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THE LOCAL CHURCH



What is the Church?



LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To teach that the church is the family of God.
- To explain the need for disciplining in God's family.
- To motivate children to love/help members of God's family.



SCRIPTURE PORTIONS

Ephesians 1:22-23, 2:19; 1 John 3:1-2, 4:20-21; 1 Timothy 3:14-15; James 2:14-17; 1 Corinthians 12:11; 2 Thessalonians 3:12



MEMORY VERSE

Ephesians 2:19: "Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household."



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 should be our role in it.

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

The Student Workbook contains a Son-Servant Table. Ask the children to tick the appropriate box for each question. Then ask the children if any of them have servants who are almost like “part of the family.” Give them a minute to talk about such servants. Next ask if any of them have servants who are lazy or always demanding more money. Give them time to share about such servants too.

Explain

We consider some servants as “part of the family” because they show us so much love and concern. They don’t work just for money but out

What is the Church?

of love. They go out of their way to do extra chores even if they are not paid for them.

But such servants are rare. Most don't care about us. They just want to earn a livelihood and they do the bare minimum required to earn it.

So generally a son will usually do more for the family than a servant. To use a simple example, if you ask a servant to wash the car, he may immediately ask how much you will pay for it. But a son on the other hand may volunteer to help simply out of love.

What do sons and servants have to do with the Church? Let's find out.



TEACHING CONTENT

Ask

What is a church? How would you describe it?

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. This universal church of Jesus is divided into many local churches, with different believers choosing to attend at different locations.

How does 1 John 3:1-2 describe the church?

As God's children, as His family.

How does Ephesians 2:19 describe the church?

It describes believers as members of God's household. In other words, it describes us as God's family members.

In 1 Timothy 3:14-15 Paul gave the church instructions regarding what?

Paul gave instructions on how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household, which is the church of the living God.

Explain

A lot of Christians think they can behave any way they wish, not realising that now they have become members of God's family. The same way an earthly family has certain rules and maintains discipline, there must be discipline in God's family too.

Ask

What are some of the rules in your family?

(Ask the children to write down some of the rules in their families. There may be rules on how many hours of TV-watching is allowed, rules regarding studies and homework, rules regarding household chores, etc.)

Explain

Parents create rules for the benefit of the entire family as well as of the individual members.

- For instance, think of the chaos there would be if there were absolutely no rules regarding studies at home. The children would probably not bother attending school and they will be unable to support themselves when they grew up.
- Similarly what if there were no rules about sharing TV-time? Everybody would fight for control over the remote, and there will be bitterness and strife at home.
- In the same way, what if there were no rules about going to bed on time? The children would probably stay up the whole night playing computer games and be unable to stay awake at school the next day.

Every family has simple rules so that the family members can function better. And when the rules are broken, there is usually some disciplinary action taken to ensure that the rules are followed next time.

Ask

What disciplinary measures does your family use to maintain order?

(Ask the children to write these down. They may have disciplinary measures like not being allowed to go out and play if the homework is not finished, etc.)

Explain

Just like in our families, God's family too has rules and disciplinary measures. For instance if a believer is living in sin and exercising a wrong influence on others, the church leaders may take some disciplinary action against him. There may be other rules like switching off the mobile phone during a church service, participating in the Communion Table respectfully, bringing your Bible without fail to the church service, etc.

If we break these rules, nobody will throw us in jail. However we choose to submit to these rules because we are part of God's family and we want to honor the Lord by following them.

Ask

According to 1 John 4:20-21 what should be our attitude towards other believers? Why?

We must be willing to love and forgive other believers because they too belong to the same family. God is the Father of us all. So we can't pretend to love Him while hating one of His children.

According to James 2:14-17 what should be our attitude towards other believers? Why?

If we claim to be part of God's family then we must be willing to use our time and money to help other believers. If we are too selfish to help others it shows that our faith is fake, a dead faith. (True believers with real faith in Christ will automatically help others, because the Holy Spirit within them will enable them to do so).



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 church leaders have the right to order us and discipline us? They don't have "legal authority" like school staff and government officials do. So why must we take orders from them?

1 Corinthians 12:11 says, that it is the Holy Spirit who guides the church in appointing leaders with different gifting. So we submit to these leaders out of respect for God. We may not like it when a church leader corrects us; but we must submit because we are part of God's family, and the Lord uses these leaders to maintain discipline in His family.

Do church leaders have the right to order us on what to wear, what to buy, what to eat, etc.? To what extent do we have to submit to them?

When it comes to rules that directly apply to the church service, we must submit to the church leaders because they have been appointed by God. For instance if we are asked to attend the service on time, or requested to memorise certain scriptures, we should do it. As long as we are part of a local church, it is a godly thing to submit to the leadership of that church.

However, when it comes to personal matters like the kind of clothes we wear, the amount we give to the church, etc., we need to listen to our parents—because they have been placed in authority over our personal lives. It is good to listen to the godly advice offered by the church leaders, but the ultimate decision rests with us in personal matters.

If a church member has no job, should we all pool in money and start supporting his family?

In times of crisis, it is good to help other believers financially. However, God expects the unemployed person to find a job and

start supporting himself soon. We should not continuously support someone if it causes them to grow lazy and not look for a job. 2 Thessalonians 3:12 says, “Such people we command and urge in the Lord Jesus Christ to settle down and earn the food they eat.”



APPLICATION

Let's summarise what we have learnt today:

- All believers belong to one single family—God's family. As part of His family, we need to have the attitude of sons. We must obey God out of love rather than with the sole motive of extracting blessings from Him.
- As part of God's family, we have to submit to the disciplining of church leaders. However they cannot dictate to us beyond certain reasonable boundaries.
- Similarly, as part of God's family we must love and help other believers. However we must not let them take unfair advantage of us.

Now take a moment to reflect on whether you have the attitude of a son or a servant. Do you obey God only when it benefits you personally? Or are you willing to obey Him sacrificially even when it hurts? A servant obeys or helps only when there is personal gain involved. However, God expects us to behave like sons—not servants.

Also, can you think of any areas where you have refused to submit to church leaders (including Children's Church teachers and leaders?) If you cheerfully submit to them out of love for God, you will receive God's blessings.

Finally think of some practical ways in which you can be of help to other believers in the Children's Church. Make a commitment to be a blessing to at least one person in the following week.

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



THE LOCAL CHURCH



Why Did God Make the Church?



LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To explain the main purpose of the church.
- To motivate children to attend church with the right attitude.
- To provide practical tips on worship and prayer at church.



SCRIPTURE PORTIONS

Acts 1:24, 2:42-47, 4:31, 6:4, 12:5; Psalms 133; Romans 15:30; Ephesians 6:18; 1 Timothy 2:1-2



MEMORY VERSE

Psalms 100:2: “Worship the Lord with gladness; come before him with joyful songs.”



RECAP

- What did we learn about last week?
- Did you do anything this week that showed you have the attitude of a son? (Give examples)
- How did you help/serve God's family this week? (Give 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: Worshippers vs Seat Warmers

Some people attend church to warm the seat. Others attend to worship God. The Student Workbook contains a Worksheet with both categories of people. Ask the children to complete it. Also ask them to assess which category they personally fall into.

Please Clarify

The purpose of this exercise is not to pass judgment on anyone. For instance, some of you may be sincerely practicing all that is taught in Children's Church; but you may have difficulty in memorising Bible verses. None of us is perfect. The goal of this exercise is simply to help us assess our "overall attitude" when we come to church. Are we coming to church with a genuine desire to worship God or due to pressure from parents? This exercise helps us pinpoint any shortcomings we may have, so that we can improve in those areas.



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, 46-47 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 have not yet been saved.
- To praise God.

The Early Church worshipped God and also made it a point to pray for other believers. Let's see how we can do the same in our local church.

Worshipping in Church

What did the psalmist command the people of God to do in Psalms 100:2-4?

- Because we are God's people, we must go before the Lord with songs of praise and worship.
- We must enter the gates of His temple with thanksgiving.
- We must enter His courts with praise.

One of the main reasons why we go to church is to worship the Lord along with our spiritual brothers and sisters.

Sadly, many Christians see the worship-segment of the church service as entertainment-time. It is considered that time in the church service when you can clap, shout and shake a leg. It's also that time when you can sing feel-good songs and feel comforted by God.

Because we usually think of worship-time this way, we tend to react badly when the worship team doesn't supply the fun-songs or the comforting songs that we had been hoping for. And we tune out because we don't feel any 'adrenaline-rush' or 'Holy Spirit goose bumps.' We feel 'bored' and we wish the church had a better worship-team.

If this is generally how you have looked at worship, please realise that this is NOT worship. Worship-time is not for your personal entertainment. Rather it's the opportunity to stand along with the rest of God's Family and together tell God how wonderful He is.

It doesn't matter if the worship-leader is singing a song that you find dull and boring. It doesn't matter if the team can't play musical instruments properly. The worship team is not standing up in front to entertain you. They are standing there to tell God how marvelous He is, and you should be busy doing the same.

Here are some practical things you can do, as a child, to make your Worship-time more meaningful during the Church service:

1. If you get easily distracted, then close your eyes during worship. In your mind, picture God's throne. Picture yourself standing in front of Him and singing to Him.
2. On the other hand, if you are not familiar with the lyrics, then keep your eyes open. But focus completely on the overhead screen. Don't look here and there. Realise that in the spiritual realm, you are not just standing in a church-hall. You are actually standing before the very throne of God, and He thinks you have come to worship Him.
3. Try to notice what the words of the song say. Sing these words as though you are directly saying them to God.
4. You could even talk to God during Worship. Whisper to Him in your heart and tell Him how grateful you are for everything He has done. Your words will bring great joy to the Lord's heart.
5. Worship-time can also be the time to renew your commitments. Make a fresh commitment to honor the Lord in your personal life during the rest of the week.
6. Worship-time also provides a great opportunity to sing in tongues. Sing not only with words but also with your spirit.
7. Even as you sincerely engage in worship, you may hear God talking back. During genuine worship, because our hearts are so much in tune with His, we can hear the Lord's voice far more clearly. If the Lord brings to mind any scriptures while you are worshipping, it's okay to open your Bible and look up the verses He is showing you.

These are some simple things that you can do to make the worship-time so much more meaningful. So do not attend Children's Church because your parents asked you to. Rather attend with the clear goal of worshipping God.



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 must we attend church to worship God? Can't we just do it at home with an iPod?

In Acts 2, we saw that the early church did five things when they met together. Please notice that they did these five things as a group—as a family. This “spiritual family” was made up of many earthly families—some rich and some poor. But they behaved like a single family, even selling their property to provide money to the poorer members in their group. It was in this attitude of oneness that they worshipped God.

We cannot do this sitting at home. Sunday service gives us an opportunity to come together as ‘one single family,’ so that we can together tell our Heavenly Father just how wonderful He is. God enjoys the show of unity as much as the worship. This is one reason why even in the Old Testament the Israelites always came together as a big group whenever they were worshipping God.

Please Note: This does not mean that we shouldn't worship God individually, at home, during our quiet time. The church worship-time is just a great opportunity to minister to the Lord together as one single united family.

Psalms 133: 1, 3: “How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity ... For there the Lord bestows his blessing, even life forevermore.”

Acts 2:42 says that the early church met together to pray. What did they pray about?

- **Romans 15:30** The early church prayed for the leaders of the church. We too must pray for our Pastors and Children's Church teachers.

- **Acts 1:24:** The early church prayed for God’s guidance. We too must pray that the Lord will guide our local church, so that the right decisions are taken. If we pray sincerely about this, the local church will accomplish what God wants rather than simply follow the fanciful ideas of some of the leaders.
- **Ephesians 6:18:** The early church prayed for believers everywhere. We too must pray for other believers—for their spiritual as well as material well-being.
- **Acts 4:31:** The early church prayed for the power to preach boldly and effectively. Unless we pray this for our church, we will see very few converts being added to the church.
- **Acts 12:5:** The early church prayed for the deliverance of those facing persecution. We must do the same.
- **1 Timothy 2:1-2:** The early church prayed for governments and rulers. We too must pray for our government, that the Lord would move in the hearts of politicians and officials, to make them act righteously and justly.
- **Acts 6:4:** The early church leaders gave themselves continually to prayer. Leaders like Pastors and Children’s Church teachers must pray for the people they are ministering to if there is to be a revival in the church.



APPLICATION

What changes do you need to make, so that your worship-time becomes more meaningful? Make a commitment to worship the Lord wholeheartedly during the church-worship. Similarly commit to specifically pray for at least some of the points that we have discussed today.



CLOSE WITH PRAYER



THE LOCAL CHURCH



Equipping the Saints



LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To teach that we must serve both in the church and outside.
- To emphasise the importance of faithfulness in little things.
- To motivate children to be full of the Spirit in service and submission.



SCRIPTURE PORTIONS

Ephesians 4:11-12, Acts 6:1-10



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?
- What are some practical things we can do to make Worship-time more meaningful during the Church service?
- Did you pray for the church this week? What did you pray?
- 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 is 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

Doing God's Ministry

The Student Workbook contains brief sketches of three persons. Ask the children to read through and answer the following questions:

- Which of the three is doing God’s ministry work?
- Which of them would, most likely, be honored with a ‘Christian Service Award’?
- Among the three, who will receive the greatest reward in heaven?

Explain

All three are involved in ministry, in one way or the other. God expects all believers to be involved in His ministry—and ministry is not necessarily standing on stage and preaching. Serving as a volunteer at church and sharing the Gospel is ministry too.

Usually those who serve God onstage get more publicity. So people may recognise their services more and honor them for it. Those who serve offstage (e.g., taking care of the sound equipment, helping prepare the elements for communion, making calls to new visitors, etc.) will probably never get a “Christian Service Award” because nobody sees them.

However, God is constantly watching everyone. He not only sees the service offered by believers, but also the motive and attitude with which it is offered. So in heaven a church caretaker may get a reward equal to that of a pastor, based on how faithfully he has done the tasks given to him by the Lord.

We will now look at a Bible Character who served the Lord, and see what lessons we can learn from his life and service.



TEACHING CONTENT

Stephen’s Ministry (Acts 6:1-10)

Shortly after the Day of Pentecost, the church began to grow in large numbers, and many new believers were added to the church. These Christians were full of the love of God and made it a point to take care of the poor and needy among them. They spent money out of their own pockets to provide food for widows who had no other means of support.

But when the number of believers multiplied into thousands, managing the food distribution became more complicated. Most of the local believers in Jerusalem were Hebrew-speaking Jews. Being more familiar with their own Hebrew-speaking widows, they mainly concentrated on serving food to these Hebrew ladies. However in the process, the Greek-speaking widows got neglected; and some of them used to go home hungry.

This deeply hurt the feelings of the Greek-speaking believers, and they complained to the apostles about what was going on. The twelve apostles immediately convened a meeting of all the believers and placed the situation before them. They explained, “Jesus specifically ordered us to spend time in preaching the Gospel and in prayer. So we cannot spend hours every day, personally serving food to the widows. Instead, why don’t you appoint seven godly men and assign this important task to them?”

This appealed to the whole church. They prayerfully chose seven men who were “full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom” and presented them to the apostles. Then the apostles laid hands on these men and commissioned them for the task. One of the persons chosen was Stephen, and the Bible describes him as “a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit.”

Stephen and the six believers had to make sure that enough money was collected every week to feed all the widows—both the Hebrew-speaking ones and the Greek-speaking ones. This probably meant that Stephen went from door to door reminding people to contribute towards the food supplies. He had to balance this additional responsibility along with his regular job. He had to make time to purchase the groceries and oversee the preparation of the meals, making sure that everyone got enough. When people complained about the food provided, he had to patiently listen to them and try to satisfy them.

It wasn’t easy! Poor, hungry people can be very rude and inconsiderate when free food is being supplied. If you visit a slum at election-time

and watch food packets being distributed, you will get a fair idea of the kind of arguments that break out. I'm sure there were occasions when Stephen got criticised rather than praised for the hard work he was putting in. To put it simply, serving as a volunteer in the widow-feeding department was demanding, quite tiring and not at all glamorous.

However, we see a very interesting result coming out of all this hard work. Because Stephen and the six took over the time-consuming job of feeding widows, the apostles were left with enough free time to shake the city! They spread the Gospel to even more homes and many more thousands entered into the kingdom of God. The greatest miracle was that staunch Jewish priests began to be saved in large numbers! Stephen and the six, who were patiently serving as waiters every day, made it possible for the apostles to accomplish this great task. Because of the faithful hard work of these seven, the apostles had enough time to preach and do mighty miracles.

It was during this time of faithful service that Stephen too began to perform great miracles. Seeing these miracles many people believed that Jesus is indeed God. This upset the Jewish leaders who had always hated Jesus. They tried to argue with Stephen that the miracles were not happening by the power of Jesus, and that Jesus was very much dead. But God gave Stephen the wisdom to break all their arguments by giving clear explanations from the Old Testament about Jesus the Messiah.

When the Jewish leaders realised that they could not prove Jesus was dead and gone, and when they saw Stephen's powerful explanations convincing people of Jesus' resurrection and Godhood, they decided to murder him. As a result of this decision, Stephen was stoned to death and became the first martyr for God in the Early Church.



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 didn't the apostles want to serve as 'waiters'? Do you think preaching and performing miracles is a more important task than serving food?

The most important task for a person is to do what God has commanded them to do. Jesus specifically commanded the apostles to focus on spreading the Gospel and prayer. So they didn't want to get distracted by the administrative task of distributing food. On the other hand God specifically gifts some people in the church with the ability to administer and manage projects. He expects these people to focus mainly on doing this and not get distracted by other things.

Which do you think is a more important task? Leading worship or doing pack-up in Children's Church? Explain why.

Both are equally important. Leading worship may appear more glamorous but we must be willing to do even the less glamorous tasks for the Lord. Stephen was so excellent in debating that not even the learned Jewish leaders could win an argument with him. If such a great man humbly 'served' as a 'waiter' on a daily basis, shouldn't we be equally willing to do "server and servant" tasks?

How much salary do you think the Early Church paid Stephen to do the food-distribution work?

Stephen worked as a volunteer for the church. He wasn't a paid employee of the church. He had to work at a regular job just like everyone else, to earn his livelihood and support his family. So serving the widows was an additional responsibility, and he had to consciously make time for it every day.

What do you think would be some of the hardships involved in Stephen's food-distribution ministry?

Here are some of the more obvious hardships involved:

- He probably had to make time every single day for the widows -three times a day if they were serving three meals per day!
- He had to regularly take care of all the grocery purchases.
- He probably had to raise funds to make the purchases.
- Some people are harder to please. Stephen must have got complaints from at least a few of the widows that they were not being treated as royally as somebody else—even after he did his best to please and satisfy everyone.
- Some people might have criticised the catering-method being used by Stephen and the six. People tend to have different ideas about how to organise any given activity.

Why do you think God used Stephen to perform mighty miracles? Did God like him better than the others?

Jesus once said, “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” (Luke 16:10). Stephen proved his trustworthiness in faithfully serving the widows. Because he was faithful in the little given to him, God used him for much more. In the same way, if we too are faithful in little things—in doing the less pleasant tasks—then in future the Lord will be willing to trust us with more demanding responsibilities.

According to Ephesians 4:11-12 who is supposed to do the ministry work? The pastor or the people?

The pastor's job is to 'equip' and prepare the people in the congregation to do the ministry. It is the job of the congregation to actually go out into the world and do the Gospel-sharing, serving of the poor, performing of miracles, etc.

Food distribution is an administrative task. What kind of people were appointed in the early church, to do this task?

The early church appointed persons who were “full of the Spirit and wisdom” (Acts 6:3).

Why do you think a person “full of the Spirit and wisdom” was needed to do food-distribution work? Do you think it was really necessary to choose such highly spiritual people? Explain why or why not.

Even an atheist who doesn't believe in God's existence can work as a waiter. But he will probably work for the sake of the salary he receives from the job. On the other hand, a person fully filled and controlled by the Holy Spirit will be willing to serve faithfully even if there is no pay or reward. Such a person will serve God enthusiastically even when the task assigned to them is boring, strenuous or unrewarding. The church chose Spirit-filled persons to serve as waiters as they knew only such men would pour their hundred percent into serving a bunch of smelly, unwashed dirt-poor widows, who had zero status in the eyes of the world.

What kind of children do you think are needed to do pack-up work in Children's Church? What should be their qualifications?

Anyone who is willing to submit to the Lord and humbly serve Him is a suitable person for this task. When they submit themselves to the Spirit in this way, He is able to equip them for more ministry and tougher responsibilities. On the other hand, people who serve God only to get popularity or other added benefits, are selfish and self-serving. Such people will not be rewarded by the Lord even if they serve on the Worship team or become preachers.



APPLICATION

According to Ephesians 4:11-12, it is not just the pastor's job to do the work of ministry. It is the rest of the church members—us—who should do ministry by sharing the Gospel, serving the poor, etc. The pastor's job is simply to equip us, so that we do the ministry work properly.

There are a countless number of small ways in which a person can start doing ministry work. Even as he does these things sincerely, God will entrust him with tougher responsibilities.

The Student Workbook contains an extensive list of simple things that children could do to minister to the Lord.

Reflect on these options and consider which ones you could volunteer for. Do not hesitate to be a servant and serve the church. Even as you faithfully do these things, the Lord will equip you for much bigger, tougher tasks.

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



THE LOCAL CHURCH



Women in Ministry



LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To clarify the Scriptures that appears to forbid women from doing ministry.
- To explain that Paul never forbade women from teaching or preaching.
- To teach the need for submission to the leadership of the church.



SCRIPTURE PORTIONS

1 Timothy 2:12-14; 1 Corinthians 11:5, 14:34-38; Acts 18:26, 21:9; Philippians 4:2-3; Romans 16:1-5



MEMORY VERSE

Hebrews 13:17: “Have confidence in your leaders and submit to their authority, because they keep watch over you as those who must give an account. Do this so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no benefit to you.”



RECAP

- What did we learn about last week?
- According to Ephesians 4:11-12 who is supposed to do the ministry work? The pastor or the people?
- Did you do any ministry work this week? Give examples.
- 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

Ask

Anne Gimenez, Bishop of Rock Ministerial Fellowship (a network of about 500 congregations around the world) has been criticised for serving as Bishop and Pastor even though she is a woman.

She has a led a godly life and has never been involved in any scandals or heresies. The only criticism her opponents level against her is that she is a woman pastor and bishop. In October 2013, at the age of 81, she appointed her daughter and son-in-law as the senior pastors of Rock Ministerial Fellowship.

Her opponents criticised her because Apostle Paul taught Timothy saying, “I do not permit a woman to teach or to assume authority over a man; she must be quiet. For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner. But women will be saved through childbearing—if they continue in faith, love and holiness with propriety” (1 Timothy 2:12-14).

What do you think?

- Is Paul saying that Anne Gimenez should not be permitted to teach or exercise authority over the men and women in her church?
- Has Anne Gimenez done a wrong thing by ministering to her church as Bishop and Pastor?
- Has she committed an even bigger mistake by appointing her daughter as senior pastor?

(Note: *The children may not have clear answers to these questions. But please motivate them to voice their opinions and get them thinking about the issue.*)



TEACHING CONTENT

Some Christians strongly believe that women should not be involved in the ministerial roles of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. As a result many women hesitate to take on these ministry roles even if God is calling them to do so. Today, we will study what the Bible says on this subject so that we can have a correct perspective.

There are three passages which specifically deal with this issue:

- As we have already seen, in 1 Timothy 2:12-14, Paul instructed Timothy under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, saying women should be silent in church.
- Similarly in 1 Corinthians 14:34-38 Paul instructed the Corinthian women to remain silent in church.
- Then in 1 Corinthians 11:5 Paul instructed women to pray and prophesy with their heads covered.

These three passages have led to a lot of confusion:

- People wonder, “How could Paul ask women to be silent in church, and at the same time also ask them to prophesy with covered heads? It’s not possible to prophesy while maintaining silence is it?”
- They also point to all the women mentioned in Paul’s letters who were actively involved in church ministry and leadership. They ask, “Why did Paul allow these women to take on leadership roles in the church while at the same time saying that women should not exercise authority over men?”

The answer to these questions is simple ... Maybe Paul was NOT saying women shouldn’t do church ministry work ... Maybe he was NOT banning women from church leadership ... Maybe he meant something else when he spoke of women being silent and not exercising authority over men ...

Let’s begin by looking at some women leaders in the Early Church. Incidentally, most of these women are mentioned in Paul’s letters itself, where he greets them by name and says he valued their ministry work:

- Philip’s daughters (Acts 21:9): They were prophets.
- Clement and Euodia (Philippians 4:2-3): Evangelists
- Phoebe (Romans 16:1): Deacon

- Priscilla (Romans 16:3-5): Taught and explained the Scriptures to Apostle Apollos along with her husband.
- Junia (Romans 16:7): Apostle who was imprisoned for her faith.

Please note: If Paul was against the ministry and leadership of these women in the early church, he wouldn't have spoken favorably about them in his letters.



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.*

If Paul was in favor of women church leaders, why did he say what he did? What did he mean when he instructed women to remain silent and not exercise authority over men in church? We will try to discover answers to these questions through our discussion.

Paul wrote Chapter 14 of 1 Corinthians to convey one main instruction. What was it? (Look at the last verse of the chapter).

In this chapter Paul gave instructions to the Corinthian believers to conduct their church services in a “fitting and orderly manner.” This was his main goal in writing the instructions of this chapter.

In 1 Corinthians 14, in what way do you think tongue-talkers were disrupting the church service? (Look at verses 5, 9, 27-28).

It looks as though all the Corinthian believers were speaking in tongues at the same time, creating confusion. Non-Christians who attended the service didn't benefit from this, as nobody was interpreting their messages. So Paul urged believers to be orderly and take turns speaking in tongues, making sure that someone was available with the gift of interpretation of tongues.

In 1 Corinthians 14, in what way do you think prophets were disrupting the church service? (Look at verses 29-33).

It looks as though some of the Corinthian prophets used to stand up and prophesy non-stop, not giving anybody else a chance to minister. The excuse they were using was that the Holy Spirit had taken control of them and they couldn't make themselves stop. Paul corrected them, pointing out that our God is not a God of disorder. God has given every prophet the ability to control his gifting; so he does have the ability to stop prophesying and give others a chance to speak too.

In 1 Corinthians 14, in what way do you think women were disrupting the church service? (Look at verses 29, 34-35).

Paul instructed that while someone is prophesying, the others "should weigh carefully what is said" (1 Corinthians 14:29). It looks as though the Corinthian women were doing the 'weighing' in a very wrong manner. They were probably arguing aggressively about which prophesy is correct and which is wrong, and not submitting to the doctrinal conclusions drawn by the main leaders of the church. In this way they were disrupting the church service, and Paul asked them to 'submit' and keep quiet.

Explain

If we look at the overall context of the whole of Chapter 14, we realise that Paul was NOT banning women from ministry work in church. His concern was that the tongue-talkers, prophets and women were disrupting the church service and not doing things in a "fitting and orderly manner."

Therefore Paul does NOT conclude the chapter by saying women should not do ministry work in church. Rather he concludes by saying that the women who strongly disagreed about a doctrinal issue should go home and discuss the matter with their husbands rather than rebel against the God-ordained leadership in the church service.

In 1 Timothy 2:12 Paul ordered women not to teach. Yet he praised Priscilla who taught Apostle Apollos from the Scriptures (Romans 16:3-4; Acts 18:26). Was Paul contradicting himself?

Though Paul knew that Priscilla had taught Apollos, he didn't condemn her. Instead he declared that both he and all the other churches were deeply grateful for the ministry she and her husband were doing. (Romans 16:3-5)

Priscilla and Aquila are mentioned by name six times in the Greek New Testament. Significantly, in four of those occurrences, Priscilla's name is mentioned first. This unconventional order of the wife's name before her husband's may be an indication that Priscilla's ministry was more prominent than Aquila's. Paul who put her name first in some of his letters, didn't think there was anything wrong in her teaching a man.

Moreover in his letter to the Philippians, Paul described Euodia and Syntyche as "women who contended at my side in the cause of the gospel." (Philippians 4:3) As evangelists these women preached the Gospel to both men and women, and Paul did not object to it. So in 1 Timothy 2:12-14 Paul was obviously NOT banning women from teaching.

Based on the references he makes to Adam and Eve, we have to conclude that Paul was talking about women who were rebelling against the God-ordained leadership of the church. Hebrew 13:17 teaches, "Have confidence in your leaders and submit to their authority, because they keep watch over you as those who must give an account. Do this so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no benefit to you."

Paul said women shouldn't exercise authority over a man. Then why did Paul praise Apostle Junia who must have exercised authority over men as an apostle? Was Paul contradicting himself?

Paul speaks very favorably about both Phoebe and Junia in his letters. Phoebe was a ‘deacon’ sent to Rome to represent the Cenchreaen church. This is a clear indication that she was a leader in the church of Cenchreae. Similarly Junia too exercised “apostolic authority” over the men and women in her church, and Paul praised her for her ministry work.

So obviously Paul was referring to something else. Based on the references he makes to Adam and Eve, we have to conclude that Paul was talking about women who were rebelling against the God-ordained leadership of the church. Once the church leadership prayerfully comes to a conclusion on a doctrinal issue, the congregation has to submit to it, including the women.

An example of this can be the doctrinal decision taken by the main leadership in Acts 15:12-29. They prayerfully decided what the right doctrine and practice should be for the particular issue they were dealing with. The apostles fully expected all the believers to humbly submit to this decision rather than rebel and argue.

Therefore, Paul urged women to “learn in quietness and full submission,” and not to exercise authority over the male leadership by forcing their own views in opposition to what had already been decided upon. He was NOT forbidding women from teaching Scripture or preaching the Gospel.



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





God's Message to the Churches



LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To warn children against backsliding.
- To show that serving Christ with a cold heart is not enough.



SCRIPTURE PORTIONS

Revelation 2:1-7 and Revelation 3:1-6



MEMORY VERSE

Revelation 3:3: “Remember, therefore, what you have received and heard; hold it fast, and repent. But if you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what time I will come to you.”

Materials needed: Paper cups, spoons, water, powdered sugar, white flour.



RECAP

- What did we learn about last week?
- Why did Paul ask the Corinthian women to stay silent in the church?
- What did Paul mean when he said women shouldn't exercise authority over a man?
- 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 suitable 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

Real vs Fake

Fill the paper cups with water. Stir powdered sugar into some of them. Stir white flour into others. Give each child a cup and ask them to describe what they taste. While some will say that the water is

slightly sweet, others will fail to detect any taste—depending on the cup they have received. Point out that while powdered sugar and white flour look almost identical, there’s a huge difference between the two. While one is sweet, the other isn’t.

In Revelation 3:1 Jesus spoke of a church that appeared to be one thing but was really something else. It ‘looked’ as if it were spiritually alive and on fire for God. But the truth was that it was spiritually dead. Jesus warned the Christians of this church that they need to start ‘behaving’ like Christians in their everyday life.

- Attending church on Sunday is not enough. We must also worship God in our work during the week by living Christ-like lives.
- Holding a prayer meeting is not enough. We must also show practical love and concern by ‘doing’ helpful things for the people whom we have prayed for.
- Listening to a one-hour sermon is not enough. We must also practice what was taught in that sermon.

In other words, ‘looking’ like a Christian on Sunday isn’t enough. We must think, speak and act like Christ during the week too. Those who fail to do this are ‘backslidden’ Christians. They are like tasteless flour pretending to be sweet sugar.



TEACHING CONTENT

Revelation 2:1-7 and Revelation 3:1-6 contain God’s warning to the churches of Ephesus and Sardis respectively. Both these churches had ‘backslidden’ from the Lord in one way or the other. Read through these passages and identify exactly what was wrong with these churches.

	Church of Ephesus	Church of Sardis
What did Jesus praise them for?	<p>They did not tolerate wicked men and hated the practices of the Nicolaitans. (v. 2, 6)</p> <p>They 'tested' those who claimed to be apostles and got rid of the fake ones. (v. 2)</p> <p>They persevered and endured through many hardships in serving Christ. (v. 3)</p> <p>They refused to grow weary and give up following Christ. (v. 2)</p>	<p>Some of the believers of this church refused to soil themselves by doing sinful things.</p>
What did Jesus criticize them for?	<p>Their service and ministry was no longer motivated by a deep love for God. Now they were probably serving Christ only out of a sense of duty.</p> <p>So God felt as if the level of their love had fallen from a very great height.</p>	<p>They had a reputation for being alive, but were dead.</p> <p>In the eyes of God, their good deeds appeared 'unfinished' and undeserving of any reward.</p>
How did Jesus correct them?	<p>He warned them to repent and do the things they used to do at first.</p>	<p>He warned them to strengthen the little bit of faith they seemed to have left, before it completely died out.</p> <p>He warned them to remember once more all that He had taught them, and hold fast to it in repentance and obedience.</p>
What did Jesus promise if they accepted correction?	<p>Those who accepted correction and repented would be allowed to enter heaven and eat from the tree of life.</p>	<p>Those who accepted correction and repented would be clothed in white robes of righteousness.</p> <p>Their names would not be blotted out of the Book of Life.</p> <p>Jesus would acknowledge them in front of the Father and angels.</p>



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 is ‘backsliding’? Who do you think is a backslidden Christian?

Backsliding is when a person who follows Christ turns away from Him. To the backslider, God is no longer the main focus of his life. Without God’s leading, the person “backslides” into his old sinful way of life.

Do you think the Sardinians were backslidden Christians? Explain why or why not.

Except for a handful of believers who refused to soil themselves by doing sinful things, the rest of the believers in Sardis had turned their backs on God. People who took part in their church programs and prayer meetings thought they were very spiritual. But the reality was that they never bothered to practice anything the Lord had taught. They didn’t mind listening to long sermons; but they didn’t do the things taught in the sermons. So they were clearly ‘backslidden’ Christians.

Do you think the Ephesians were backslidden Christians? Explain why or why not.

The Ephesians weren’t as bad as the Sardinian Christians. In fact Jesus praised them for many things as we saw above. However, they too had ‘backslidden’ in a way. They no longer served God out of deep love for Christ, but more out of a sense of duty. This upset the Lord so much that He threatened to close down their church if they didn’t repent.

What lessons do you think we can learn regarding ‘backsliding’ from these two churches?

Backslidden believers are not only the Christians who return to smoking and drinking after accepting Jesus as Lord and Saviour. There are various degrees of ‘backsliding.’ Some people may give up everything they have received from Christ and choose to live in

outright sinfulness. Others, on the other hand, may just start losing interest in the things of God and spend less and less time with Him. This too is 'backsliding', and God disapproves of all levels of backsliding. The anger Jesus expressed against the Ephesians shows that He feels very strongly about the average Christian who has got bored of serving God. He expects us to repent and make a fresh commitment to serve Him with the passion we first had.



APPLICATION

Jesus spoke highly of the Ephesian church. He praised them for their uncompromising stand on righteousness. He complimented them for not tolerating false teachings and fake apostles. However in spite of these high words of praise, He criticised them for no longer having a "first love" towards Him.

God wants followers who love Him deeply and are enthusiastic about pleasing Him. He is not impressed by Christians who give offerings only because they don't have any other choice. He doesn't admire people who serve reluctantly in the hope of getting His blessings. He doesn't care for Christians who do their Bible reading as a mechanical exercise rather than with any eagerness to hear from God and fellowship with Him.

If we have lost our earlier passion for God, then we too have 'backslidden.' We must repent and serve the Lord once more, with the same love and commitment that we first had, when we got saved. Remember, love for God is something that must be consciously cultivated. When we spend enough time with the Lord, He begins to work in our hearts, giving us a deeper love towards Him. We begin to think more like Him and enjoy the things He enjoys. So, committed regular fellowship with the Lord is a must if we want to renew our love for God.



CLOSE WITH PRAYER



THE LOCAL CHURCH



Water Baptism



LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To clarify why Jesus got baptised though He was sinless.
- To explain the true meaning of water baptism.



SCRIPTURE PORTIONS

1 Peter 2:24; Luke 3:3; Matthew 3:5-8, 14-15; Hebrews 4:15;
2 Corinthians 5:17, 21; Romans 6:3-11, 12:2; John 3:6-8



MEMORY VERSE

Romans 6:4: “We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.”

Materials Needed: 2 plastic containers, 40 disposable glasses.



RECAP

- What did we learn about last week?
What lessons did we learn regarding ‘backsliding’ from the Churches of Ephesus and Sardis?
- What did you do this week to increase your love for God? (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 how to receive the power of God into our lives as we participate in 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

Glassket Ball

Divide the children into two teams and ask them to choose one volunteer each. Place two containers at a fair distance away from

the children. The volunteers must throw a set of twenty disposable glasses into their respective containers. If a glass drops outside the container, the volunteer must fetch it back to the starting line, and try throwing it again. The team that finishes first is the winner.

Ask

Can you think of a faster way to throw the twenty glasses into the container? (*Ask for opinions*).

Explain

If the disposable glasses were tucked into one another, we would need to throw only the first cup. As all the other cups are already tucked into the first one, they would together reach their final destination in a matter of seconds.



TEACHING CONTENT

Ask

Why do you think people get baptised? Does this practice have some special meaning? (*Ask for opinions*)

Explain

We have already studied in the previous topic what Christ did for us on the cross (CC Module 8 – Cross of Christ). How many of you remember the ‘kangaroo’ example we used to describe our position in Christ? (*Ask for a show of hands*).

Let’s briefly recap what we studied that day:

On the Cross, God placed all the humans ‘in’ Jesus. (You can try to picture this in kangaroo-terms. Imagine Jesus with an imaginary pouch, carrying the entire human race).

- When Jesus carried the entire human race on the cross, He automatically carried all their dirt as well. All their filthy sins came upon Him.

- 1 Peter 2:24: “He himself bore our sins” in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; “by his wounds you have been healed.”
- When Jesus defeated the power of sin and death, and rose to life, He was still carrying all of us (in His imaginary pouch).
- So, when He became victorious over sin and death, we too became victorious over sin and death.

Today, we used a different object lesson to bring out the same point. When all the disposable cups are tucked into the first cup, they become one single unit. Whatever happens to the first cup, also automatically happens to all the other cups tucked into it. If we immerse the first cup into water, the other cups get wet too. In the same way if we place the first cup in a showcase, in a place of honour, all the other cups tucked into it also enjoy that position of honour.

When we understand this concept, Jesus’ baptism in the Jordan River begins to make sense.



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.*

According to Luke 3:3 what kind of baptism did John the Baptist teach?

John “went into all the country around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins” (Luke 3:3).

According to Matthew 3:5-6 why did people go to John for baptism?

The people wanted to confess their sins and repent of them. They wanted God to forgive them of all their past sins and give them a second chance.

According to Matthew 3:7-8 why did John refuse to baptise the Pharisees?

They had no desire to repent of their sins and leave them behind. They wanted to participate in the baptism ceremony simply to impress people of their supposed ‘godliness.’ So John’s “baptism of repentance” was not available to them.

Why do you think Jesus got baptised? Did He want to repent of His sins too?

Hebrews 4:15 describes Jesus as one “who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin.” Jesus never committed a single sin. This is why John was confused about baptising Jesus. He said to Jesus, “... I need to be baptised by you, and do you come to me?” (Matthew 3:14). However Jesus replied saying, “... It is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness” (Matthew 3:15).

If Jesus got baptised to “fulfill all righteousness” then does it mean He wasn’t righteous enough before baptism?

As Jesus never sinned, He was always fully righteous. Rather Jesus was referring to the righteousness which He wanted to provide for the rest of us.

In Old Testament times, the High Priest offered sacrifices to God on behalf of the people, to make them righteous. In the New Testament, Jesus became a priest and sacrificed Himself for our sins, so that we could become righteous like Him (1 Peter 2:24; 2 Corinthians 5:21).

So Jesus got baptised for one basic reason—to represent us, to become one with us, and achieve for us what we couldn’t achieve on our own.

What does Romans 6:3-4 say about baptism?

According to this verse, when we get baptised in Jesus’ Name, we get baptised into His death. This enables us to live a new life.

Explain

The Bible uses a lot of symbols to explain things to us. When we understand what a certain symbol is saying, we are able to understand what the Bible is trying to teach through that symbol.

According to Romans 6:3-4, baptism is symbolic too. Going into the water and coming out of the water holds special meaning.

When Jesus got baptised in the Jordan River, He symbolically “acted out” what He was going to do for us as our High Priest and representative. When John submerged Jesus in the water, Jesus symbolically “acted out” his death and burial which would happen three years later. Similarly when Jesus rose up out of the water, He “acted out” His victory over sin and death.

Today when we get baptised, we “re-enact” what Jesus did for us. We remind ourselves that on the Cross, God placed all the humans ‘in’ Jesus. (We can try to picture this in kangaroo-terms. Imagine Jesus with an imaginary pouch, carrying the entire human race. We can also picture Jesus as the “first paper cup,” with all the other cups tucked inside Him).

When the first cup is submerged under water, all the other cups get submerged too. Then, when the first cup is raised out of the water, all the other cups get raised too. In other words, 2000 years ago, on the cross, when Jesus died and was buried, we too died (in a spiritual sense) and were buried. Then later, when Jesus was raised to life, we too were raised to life. Everything that happened to the first cup happened to us too—because we were ‘tucked’ inside Him 2000 years ago.

So when we get baptised in a water tank, we publicly declare what Jesus did for us. We also recognise the new status that we enjoy because of what He did.

Our New Status in Christ

2000 years ago, when Jesus died on the cross, we too died in a spiritual sense. The practical benefits of this became available to us when we accepted Jesus as Lord and Saviour.

- Romans 6:11 teaches that those who accept Jesus as Saviour become dead to sin. The same way a dead person is not interested in sinful things because he is too dead to feel anything; we too become dead to sin.

Similarly, 2000 years ago, when Jesus arose from the dead, we too arose from the dead in a spiritual sense.

- John 3:6-8 and 2 Corinthians 5:17 teach that those who accept Jesus as Saviour are “reborn” into a new person. This new person doesn’t have any of the sinful desires which the old person had. The old person died on the cross, and now the new person who has been created, has only godly desires.

If a person gets baptised with this clear understanding of what the baptism ceremony symbolises, it can transform their life forever!

- The next time this person is tempted to watch something wrong on TV, he can remind himself of what he ‘enacted’ on the day of his baptism. When the pastor submerged him under the water, this person “acted out” the fact that he died along with Christ on the cross. The sinful person who enjoyed watching sinful things on TV, died along with Christ!
- The person who is now sitting in front of the TV is not the person who died inside the waters. He rose up out of the water as a “new creation” with only holy desires.

(Please Note: His ‘unrenewed’ mind is still longing after old sinful things only because he has not taken the effort to teach it and renew it. So he must daily teach his mind that he is no longer under the control of old sinful desires, and doesn’t need to yield to them anymore).

- Similarly if this person is diagnosed with cancer, he doesn't have to accept the disease and suffer under it. He must remind himself of what he 'enacted' on the day of his baptism. When he rose up out of the water, he rose up with the victory of Jesus over sin and 'death'. As 'death' includes disease and sickness, he now possesses victory over sickness too. So with this confidence, he can now claim his healing and be delivered from the cancer.



APPLICATION

When we get baptised truly believing what Jesus has done for us, we are able to apply to ourselves what He has done, and live in great victory.

- God expects us to truly believe Romans 6:11 which says believers are dead to sin.
- He expects us to truly believe that we have been reborn as a new person.

If a person goes through the water baptism fully believing what the Bible says, the event would become very meaningful. Because of their faith, and because of their obedience in getting baptised, the power of the cross would be released into their lives in a new and fresh way.

So believe what is written in Romans 6:11, John 3:6-8 and 2 Corinthians 5:17 about you. According to these verses you have as much interest in sinful things as a dead person! Teach your mind this truth and refuse to give in to temptations. Start believing that the old sinful person you once were, has now died. You died and were reborn through the Spirit as a brand new person. In your spirit you are now a different person with the power to overcome sin and sickness.

Take water baptism keeping these truths in mind and watch the power of the cross transform your life!



CLOSE WITH PRAYER





The Lord's Supper



LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To teach how to partake of the Lord's Supper in a worthy manner.
- To explain the deeper significance of the Communion Service.



SCRIPTURE PORTIONS

1 Corinthians 10:17-22, 11:17-34



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 baptism change a person's life if done meaningfully?

- What did you do this week to renew your mind?
- 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

Lord's Supper in Corinth

The Student Workbook contains a comic strip about the celebration of the Lord's Supper in Corinth. Ask the children if they are familiar with this Bible Story. Briefly narrate the story as described in 1 Corinthians 11:17-34.



TEACHING CONTENT

Participating in the Lord's Supper

Paul was extremely upset with the Corinthian believers because they were participating in the Lord's Supper in an unworthy manner. In those days the church used to celebrate the Communion Service in exactly the same way Jesus had His Passover Supper.

The same way Jesus and the disciples had an entire meal together, the believers too used to have an entire meal together. It was like a potluck dinner, with different believers bringing whatever they could. The poorer believers used to come empty handed as they had nothing to bring. The rich believers probably didn't like this; so they preferred to form their own little groups and eat together, excluding the poorer believers. As a result, many of the poorer believers used to return home with empty stomachs, while the richer believers used to go home overloaded with food and wine.

Paul administered correction regarding three things:

(After you explain each of the three things and how this applies to us, let the children write down the empty lines given in the student workbook).

First, Paul emphasised the need for love and unity.

- He said, "Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all share the one loaf" (1 Corinthians 10:17). He tried to tell them that the main focus in a Communion Service should not be the food or one's social status.

Jesus compared Himself to a loaf of bread, broke it into portions, and gave each disciple a portion. All the disciples, whether rich or poor, received spiritual food and salvation through the "One single loaf" that is Jesus. Without Him all of them, whether rich or poor, would be equally dead spiritually and would go to hell one day.

How this applies to us: During a Communion Service, we need to be very aware that the rest of the believers are a part of us—we are all sharing the one body of Christ together. There should be no unforgiveness, bitterness or grudges between us when we are partaking of the Communion Service.

Second, he condemned the casualness with which the believers were partaking of the Lord's Supper. They seemed to be treating it more as a "party event" at which to get drunk rather than meditate on what Jesus had done for them and do it "in remembrance of Him."

- Therefore Paul said, "So then, when you come together, it is not the Lord's Supper you eat, for when you are eating, some of you go ahead with your own private suppers. As a result, one person remains hungry and another gets drunk. Don't you have homes to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God by humiliating those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you? Certainly not in this matter!" (1 Corinthians 11:20-22)

How this applies to us: Some Christians have a very casual attitude towards the Communion Service. They do it more as a religious ritual without really focusing on the true significance of the practice. We should avoid all such casualness. We must instead meditate on what Christ did for us on the cross, and trustingly apply to our own lives all the benefits of the cross.

Third, Paul warned those who were divided in their loyalties. Some of them were eating at the pagan feasts where idols were honored. But then they also came to the Lord's Supper and ate there. Paul asked them to stop compromising before God's judgment came down upon their heads!

- He said, "You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons too; you cannot have a part in both the Lord's table and the table of demons. Are we trying to arouse the Lord's jealousy? Are we stronger than he? (1 Corinthians 10:21-22)"

How this applies to us: Are we compromising in any areas of our lives? Do we feed on sinful things during the week (such as watch immoral things on TV, compromises with worldly friends, etc.), and then feed on the Lord's Supper on Sundays? We must get rid of divided loyalties before God's judgment comes upon us.



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.*

If I have unforgiveness in my heart, or if I have hurt someone, is it okay to participate in the Lord's Supper?

1 Corinthians 11:27 says, "Whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord." We must 'discern' that the wafer in our hands represents a small portion of the "One Loaf"—Jesus Christ. All believers are part of this one loaf and must maintain oneness.

So if we have unforgiveness in our hearts, or if we have hurt someone, it is better to prepare ourselves beforehand during the week. We must take the initiative to approach the concerned believer and attempt to resolve the differences between us. We must participate in the Communion only if we have sincerely made all efforts to make peace and establish love. If the other believer refuses to reconcile with us, then that is an issue *they* need to deal with. We are absolved and can participate with a clear conscience.

1 Corinthians 11:28 says, "Everyone ought to examine themselves before they eat of the bread and drink from the cup." What exactly are we supposed to examine?

There are two areas of life where we can examine ourselves. First, we can ask ourselves if we are entertaining any specific sin. If so, we must

repent and give up that sin before participating in the Lord's Table.

Second, we can ask ourselves if we are feasting at the devil's table in any way. Has anything become so important to us that we worship it more than God? It could be a hobby, or our friends, or even Facebook. If we are worshipping any such idols we must repent of our sin and make the Lord our first priority once more.

1 Corinthians 11:29-30 says, "For those who eat and drink without discerning the body of Christ eat and drink judgment on themselves. That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep." Were these believers dying because they had participated unworthily in the Lord's Supper?

We understand these verses in two ways:

First, it's true that God judged some of the Corinthian believers who partook in the Communion unworthily. However, being a merciful God, He doesn't go about killing everyone who slips up. He shows us kindness, in the hope that His kindness will lead us to repentance. So the Lord doesn't generally strike down people with sickness and death.

Second, we are expected to 'discern' the spiritual meaning and significance of the Communion Service. Many people eat the wafer and drink the juice without understanding what Christ has done on the cross. So they continue to suffer with arthritis, cancer, etc., in spite of having taken Communion. This was the case with many of the Corinthian believers who failed to 'discern' what Christ had done for them. But today if someone celebrates Communion meaningfully, claiming what is rightfully theirs, they will see healing manifest in their physical bodies.

How do we take Communion meaningfully? What must we do?

Participating in the Communion Service is an act of faith. Holding the wafer, we remember that Jesus allowed His body to be bruised

and battered for us. He took all our sicknesses upon His own body, so that He could give us perfect health in exchange. He also took all of our sins upon Himself, so that He could grant us forgiveness.

By faith, we choose to believe these things to be true. So by faith, we choose to believe that the Lord has forgiven us of all the sins that we confessed and repented of. We choose to forget those past sins and no longer continue to beat ourselves over them. We also choose to believe that the sickness we have been diagnosed with, was carried by Jesus 2000 years ago and paid for. So by faith we command the sickness to leave our bodies. In this attitude of faith, we thank the Lord and eat the wafer.

In the same way, while holding the cup, we remember how Jesus' blood was shed for us. We remember that He called it the blood of the new covenant. By shedding His blood He established a new covenant with us—to make us part of God's own family and seat us in the heavenly places with Him. By faith, we choose to believe this to be true. We thank the Lord and drink the juice as a sign of our belief, and we resolve to exercise our spiritual authority to gain victory in every area of our lives.

'Communion' means "having a close deep relationship." If we partake of the Lord's Supper meaningfully, we will literally 'commune' with the body and blood of Jesus, and we will then see all the blessings of the cross manifesting in our lives.



APPLICATION

This week onwards, prepare yourself to partake of the Lord's Supper meaningfully and in a worthy manner.

- If you need to reconcile with other believers, try your best to do so. Forgive and forget all past hurts inflicted on you, with the help of the Holy Spirit.

- If you are worshipping other 'idols', if a person or thing is causing you to neglect the Lord or live in sin, then get rid of them and give the Lord first place in your life once again.
- Finally choose to believe the things that the Communion Service represents. Accept the forgiveness that is yours and stop condemning yourself over past forgiven sins.
- Claim the healing that is rightfully yours.
- And exercise the spiritual authority that is yours in Christ, under the new covenant.



CLOSE WITH PRAYER



