs, you are so irresponsible and careless. So I refuse to help you. Continue to bleed for I don't care!" No! Your hands will immediately reach out to your knees, to attend to the wounds.

It's the same with the irresponsible members of the Body of Christ. They are immature and shallow, and go about hurting people as they wish. But because they belong to the same body, Jesus the Head expects us to show these people the same level of love and concern.

Your hands show unconditional love for your legs even when they are irresponsible. You need to show the same unconditional love to other believers even when they are irresponsible or hurtful. In His perfect time, Jesus will discipline them and change them. Until then He expects us to continue loving them.

**In a church who do you think is more important? The person who can recite the maximum memory verses or the person who is scared to even walk onto the stage? Why?**

Different people have different talents. But irrespective of how talented a person is, all are equal in the body of Christ.

For instance, in the human body, it would be foolish to say that the eyes are more important than the lips. The eyes work hard, and they work continuously. On the other hand, lips barely do anything; they just sit there on the face. But nobody ever says that the eyes are more important than the lips—because the lips have their own function. They may not work continuously like the eyes; but they help a person hold food and get it into the mouth. It would be foolish to say that the eyes are more important simply because they do more work than the lips.

In the same way, some people in the body of Christ seem to have a lot of functions. With multiple talents they're almost always on stage, preaching, singing, acting or miming. They're like the busy eyes. On the other hand someone else in the body of Christ may have only limited functions, like the lips. But they too are equally important because God has a special role even for them.

So it is important to remember that all are equal in the body of Christ, irrespective of their talents. If a person has only one talent, and they sincerely use it to serve God, they will be rewarded in heaven just as greatly as the multi-talented person on the stage.

**Is it necessary for all believers to serve God? Why can't we just leave this task to the more talented people?**

Each organ of the human body has a talent and a task. The skin on a person can't talk, smell, pump oxygen or digest food. It can do only one single thing—to cover your internal organs and protect them from infection. What would happen if the skin decided that it's not talented enough to be useful? What if your skin decided that the

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other organs could take care of you much better and decided to go away? You will probably die in a few minutes with no skin!

God depends on each of us to serve Him in one way or another. If you neglect the little role given to you, the overall damage may be quite great. In the object lesson we did today, the front person depended on the “hands” to do so many tasks. Whenever the “hands” didn’t cooperate, the front person couldn’t get the job done. In the same way, today we are God’s hands and legs. If we don’t take our role in the Body of Christ seriously, we will delay the work of building God’s Kingdom.



### APPLICATION

What are some things that you hate to do in spite of knowing God expects you to do them? Choose to submit to the Lord in these areas, because the Head only asks us to do what is best for the body. Jesus asks difficult things of you sometimes, only because He wants the best for you.

Also think of some concrete ways in which you can be more loving or helpful to the body of Christ. Think of specific persons that you can help during the week. Do it as though you are serving Christ, because you are serving His body.

Finally think about what you can do for God now. Maybe when you grow up, God will use you to save a thousand lost souls; but what does God want you to do today? What is your role in the Body of Christ today? Take a few minutes to think about this. Pray about this and allow God to show you how you can serve the Body of Christ better. Make a commitment to do this now onwards.

Don’t sit passively in Children’s Church simply because your parents force you to attend. You are a part of the Body of Christ. Start playing your role in this body.

### **Note to Facilitator**

If children begin to consciously serve God today, there is a greater chance that they will not simply warm the church seat when they grow up. So create opportunities for the students in the Children's Church to serve God. Help them to discover little ways in which they too can serve the Body of Christ. This will equip them for the future, so that they may fulfill God's purposes for their lives.

Especially make an effort to draw out those non-participating children who believe they have no talents and are not useful to the Lord. Help them take pride in serving Him in little ways. As a facilitator, you are responsible for building and equipping the next generation of church leaders. Lesson 3 contains more details regarding this.



**CLOSE WITH PRAYER**





## *Why Did God Make the Church?*



### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To explain that one main purpose of the church-service is to instruct us in godly living.
- To teach that Jesus wanted the church to be like a town on a hill.



### SCRIPTURE PORTIONS

Acts 2:42; Matthew 5:14-16; Titus 2:11-12, 15



### MEMORY VERSE

**Acts 2:42:** “They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.”

**Materials Needed:** Colour pencils (light colors)



## RECAP

- What did we learn about last week?
- In the Church of Christ, who is the Head and who is the Body?
- How did you serve the Body of Christ this week? (*Ask for examples*)
- Recite the Memory Verse for last week.



## INTRODUCTION

There are a lot of different reasons why people go to church. Some go to church because they are in need of help. Some go because they feel lost and need guidance in their lives. Most people go only on special occasions such as Christmas and Easter. However God established the local church as a place where people could gather to worship, fellowship with other believers and grow in the word of God. Today we will look at one of the main reasons why God created the church and why we should actively participate in it.

### Note to Facilitator

Lesson 2 covers different aspects of God's Purpose for the Church:

- **Primary Level:** We attend Church to learn Godly Living.
- **Junior Level:** We attend Church to Worship and Pray.
- **Senior Level:** We attend Church for Fellowship and to learn from the Word.

We also attend Church to participate in the Sacraments and to Equip Ourselves for Ministry. These aspects will be covered in future lessons.



## ATTENTION GETTER

### Worksheet: Why I attend Children's Church

The Student Workbook has text bubbles with different reasons why we attend church. Ask the children to colour only those bubbles that are true of them. Assure the children that there are no right or wrong answers and it is okay to colour any of the bubbles. In case there are additional reasons why they attend Children's Church, ask them to write down these as well in the space provided.



## TEACHING CONTENT

There are so many different reasons why people attend church. However, Acts 2:42 lays out the main reasons why God wants us to attend church.

### **Read Acts 2:42 and list down the reasons why we should attend church.**

- To listen to the teaching of God's word and practice it.
- To have fellowship with other believers.
- To participate in the Lord's Communion.
- To pray for believers and for those who haven't yet been saved.

One of the main reasons why we attend church is to learn from the teaching of God's Word and grow in godliness. While living on this earth, Jesus explained that His followers are like a town on a hill.

### **Read Matthew 5:14. Why do you think Jesus compared His church to a town on a hill? What lesson was He trying to teach?**

*(Ask the children to write down their opinions. Some of them may be already familiar with the concept of believers being the light of the world.)*

Look at the picture of the "Two Towns" in the Student Workbook. If you were standing many kilometers away from the hill, which town do you think you will be able to see? The little town in the valley or

the town on the hill? (The town on the hill would be visible from even a great distance. Everyone would be able to see it because it's sitting high up on a hill.)

This picture helps us understand what Jesus meant when He referred to the church as a town on a hill. The same way the town on the hill stands out high above everyone, we too are meant to stand high above everyone so that all can see us.

The second picture is of Leena and Ravi. They study in the fourth standard.

- During exams, Leena copies and cheats just like some of the other students, even though she is a Christian. Many of the students know that she cheats, but nobody has informed the teacher about it. So Leena is very happy about this.
- Ravi is happy too. But he is happy for a different reason. One of his friends asked him to show an answer during the Math's exam, and he refused. Why? Because he is a Christian and doesn't believe in participating in copying. His friend was very upset and said after the exam, "I didn't ask you to copy did I? I'm the one doing the copying. You just had to show me your paper. Why didn't you? What kind of a friend are you?" After this incident, Ravi's friends wouldn't talk to him anymore; he felt very lonely. In fact he had to eat alone at lunch time every day! But he is happy that he honored Jesus by not sinning. He says, "Jesus died on the cross to forgive my sins. How can I betray him?" Everybody in the class is now talking about what Ravi did and how he lost his friends.

**Who do you think is like the town on the hill? Leena or Ravi? Explain why.**

Everybody can see Ravi because he is *different*. He is like a town on a hill—high above the others and very different from them. He doesn't compromise the truth like everybody else. So everybody notices him.

And though they may not say anything to him, many of them secretly admire him for having the guts to stand up for what is right.

### **How is God glorified when we choose to be different and obey God?**

When we live differently, people are curious about us. They want to know *why* we are different. This gives us the opportunity to share about Jesus with them.

For instance, in the story, Ravi’s friends refused to talk to him for three whole weeks! They thought he would say ‘sorry’ and agree to copy if they pressurized him this way. But when Ravi refused to change, they became curious. They asked, “Why do you want to be different? Do you enjoy being friendless and alone? Do you enjoy making a fool of yourself?”

Ravi explained, “I hate being alone! I wish you would be friends with me again. But I can’t dishonour Jesus by copying. You see, He sacrificed His life on the cross to pay the price for my sins. So I can’t betray Him.” After this, Ravi’s friends gradually became more interested in Jesus and wanted to know more and more about Him. Ravi got back his friends and Jesus too was glorified!



### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

**Note:** *All discussion questions must be answered by the children, and NOT by the teacher. The guidelines given here are only meant to assist the teacher during the discussion.*

**Why do you think Ravi was so faithful to God? Do you think he was born more spiritual than others—the same way some children are born fairer than others?**

Ravi was not born with any supernatural ability to serve God. He was born just like Leena. But Ravi decided early in life that he would attend church regularly and pay full attention to everything taught

in the Sunday class. And he made up his mind that he would put into practice all that he learnt.

Attending Children’s Church helped Ravi learn what God expects from us. Many children think it is okay to copy and that God will understand. But because Ravi attended Children’s Church, he was clearly taught what is okay and what isn’t. When we attend church, we are able to learn what God expects from us, and this helps us live more faithfully.

**Titus 2:11-12, 15: For the grace of God ... has appeared ... It teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age ... These, then, are the things you should teach ...”**

**According to these verses, what did Paul ask Titus to do in the church?**

Paul asked Titus to teach the church how to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly desires. He asked him to teach believers how to exercise self-control so that they wouldn’t sin. Titus taught people how to live honest and godly lives in this world.

**Why must we attend church regularly? Can you suggest one main reason?**

In church we learn how to live godly lives and honour the Lord. In the Early Church, believers gathered together every week to listen to the teaching of God’s word and practice it (Acts 2:42). We must do the same.



### APPLICATION

Reflect on Jesus’ teaching about the town on the hill. Are you behaving in school like the town on the hill? Are you different from others? Do you stand up for Jesus by doing what is right? Or are you doing sinful things just like everybody else?

Is God convicting you of any sinful thoughts, words or actions? If so, repent and make a commitment to stand up for the Lord. Choose to do right even if it means people will notice you and point fingers at you. As part of God's church, you are expected to be like a town on a hill.

Also ask yourself what your general attitude towards attending Church is. Do you attend because your parents force you to? Or do you attend so that you can learn how to be more godly and grow in God? If you attend with a genuine desire to learn, you will see God changing your life for the better.



**CLOSE WITH PRAYER**



# THE LOCAL CHURCH



## *Equipping the Saints*



### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To show how God equipped Samuel for ministry.
- To motivate us to have the same attitude as Samuel in serving God.
- To encourage the children to serve in church and at school.



### SCRIPTURE PORTIONS

Ephesians 4:11-12; 1 Samuel 1:11, 26, 3:19-20, 9:9; Luke 16:10



### MEMORY VERSE

**Luke 16:10:** “Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much.”



## RECAP

- What did we learn about last week?
- What did Jesus mean when He said believers are like a town on a hill?
- This week did you stand up for Jesus by doing what is right? Give examples.
- Recite the Memory Verse for last week.



## INTRODUCTION

Ephesians 4:11-12 says that it is the duty of pastors and teachers to equip 'all' the believers to do ministry. It's NOT the pastor's duty to do ministry. This is a responsibility given to the congregation. The sole task of the pastors and teachers is to equip the rest of the believers to do ministry effectively. This week we will discuss why and how children must equip themselves to do the work of God.

### Note to Facilitator

Lesson 3 explains that God expects every child to be a full-time minister of God:

- **Primary Level:** God equipped Samuel from childhood for ministry.
- **Junior Level:** Equipping for Ministry involves service and servant hood.
- **Senior Level:** Every child is a Full-time Minister of God in the Seven Fields of Society.



## ATTENTION GETTER

### Who is He?

The Student Workbook contains a picture-story. Ask the children to guess who the story is about. Then use the

pictures to narrate the story as given here in this Guide. The narration given here contains details that may not usually be mentioned in the children's story. So please follow the narration provided here.



## TEACHING CONTENT

### **Samuel's Ministry**

Most of you are familiar with the story of Samuel. You may remember that Samuel's mother was a woman named Hannah. She wanted a son more than anything, so she prayed and asked God to give her a son (Picture 1 in Workbook). She promised God that if He would give her a son, she would give him back to the Lord to serve Him all the days of his life. God gave Hannah the son she asked for and she kept her promise to God (Picture 2 in Workbook).

Hannah dedicated her son as a 'Nazirite.' This means that he would serve God full-time and not hold any other secular job. In those days the Nazirites never cut their hair or had wine, to show everyone that they had dedicated their lives to God. So Hannah never cut her son's hair, just as she had promised in 1 Samuel 1:11. Then later when the boy was around three years old she took him to Shiloh and presented him to Eli the priest (Picture 3 in Workbook).

Hannah left little Samuel with Eli, and went home to Ramah. Eli loved the boy, and fitted him with a little linen ephod, like the one he himself wore, thus indicating that the child's service in the Tabernacle had official sanction. After that, every year Hannah made a robe for Samuel and when her family came to offer sacrifices she gave Samuel the new robe she made. This indicates that the boy grew up rapidly, since a new and larger coat was necessary every year.

1 Samuel 1:26 explains that the child Samuel grew before the Lord, not only physically but also spiritually, in favor with the Lord and also with men. Eli had become extremely overweight, and almost blind. And his unfaithful sons had no love for God. So Samuel must

have shouldered most of the physical workload, and he did it willingly without grumbling (Picture 4 in Workbook).

It was quiet in the Tabernacle and often as Samuel dusted the beautiful gold and silver vessels on the altar and swept the floor clean he thought of God, whose house it was. He loved cleaning and filling the seven branched lamps with oil. They were shaped like big candle-sticks, and when each tiny lamp in them was lit, they looked like wonderful great flowers with lights for blossoms in the dark Tabernacle. He collected wood for the sacrifices, swept and dusted and polished; this was his daily routine.

Samuel's duties were dull and boring, you may think, but in doing them properly, Samuel was pleasing God as much as a king on his throne. This is why 1 Samuel 1:26 specifically says that Samuel grew in favour with God and man.

At night Samuel closed the doors of the Tabernacle, put down his mattress on the floor and went straight off to sleep, while the light on the altar shone in the darkness. Samuel would sleep all night without waking up until the morning.

One night Samuel closed the Tabernacle doors as usual, lit the lamp, and then went to bed. Just at the dawn of the day, before the light which burned all night in the golden lamp was put out, Samuel heard a voice calling his name. He thought that Eli wanted him, and, like an obedient child, he ran to the aged priest and said, "Here am I!" Samuel's quick and unquestioned obedience is impressive. He thought it was Eli calling him. But after the first two times, when Eli said he had not called Samuel, it would have been quite natural for young Samuel to think: "There is no one else here. The poor old man must be calling out in his sleep, without realising it. No need for me to respond anymore."

But Samuel did not do this. Even when the third call came, he obeyed instantly. He once more left his warm and comfortable bed, and ran to Eli, saying, "Here am I!" And this is when he got the most

important instruction of his life, which resulted in his becoming, that very night, a Prophet of the Most High God. Eli told Samuel that if he heard the voice again, he was to respond. This is when he learned to say to the Lord: “Speak, for thy servant heareth!” Let us also learn this lesson. We, too, are called of God. We are called to a High Calling. Upon hearing the call, our instant response should be: “Speak, for thy servant heareth!” (Picture 5 in Workbook)

Some people think that God only calls grown-ups. But Samuel was just a young boy when God called him; and he went on to be a great prophet and leader of God’s people. You don’t need to wait until you are older to serve God—you just need to be willing to listen and to serve. God can do great things through you just as He did through Samuel. God knows your name just as He knew the name of Samuel and God still calls boys and girls today saying, “Come, follow me.” So, listen for God’s call and answer just as Samuel did, “Here I am!”



## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

**Note:** *All discussion questions must be answered by the children, and NOT by the teacher. The guidelines given here are only meant to assist the teacher during the discussion.*

**What kind of work did Eli give Samuel in the tabernacle? Was he asked to do things that made him famous?**

Most people who came to the tabernacle probably never even noticed Samuel at first. He was just the helper who filled oil in the lamps, swept the floor, dusted and polished the articles in the tabernacle and collected wood for the sacrifices. Nobody praised him or talked about him in the town. But he did his work sincerely even though nobody saw him. He didn’t work to get praise or fame. He did his work as a service to honour God.

**Why do you think Samuel got up a third time and went to Eli after the priest denied calling him the first two times? What**

**does this show us about Samuel's character?**

This incident shows us what a loving heart Samuel had! Eli was a very old man who could barely see. So Samuel wanted to make sure that Eli wasn't calling out for help. He didn't mind getting up any number of times because Eli would be helpless in the darkness of night time.

**Read Luke 16:10. Based on this verse, why do you think God appointed Samuel as Judge and Prophet over the whole of Israel?**

God must have daily observed Samuel's love and willingness to serve Eli. After watching him the Lord must have thought, "I asked this boy to serve Eli, and he has done it with his whole heart, showing hard work, love and loyalty. Next if I ask him to serve the whole of Israel, he will serve Israel too with same level of hard work, love and loyalty." Because Samuel was faithful in little things like dusting and cleaning, God put him in charge of bigger, more difficult things.

**1 Samuel 3:19-20 describes Samuel when he was around 15 or 16 years of age. How did his life change? Why do you think it changed?**

In those days God was not speaking directly to anyone because the people had become so hard hearted and sinful. However because Samuel was so sincere in serving and obeying God, the Lord decided to speak to him directly. He began to share prophecies with Samuel about things that would happen in the future. Samuel would then share these things with the rest of the people.

The people soon noticed that whatever Samuel said always came true. This made them realise that God was really speaking to Samuel. They began to call him the 'seer' because he could see future events (1 Samuel 9:9). In this way Samuel became the most famous prophet in all of Israel.

God brought all these great changes into his life while he was still in his boyhood. This was because Samuel served God with all his heart.

If Samuel had not followed God sincerely, the Lord wouldn't have made him into a great prophet while he was still a teenager.

**What are some ways we can serve God in Children's Church, in school, and in our neighborhoods? Give a list of things we can do.**

**In Church:**

- Collect the offerings.
- Do the Scripture Reading during Children's Church.
- Give to God from your pocket-money.
- Lead the Opening prayer in Children's Church.
- Lead the Closing Prayer in Children's Church.
- Pray for the Offertory.
- Share personal testimonies in Children's Church.

**In School:**

- Pray for a friend at school, sit with them in school and pray a three sentence prayer.
- Share gospel with non-Christian friends at school.
- Share personal testimonies with non-Christian friends at school.

**In Neighborhood:**

- Give a favorite toy to a beggar-child at the traffic lights.
- Invite a friend in your neighborhood to Children's Church.
- Pray for the sick in your neighborhood, sit with them and pray.

**What will we gain by doing these things?**

First, by doing these things we can show the Lord our gratitude for His sacrifice on the cross.

Second, when we are faithful in little things, God will promote us to bigger, more demanding responsibilities.

Third, while doing these little things we become ‘equipped’ to fulfill God’s big plan for our life.

**When Samuel served in the tabernacle faithfully, God made him Judge of the whole of Israel. If we serve faithfully in Children’s Church will God make us famous preachers or famous and successful people?**

God has a plan for each of our lives. When we serve Him faithfully in little things, He will equip us to become all that He has planned. But God has a different plan for each person. Please observe that God made Samuel a prophet; He didn’t make him a miracle worker. On the other hand God made Elijah a great miracle worker, David a great warrior, and Daniel a dream-solver. You will become what God has planned for you, and His plans for you are always good.



### APPLICATION

Over the last two weeks we have learnt that we believers are the Body of Christ. Christ needs our hands and legs to do the work of His kingdom. Are we willing to serve Him? Are we willing to hear His voice and obey? Make a commitment to serve the Lord in Children’s Church, in school and in your neighborhood. If you are faithful and sincere in little things, then God will place you in charge of bigger, more difficult things, in the days to come.

**Please Note:** In this lesson we have tried to convey the idea that faithfulness in ‘little’ things leads to ‘bigger’ things. However we are NOT saying that the ‘little’ things are of “inferior-status” and God will promote us to a “superior-status” if we are faithful. For example, helping with pack-up is NOT ‘inferior’ to performing miracles—as both tasks are being done to honour the Lord. Performing miracles is ‘bigger’ only in the sense that it requires a greater level of faith and submission, and is therefore a more ‘difficult’ role to take on.



### CLOSE WITH PRAYER





## ***Women in Ministry***



### **LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

- To show that God wants both men and women to participate in church ministry work.
- To discuss Biblical examples of women leaders in the church.
- To teach respect and submission towards the women leaders of the church.



### **SCRIPTURE PORTIONS**

Acts 21:8-15; Ephesians 4:11-12; Philippians 4:2-3; Romans 16:1-7; Joel 2:28; 1 Corinthians 14:34-35



### **MEMORY VERSE**

**Ephesians 4:11-12:** “So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up.”



## RECAP

- What did we learn about last week?
- Why do you think God chose Samuel instead of somebody else, to be Judge and Prophet over the whole of Israel?
- This week, in what way did you serve the Lord in your school or neighborhood?
- Recite the Memory Verse for last week.



## INTRODUCTION

In the first two weeks we received an introduction to the Church. We learnt that people make up the church rather than the building. And we looked at why God wants us to attend a church service every week.

Then last week, we began to look at God's perspective on ministry-work. We learnt that God expects all of us to serve Him, whether or not we are in full-time ministry. This week we will learn how important it is for girls and women to do ministry work too.

### Note to Facilitator

Lesson 4 mainly tries to explain the Biblical stand on women in church ministry:

- **Primary Level:** God appoints both men and women to church ministry.
- **Junior Level:** What Paul meant when he asked women to be silent in church.
- **Senior Level:** The Creation Order and Headship in the Church.



## ATTENTION GETTER

### Story of Agabus and Paul (Acts 21:8-15)

The Student Workbook contains a picture-story of Agabus. Use these pictures to narrate the story to the students.

Apostle Paul spent most of his days traveling from place to place preaching the Gospel. On one occasion he went to Caesarea to minister there. While he was staying at this place, God sent a prophet to Paul to give him a message (Picture 1 in Student Workbook). His name was Agabus and he came from Judea. Agabus took Paul's belt from Paul and tied up his own hands and feet (Picture 2 in Student Workbook). He told Paul that if he went to Jerusalem, then he would be tied up just like this. He said the Jews would tie him up and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.

The believers in the church of Caesarea immediately begged Paul not to go to Jerusalem because they didn't want Paul to go to prison (Picture 3 in Student Workbook). But Paul asked them, "Why are you crying and breaking my heart? I am ready to be bound. I will also die in Jerusalem for the name of Jesus" (Picture 4 in Student Workbook). When the believers realised they couldn't talk Paul out of going to Jerusalem, they finally said, "The Lord's will be done." Then Paul packed up his things, and the believers sent him off to Jerusalem with their prayers (Picture 5 in Student Workbook). In due time all the things that Agabus had prophesied came to pass.



## TEACHING CONTENT

Agabus was a prophet appointed by God to minister to the church. Today some Christians who have misunderstood the Bible say that only men should minister in church, and that women should not participate. We will now see what the Bible has to say on this subject.

Lead the children through various Scriptures that show the position of women in church ministry:

**Read Ephesians 4:11-12 and explain what Christ gave to the church.**

Verse 11: “It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers ...”

**Who is the church?**

All of us who have accepted Jesus as Lord and Saviour are the ‘church.’ We are the church. God has given us apostles, prophets, evangelists, etc.

**Why did Christ give apostles, prophets, etc. to the church?**

Jesus gave these people to us so that they could equip us. They teach us and train us on how to do ministry work in our schools, neighborhoods, etc.

**According to Acts 21:9 what was the role of Philip’s daughters in the early church?**

They were prophets.

**Who do you think appointed Agabus as a prophet according to Ephesians 4:11-12?**

Christ Himself appointed him.

**Based on Ephesians 4:11-12 who do you think appointed Philip’s daughters as prophets?**

Christ Himself appointed them.

**According to Joel 2:28 did God promise to pour out His Spirit on just the men, or on women as well?**

God promised to pour out His Spirit on both men and women. He promised that both would prophesy in the church.

**Based on these verses, can we say that Jesus Christ appoints both men and women to church ministry?**

Yes. It was the Lord who appointed both Agabus and Philip's daughters as prophets.

**According to Philippians 4:2-3, what position did Clement, Euodia and Syntyche hold in the church?**

All three were evangelists who preached the Gospel to people. Clement was a man while the other two were women.

**According to Romans 16:1, what position did Phoebe hold in the church?**

Paul refers to her as a 'deacon.' This was a leadership position in the church.

**According to Romans 16:3-5, what position did Priscilla hold in the church?**

Paul called her a co-worker along with her husband. This couple ran a church in their home. In fact the great apostle Apollos became a believer through their loving mentoring.

**According to Romans 16:7, what position did Junia hold in the church?**

Andronicus and Junia were apostles just like Paul. They preached the Gospel and established new churches in different cities and towns. While Andronicus was a man, Junia was a lady-apostle.



**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

***Note: All discussion questions must be answered by the children, and NOT by the teacher. The guidelines given here are only meant to assist the teacher during the discussion.***

**1 Corinthians 14:34-35 says that women should remain silent in church. Do you think this means women should not minister in church?**

We saw earlier that God appointed different women as prophets, evangelists, deacons and apostles. If these women had to stay silent in church, they could never have carried out the work given to them by God. How can a prophet prophesy in church without opening her mouth?

So these verses are not saying women shouldn't minister in church. Rather these verses teach that women should not argue over matters of doctrine during a church service and disrupt the service. Paul gave similar instructions to those speaking in tongues and prophesying who were disrupting the church service (1 Corinthians 14:26-33).

**In the examples we saw of women in the early church, do you think any of them were “church leaders”?**

Phoebe was a 'deacon' sent to Rome to represent the Cenchræan church. This is a clear indication that she was a leader in the church of Cenchræa. Paul gave Timothy many rules regarding what kind of persons should be appointed as 'deacons' because they occupied important leadership positions in the church.

**Based on these examples, can we say that God appoints women too as leaders?**

Yes, God appoints women too as leaders. Junia, especially, must have been a leader because she was an 'apostle'. Apostles were main leaders of the church, with direct authority from God to lead and guide church members. These examples prove that women leaders existed in the early church, and Paul accepted them as being appointed by God.



## APPLICATION

It is important for us to do the ministry work that God gives us. If the Lord appoints a woman as ‘deacon’ in the church, she must sincerely fulfill her leadership role. In the same way, if God calls upon a lady to pastor a church, she must obey Him by looking after that church.

Because God Himself has appointed these women, we should treat them with respect and submit to them, the same way we submit to the male leaders.

Can you think of any women in your church who are in leadership positions? They could be pastors, Sunday School teachers, administrative staff, etc. The Lord expects you to submit to them humbly “as unto the Lord.” Do it to honour the Lord who has appointed them.



## CLOSE WITH PRAYER



# THE LOCAL CHURCH



## *God's Message to the Churches*



### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To highlight the faithfulness of the churches of Philadelphia and Smyrna.
- To motivate children to serve the Lord faithfully “even to the point of death.”



### SCRIPTURE PORTIONS

Revelation 2:8-11, 3:7-13; 2 Thessalonians 2:15



### MEMORY VERSE

**Revelation 3:11:** “I am coming soon. Hold on to what you have, so that no one will take your crown.”



### RECAP

- What did we learn about last week?
- Why did Paul ask the Corinthian women to stay silent in the church?

- Does God appoint women too as church leaders?
- Recite the Memory Verse for last week.



## INTRODUCTION

Jesus gave John a message for seven churches in Asia Minor (Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea). These seven messages were given to strengthen the churches in John's day and throughout church history. Each of these messages includes information in relation to each church, and from these messages we can draw lessons applicable to our own lives today.

### Note to Facilitator

- Primary Level: Churches of Philadelphia and Smyrna.  
(Both these godly churches were being persecuted by the “Synagogue of Satan”)
- Junior Level: Churches of Ephesus and Sardis (Two levels of ‘Backslidden-ness’)
- Senior Level: Churches of Laodicea, Pergamum and Thyatira (Danger of False Teachings)



## ATTENTION GETTER

### Polycarp of Smyrna

The Student Workbook has a Picture Story which can be used to narrate this historical event.

Smyrna was a large, important city on the western coast of Asia Minor, it was famous for its schools of medicine and science. The world watched this important city with great interest because it produced great scientists and doctors.

God's eyes too were on this city. He closely watched over a group of people living in the city, observing them as they went about their

daily lives. These people weren't scientists or doctors; in fact many of them were not even educated. Very few of them had nice clothes or comfortable houses to live in.

Why do you think the Lord watched over these unimportant, insignificant people with such love and devotion? It's because when God looked at them, He didn't see poor people in patched-up old clothes but rich people in royal robes of white! In Revelation 2:9 God said to them, "You are rich." He saw them in this light because these poor people were gathering great riches for themselves in heaven. You should see their "bank accounts" in heaven! They are amazingly rich!

One of the church leaders at this time was a wonderful man named Polycarp. Polycarp couldn't afford a formal education; and so he was very insignificant in the eyes of the learned people of the city. However he had a deep knowledge of the things of God because he spent much time in the Lord's presence, allowing God to teach him from the Bible. Moreover he was personally discipled by John, who wrote the Gospel of John (Picture 1). As a result, Polycarp was strong in the faith and strong in his knowledge of the Bible.

In those days a false teaching called Gnosticism was trying to move into the church. Jesus called the gnostic Jews "the synagogue of Satan" (Revelation 2:9). These Gnostics taught that God had given a secret strange knowledge to a few select people, and only these few would enter heaven. The believers of the church of Smyrna strongly opposed these false teachers and boldly proclaimed the true Gospel that salvation is for everyone who accepts Jesus as Lord and Saviour.

On one occasion, when Polycarp visited Rome, he was met by Marcion, a Gnostic false teacher. Rather than get frightened by him, Polycarp openly called this false teacher "the first born of Satan" (Picture 2). Marcion was extremely angry and the opposition against Polycarp increased. In spite of the danger to his life, Polycarp continued to

expose all the false teachers, helping many people to come out of Gnosticism and accept the true Gospel. The Lord guarded his life because He wanted Polycarp to preach to many more and bring them into God's kingdom.

Finally when Polycarp turned 86, the people who hated him were able to turn the Roman government against him. Friends of Polycarp who heard his life was in danger begged him to hide at an estate outside the city (Picture 3). Polycarp was unwilling to hide at first, but then finally agreed when well-wishers pressurised him. While staying at the estate, God spoke to Polycarp and informed him that he would be caught and burned at the stake. Polycarp was not at all scared or anxious, instead he felt honored that God was choosing him to be a martyr for Christ.

Roman soldiers finally discovered where Polycarp was and came to his door. When his friends urged him to run, Polycarp replied, "God's will be done," and he let the soldiers in (Picture 4). He was led to the local proconsul, Statius Quadratus, who questioned him in front of a crowd.

Polycarp peacefully began to share the Gospel with the nobles and crowd gathered there. Quadratus tried to prove that Polycarp was wrong in his beliefs, but Polycarp presented the Gospel so powerfully that the proconsul couldn't win the argument (Picture 5). Extremely angry, Quadratus threatened to roast Polycarp in the fire. Polycarp joked in response that while the proconsul's fire lasts but a little while, the fires of judgment "reserved for the ungodly," he added, cannot be quenched. Polycarp concluded, "But why do you delay? Come, do what you will."

The Jews who hated Polycarp eagerly hurried around arranging for the wood and fire to burn him. Soldiers then grabbed him to nail him to a stake, but Polycarp stopped them: "Leave me as I am. I won't run away even if you don't nail me down. My God will give me the strength to bear the fire without moving."

Polycarp prayed aloud as the fire was lit, and soon he was consumed by the flames (Picture 6). Many people heard of his martyrdom as the story spread far and wide, and many accepted Jesus as Lord. They decided they too wanted to serve the God whom Polycarp had so fearlessly served.



## TEACHING CONTENT

### Ask

**Why do you think Polycarp did not run away when the Lord warned him he would be burnt at the stake?**

*(Allow the children to voice their opinions.)*

### Explain

John was Jesus' youngest disciple. In his old age, John was banished to the island of Patmos for preaching the Gospel. While living there alone, Jesus appeared to him and instructed him to deliver messages to seven different churches.

In the message to the church of Smyrna, Jesus clearly explained that the believers of that city would be persecuted in the near future. Jesus said, "... I know about the slander of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan. Do not be afraid of what you are about to suffer. I tell you, the devil will put some of you in prison to test you, and you will suffer persecution ... Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you the crown of life" (Revelation 2:9-10).

In His message to Smyrna, Jesus clearly instructed believers to "Be faithful, even to the point of death." He promised that if they did so, He would give them "the crown of life." Because of this message from Jesus to the believers of Polycarp's church, he was ready for the persecution that followed. Polycarp knew beforehand that he would probably have to give up his life to stay faithful. So he didn't panic when the soldiers came for him; he was mentally prepared for it his whole life.

## Ask

**Read Revelation 3:8. Do you think the believers of the church at Philadelphia were as faithful as the believers of Smyrna?**

*(Allow the children to voice their opinions.)*

## Explain

The church of Smyrna and the church of Philadelphia were very similar. This church too was small in numbers, and was hardly known in the city. The congregation was not made up of the wealthy and important of the city. They had practically no financial resources, possessing no wealth or property. In this sense, they had little strength. Therefore Jesus said to this church, “I know that you have little strength” (Revelation 3:8).

However in spite of their ‘weak’ earthly status, these believers stood firmly for the Gospel and openly opposed the wrong teachings of the non-believing Jews. Just as in the case of the Smyrna church, Jesus referred to the opposing Jews as the “synagogue of Satan.”

Jesus promised the Philadelphian Christians that in spite of the opposition they were facing from the “synagogue of Satan,” God would make it possible for them to preach the Gospel to hundreds. He said He would open a door of opportunity for them that nobody—however strong—would be able to shut. In fact He promised them that even if they were persecuted He wouldn’t allow them to be wiped out. Even though they were so ‘weak’ in the world’s eyes, they would be able to survive the persecution and continue preaching.

As a result of this promise, the Philadelphian church was not wiped out in spite of the opposition it faced. Christians continued to thrive in that city until 1,000 AD when it was captured by Muslims from the Middle East.



## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

**Note:** *All discussion questions must be answered by the children, and NOT by the teacher. The guidelines given here are only meant to assist the teacher during the discussion.*

**Jesus said, “I am coming soon. Hold on to what you have, so that no one will take your crown” (Revelation 3:11). What were they supposed to hold on to? (Look at 2 Thessalonians 2:15)**

We have to hold on to everything that Jesus has taught us through His Word and through pastors, teachers, etc. We have to choose to practice His instructions even when it is difficult.

- For instance, Polycarp continued to share the Gospel with non-Christians even when they started persecuting him.
- The believers of the Smyrna church did not use illegal methods to earn money even though they were facing great poverty. They chose to remain poor rather than disobey the Lord.
- The believers of the Philadelphia church patiently obeyed God’s commandments even when they didn’t feel like it.

All these people held on to the instructions they had received from the Scriptures. Jesus promised that if they continued to do so, He would reward them with a crown.

**Jesus promised a crown of life to those who stayed faithful. Does this mean we will get golden crowns in heaven if we serve God faithfully?**

In the original Greek Bible, the word used for “crown” is *stephanos*. In the time of the early church, the winner of the Greek Olympics sporting contest was awarded the *stephanos*, a laurel crown. It looked like a wreath made of fig leaves.

So in these verses Jesus wasn’t really referring to crowns made of gold or silver or fig leaves. In heaven the roads are paved with gold; so

a golden crown may not have much significance there. Rather Jesus was symbolically saying that believers who served God faithfully would receive ‘rewards’ from the Lord. The reward will be something far more valuable than a physical crown.

**Jesus said, “The one who overcomes will not be hurt at all by the second death” (Revelation 2:11). What do you think is the ‘second death’?**

If you remember, the Roman proconsul threatened to roast Polycarp in the fire. Polycarp joked in response that while the proconsul’s fire lasts but a little while, the fires of judgment will never be put out.

While Polycarp was burned to death, the proconsul probably died much later, of old age. Everybody dies a physical death. This is the first death.

After death, believers go to heaven and enjoy “eternal life” with God. On the other hand, unbelievers go to hell where they burn forever in the fires of hell. Because the fire never gets quenched they keep on burning forever, and the pain doesn’t let up for even a moment. This horrible existence in hell is called the “second death.”

So Polycarp warned the proconsul that getting burnt at the stake was nothing compared to the terrible pain of living in hell forever and ever. The second death is much worse than the first. Those who accept Jesus as Lord and Saviour do not experience this second death.



## APPLICATION

The instructions that Jesus gave the believers of the early church, apply to us too. We too must be willing to serve faithfully “even to the point of death” (Revelation 2:10). For a few believers this may mean literal death. They may be killed for sharing the Gospel with non-Christians.

However most of us are expected to be “living sacrifices.” The Lord doesn’t ask us to die physically. But He expects us to make whatever sacrifices are required to obey Him.

- I may have to sacrifice my pocket money to help someone one.
- I may need to forgive and forget what a classmate did to me, even though I would prefer to take revenge.
- I may need to obey my parents even when their requests seem unreasonable.
- I may need to spend time studying the Bible even if I feel too lazy to do it.

When we do these things sincerely, the Lord will reward us for it.



**CLOSE WITH PRAYER**



# THE LOCAL CHURCH



## *Water Baptism*



### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To explain the origin of the practice of baptising persons.
- To teach the difference between John's baptism and Baptism in the name of Jesus.



### SCRIPTURE PORTIONS

Luke 3:3; Acts 2:38-39, 19:1-6



### MEMORY VERSE

**Acts 2:38:** Peter replied, “Repent and be baptised, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”



## RECAP

- What did we learn about last week?
- What must we hold on to, so that we don't lose our crown in heaven?
- What sacrifices did you make for the Lord this week? Give examples.
- Recite the Memory Verse for last week.



## INTRODUCTION

Water Baptism and the Lord's Supper are the two 'Sacraments' ordained by Jesus for the Church. Both must be permanently observed by the Church. The power of Christ's finished work on the Cross becomes real and effective in the believer's life when he or she meaningfully practices these two sacraments. In this lesson we will learn a little about water baptism.

### Note to Facilitator

Three different aspects of baptism have been dealt with at the three levels:

- **Primary Level:** John's baptism vs Baptism in Jesus' Name.
- **Junior Level:** Jesus was baptised as our High Priest and Representative.
- **Senior Level:** Baptism symbolises our death, burial and resurrection with Jesus.



## ATTENTION GETTER

### "One Minute" John the Baptist

The Student Workbook contains a Word Scramble on John the Baptist. Ask the children to solve as much as they can in

“One Minute.” (*The rest can be completed at home. This activity is just to get the children thinking about John the Baptist.*)

## **Discuss**

### **Why do you think John the Baptist was called a ‘Baptist’? Did he belong to the Baptist church?**

He was called a Baptist because he baptised people.

### **Why do you think John the Baptist baptised people? Did the ritual mean something?**

(*Ask the children for their opinions.*)



## **TEACHING CONTENT**

### **The Baptism of Old Testament Times**

In India, Hindus believe that the Ganges River is holy and anyone who bathes in it will have their sins washed away. However, Old Testament Jews didn't practice water baptism with the goal of washing away their sins. God had told them clearly that their sins would be forgiven only if they genuinely repented and offered animal sacrifices at the Jerusalem temple.

So the Jewish people practiced baptism for a different reason. They used the ceremony of baptism to officially induct non-Jews who wanted to become Jews. Such people went through various rounds of interviews over several months, during which time the Jewish leaders tried to assess whether these persons wanted to become Jews for the right reasons.

Approved candidates were finally allowed to go through the ceremony of circumcision. Seven days after this ceremony, the final ceremony of baptism was performed. In the baptism, the candidate was immersed in a pool of flowing water; when he rose from the pool, he was declared a true son of Israel. After their baptism, new converts were allowed to take part in the sacrifices offered in the Temple.

Gradually many of the religious groups within Israel began to use this practice too. Groups like the Essenes, Pharisees and Sadducees used this ceremony to take on new candidates. For instance if a person wanted to become a Pharisee he would undergo a very strict training program. Then at the end of the training, he would be baptised and officially declared as a member of the Pharisees.

So the ceremony of baptism was basically a public declaration that a person now officially belonged to a particular group.

### **The Baptism Taught by John the Baptist**

Later on, when John started his preaching ministry, God asked him to give the baptism ceremony a new meaning. Luke 3:3 says John “went into all the country around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.”

In other words, while people went to the religious groups to get baptised and registered, they came to John for a different reason. He did not register them into any group. Rather he asked them to get baptised to show repentance for their sins. Those who were ready to give up their sins would come and get baptised; then God, who was watching, would forgive them of their sins and give them a second chance. The Bible refers to this new system of baptism as a “baptism of repentance.”

### **The Baptism Taught by Jesus**

The Baptism of John was a temporary practice. The main goal of this baptism was to help people repent and prepare their hearts to accept Jesus as Lord and Savior. After Jesus’ resurrection, the Lord taught a new form of baptism, and this is the one that we practice today.

- When we get water baptised, the water in the tank doesn’t wash away our sins. It’s just water.
- In the same way water baptism isn’t a registration ceremony. We cannot get our names registered in heaven by getting baptised in a tank of water.

- Rather we get baptised to declare publicly that we have now committed our lives to Jesus Christ and will follow him for the rest of our days.

So baptism basically expresses our decision to follow Jesus Christ alone (Acts 2:38-39).



## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

***Note: All discussion questions must be answered by the children, and NOT by the teacher. The guidelines given here are only meant to assist the teacher during the discussion.***

**Read Acts 19:1-6. What kind of baptism did the people mentioned here, receive at first?**

Baptism of John. (v.3)

**What baptism did they receive the second time?**

They were baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus. (v.5)

**What do you think is the difference between John's baptism and Baptism in Jesus' Name?**

John's baptism was a baptism of repentance. These men went to John and got baptised because they were ashamed of their sins. They wanted to repent and recommit their lives to God.

A few years later Paul explained to them how a person can get salvation. He told them that they must believe, Jesus alone can take them to heaven, and commit their lives to Him. When they did so, they became part of God's family.

Then these new believers got baptised in the water to express their decision to follow Jesus Christ alone. The Bible refers to this as being "baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus."

So where as John's baptism is a public declaration that you have decided to stop sinning and return to God, baptism in Jesus' Name is a public declaration that you believe only Jesus Christ can save you and take you to heaven.

### **Do you think a person will go to heaven only if they get baptised in the water?**

A person doesn't read the Bible daily so that they can go to heaven. The action of reading the Bible cannot take anyone to heaven. In the same way, the action of climbing into a baptism tank of water doesn't take anyone to heaven either.

However people who have accepted Jesus as Lord and Savior read the Bible daily because they are now God's children and He has commanded them to do it. In the same way, true followers of Jesus also get baptised because He has commanded them to do so.

So we don't get baptised to gain salvation. Rather we get baptised to declare that we have received salvation from Him and wish to serve Him the rest of our lives. Baptism basically expresses our decision to follow Jesus Christ alone.

### **How can getting baptised help us?**

When we obey the Lord and get baptised, the power of the cross is released into our lives. The Lord will help us to live in greater victory over sin. We can also expect greater healing in our bodies.



#### **APPLICATION**

Children can get water-baptised as long as they understand the true meaning of what they are doing. So you can begin to prepare yourself for this important step by spending more time with God.

If you are in the second or third standard, you may not yet be comfortable reading the Bible on your own. But try to read at least

a few verses every day and ask your parents to explain whatever you don't understand.

After a few months of sincerely doing this, you will become more comfortable studying the Scriptures on your own. You will begin to hear God's voice more clearly in your heart when you read the Bible. Gradually over time you will gain a clearer understanding of what God expects from a believer and how you can please Him.

A child who is making a conscious effort to walk with God every day, can be water-baptised just the same as an adult. However if the child isn't yet very clear about the true significance of baptism, it would be better to wait a few years.



**CLOSE WITH PRAYER**



# THE LOCAL CHURCH



## *The Lord's Supper*



### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To explain the meaning of the word 'Communion.'
- To motivate children to have communion with Christ and the Church.



### SCRIPTURE PORTIONS

1 Corinthians 10:16-17, 11:23-26, 12:27; Matthew 26:17-29



### MEMORY VERSE

**1 Corinthians 11:26:** "For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes."



### RECAP

- What did we learn about last week?
- How can getting baptised help us?

- This week, how many of you read the Bible and prayed every day?
- Recite the Memory Verse for last week.



## INTRODUCTION

Water Baptism and the Lord's Supper are the two 'Sacraments' ordained by Jesus for the Church. Both must be permanently observed by the Church. The power of Christ's finished work on the Cross becomes real and effective in the believer's life when he or she meaningfully practices these two sacraments. In this lesson we will learn how to receive the power of God into our lives as we participate in the Lord's Supper.

### Note to Facilitator

We have dealt with three aspects of the Lord's Supper in this session:

- **Primary Level:** How to have 'Communion' with the Body and Blood of Christ.
- **Junior Level:** How to partake of the Communion meaningfully, in a worthy manner.
- **Senior Level:** Communion is a spiritual proclamation that has great power.



## ATTENTION GETTER

### Picture It!

Look at the pictures given in the Student Workbook. Sometimes a picture brings back memories of an incident or event. Point to each picture in the Workbook and ask the children what memories it evokes. For instance, a picture of a Christmas tree may remind us of Christmas and cause us to recollect the fun things we did during

Christmas. A picture of a flag hoisting will probably remind us of the Independence Day celebrations at school, and so on. Encourage the children to share some of their personal memories associated with each picture.

### Ask

What does the picture of a Christmas tree remind you of? What memories come to your mind when you look at the picture of a birthday cake? Etc.

### Explain

Pictures remind us of events in our lives. For instance the Student Workbook has a framed photo of Maggie with her family. Every time she looks at this picture, she is reminded of their trip to Hawaii and the fun they had at the beach. In the same way, Jesus gave a picture to His disciples that would remind them of Him. We will learn more about this today.



## TEACHING CONTENT

### Lord's Supper

The day before Jesus was crucified, He had dinner for the last time with His disciples. This is generally called the “Last Supper” or “Lord’s Supper.”

On that evening, the disciples ate quietly as they had a lot on their minds. They were worried because some people were jealous of Jesus’ popularity and wanted to kill Him.

Jesus could see the disciples were worried. He said to them quietly, “I have something to say to you that’s hundred percent true. One of you is going to hand me over to the people who want to kill me.” They were stunned and began to ask, “It isn’t me, is it, Master?”

Jesus answered, “The one who hands me over is someone I eat with daily, one who passes me food at the table.” Then Judas said, “It isn’t me, is it, Rabbi?” Jesus answered, “Whatever you wish to do, do it quickly and get it over with.”

No one around the supper table understood why Jesus said this to him. Some thought that since Judas was their treasurer, Jesus was telling him to buy what they needed for the Passover Feast, or that he should give something to the poor.

Then Jesus broke apart some bread, thanking God for it, and shared it with the disciples saying, “This is my body, given for you. Eat it in my memory.” Then He took a full cup, thanked God for it and said, “Drink this, all of you. This is my covenant blood poured out for many people, for the forgiveness of sins. It represents God’s new covenant. I’ll not drink wine again until that new day when I’ll drink with you in the kingdom of my Father.”

The disciples didn’t understand what Jesus meant by these words, but they took the bread and wine given to them. After some time Jesus got up from the table and went to a different part of the room. He took off His everyday clothes, and put a large towel around Him, making Himself look like a servant. After that, He poured water into a large bowl and began to wash the disciples’ feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around Him.

After He had finished, Jesus said, “Do you understand what I have done for you? If I, your Master and Teacher, washed your feet, you too must be willing to wash each other’s feet. I’ve laid down a pattern for you to follow. If you understand what I’m telling you, and do this, your life will be blessed.”

All the things which Jesus said and did during that last dinner, was like one big picture that He wanted His disciples to remember and recollect ever after. It’s because of this instruction that we have communion on the first Sunday of every month.

When we hold the bread and grape juice in our hands, we remember Jesus' words on that evening long ago when He said, "This bread is my body, and this wine is my blood." We know today that Jesus spoke these words to describe the manner in which He would sacrifice Himself for us. His body was broken and His blood was shed on the cross because He took the punishment for your sins and my sins. During the communion service, we remember this amazing fact with deep gratitude and recommit our lives to serve Him.



## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

**Note:** *All discussion questions must be answered by the children, and NOT by the teacher. The guidelines given here are only meant to assist the teacher during the discussion.*

**Why do believers have bread and grape juice during the communion service? Does this mean something?**

We don't have the bread and grape juice in church simply because we feel like having some food. Rather we take these two food items with deep respect because of what they represent. The bread or wafers given during communion reminds us of Jesus' words, "This is my body, given for you. Eat it in my memory." We remember how Jesus gave up His body to be beaten, whipped and nailed, so that we wouldn't be punished in hell for the sins we have committed.

In the same way, the grape juice reminds us of how Jesus shed His blood on the cross to make a new covenant with us. In Old Testament times, according to the Old Covenant, the blood of an innocent lamb was shed so that the Israelites' sins could be forgiven. In the same way, Jesus too shed His blood to forgive our sins and make us part of a new covenant.

So we don't partake of the communion because we feel like having some food items. Rather we partake of it because it reminds us of what Jesus did for us on the cross.

## **Why is ‘communion service’ called a ‘communion’? What do you think this word means?**

The word ‘communion’ means ‘close relationship.’ When we participate in the communion service, we don’t just participate in a religious ceremony. Rather we participate deeply in what Jesus did for us.

We participate in the body of Jesus. This basically means that we can have healing in our physical bodies because Jesus took our sickness and disease upon His own body (1 Corinthians 11:26).

We also participate in the blood of Jesus. This basically means that our sins have been washed away by His blood; so now we can boldly claim the blessings that are exclusively reserved for righteous persons.

We also participate in the suffering of Jesus. Jesus sacrificed His life for us, so that we can enjoy heaven one day. Now we too participate in His suffering by choosing to make similar sacrifices. We choose every day to give up sinful things and do the righteous things that the Lord has commanded us to do.

We take part in the “communion service” so that we can ‘commune’ with Jesus in these three ways.

## **1 Corinthians 10:17 says, “Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf.” What do you think this verse means?**

Jesus used the symbol of a loaf of bread to describe Jesus. This is why most churches use ‘bread’ for the communion service. The bread represents the body of Christ.

The Bible also describes all of us—the church—as the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:27). So not only is the bread a symbol of Christ’s body, the church too is described as Christ’s body.

In 1 Corinthians 10:17 Paul reminded the Corinthian believers that because all of them belonged to the one single body of Christ, it is as if they were all part of one single loaf of bread. Therefore he urged them to live in unity and have ‘communion’ with one another.

In v.16 Paul pointed out that we have 'communion' with the body and blood of Jesus. Then in v.17 he reminded the believers that we are also meant to have close communion with one another.

### **What are some practical ways that we can have 'communion' with other believers?**

'Communion' means "having a close, intimate relationship." So we must spend time with other believers. We can do this by gathering together to worship and study the Bible together. We can also meet together to eat, chat and pray for one another. When someone is in need we must be willing to serve them, the same way Christ 'served' His disciples. Having 'communion' with other believers involves all of this.



#### **APPLICATION**

Today we learnt about three types of 'communion'.

- As believers who have accepted Jesus as Lord and Savior, we 'commune' with the body of Jesus. So we can confidently claim healing for our physical bodies—because Jesus took our sickness and disease upon His own body.
- We also 'commune' with the blood of Jesus. If we sin against the Lord, we can repent and seek forgiveness because He shed His blood to wash away our sins.
- We also 'commune' with other believers. We are expected to serve them as though they are part of our own family—because they belong to same Body of Christ.

Can you think of some practical ways that you can practice these three things this week? Come back next week with testimonies of how you had communion with Christ and with His Church.



#### **CLOSE WITH PRAYER**







