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THE LOCAL CHURCH



What is the Church?



LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To instruct that the church is the body of believers and not the building.
- To teach the significance of being the Bride of Christ.
- To explain what is expected from the church—the Bride of Christ.



SCRIPTURE PORTIONS

Ephesians 5:30-32; Revelation 19:7, 21:9; John 15:13; Romans 5:8; Jeremiah 2:2; 2 Corinthians 5:15; James 4:4-7



MEMORY VERSE

Jeremiah 2:2: “... This is what the Lord says: ‘I remember the devotion of your youth, how as a bride you loved me and followed me through the wilderness, through a land not sown.’”



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

Ask

What is the church? Is it a building or is it the people in the building?

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.

What is the Church?

If church is really “the people” who meet ‘inside’ the church building, then is everybody inside the church premises automatically part of the church? Explain why or why not.

At an earthly level, those people who become members of a local church are considered a part of that local church. However, God looks upon only the true believers who have accepted Jesus as Lord and Saviour as part of His church.

Read Ephesians 5:30-32. Whom do these verses describe? (v. 32 contains the answer).

These verses describe Christ and the church.

Where else in the Bible is v. 31 mentioned? Can you make a guess?

Ephesians 5:31 is also mentioned in Genesis 2:24. In Genesis this verse describes Adam and Eve. And here in Ephesians this same verse is used to describe Christ and the church.

Explain

Jesus thinks of the church as His bride. The same way a husband is supposed to share everything he has with his wife, Jesus too wants to share all of Himself with us. This is why Revelation 19:7 refers to the church as the “Bride of Christ.”



TEACHING CONTENT

Video Presentation

Video: Bride of Christ

Duration: 3 minutes 41 seconds

What is so special about being the Bride of Christ? Isn't it enough that we are His friends? Why do you think being His Bride is so significant?

(Ask the children to write down their opinions in the Student Workbook.)

Explain

What would you do if a beggar-woman came to your door begging? If you are a kind person you will probably give her some money. If you were really soft-hearted you will probably give her even a meal and maybe some old sarees too. But will you open your door wide and invite her in? Will you make her a part of your family and sign legal papers so that she can share equally in the family property? I doubt you will do that!

Now picture a billionaire who is rich, famous and honoured by one and all. Picture a beggar-woman going to his door. He doesn't just offer her some charity. He opens up his whole life to her—all of his riches and fame and honour—and promises to share all of it with her, to make her his wife!

It's one thing to show a little friendship and kindness to a beggar in the slum. But it's quite another to make that person your wife and let her share in your status and wealth! It's so ridiculous that nobody would even think of doing it!

Yet this is what Jesus was willing to do for us. He offered us friendship saying, "Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends" (John 15:13). Then He went even further and made us His own bride!

A bride's place is higher than that of a friend. Let's assume for a minute that you are the Prime Minister's best friend. You will be able to visit his home anytime you wished. You will be given many special privileges. You will even win respect from the world because you are the Prime Minister's best friend. But at no point will you receive the same status that the Prime Minister reserves for his wife! You only visit his home; she lives in that home 24/7 and calls it her own. The privileges that she has, as his wife, far exceed your privileges as a friend.

By saying to the church, "a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh," Jesus is granting us a higher status than even the angels enjoy! Not even the

What is the Church?

seraphim that stand before God's throne day and night, have the status that we have been accorded! We are His own bride. And at the Wedding Supper of the Lamb, which is recorded in Revelation 19, the Church will become the Wife of Christ (Revelation 21:9).



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 we the Church, have been given such a high status, then what is expected of us in return? Let's look at some Bible verses that talk about our position and our responsibility as Christ's Bride.

What kind of a bride did Jesus choose for Himself, according to Romans 5:8? What is so special about this verse?

Anybody planning on getting married usually looks for the best. A man looks for a bride who is perfect in every way. Nobody is interested in an ugly or imperfect bride.

Yet what do we see Jesus doing in this verse? He was willing to lay down His life for people who were still wallowing in sin—people who enjoyed doing wrong and refused to worship Him. Jesus was willing to die for such people and make them His bride.

This reveals to us the unconditional love that Jesus has for His bride. There are no conditions attached to His love. He loves us even when we betray His trust and sin against Him.

How does Jesus hope we will respond to His unconditional love? What does Jeremiah 2:2 say about the bride?

This verse describes a bride who is so devoted to her husband that she is willing to follow him even into a wilderness where no crops

have been sown! In other words, there is no food available in that wilderness and she could starve. But even this does not cause her to hesitate; ignoring the bleak circumstances she continues to cling to him with love and true devotion.

Because Christ chose us as His bride while we were yet sinners, He expects us to love Him back with equal devotion. We must not be people who will serve Him only when we are in the rich valleys of success and prosperity. He hopes for a bride who will cling to Him even in the desert where there's only lack and suffering.

What should be the Bride's response to Christ's unconditional love, according to 2 Corinthians 5:15?

Because Jesus died for us, we should no longer live for ourselves but for Him who died for us. We should focus on doing what pleases Him rather than focus on pleasing ourselves. This should be the bride's response to Jesus' unconditional love.

James 4:4-7 talks about God's jealousy. In these verses what does God say to His bride—the church?

Jesus didn't offer us a casual friendship but the highest relationship possible—that of husband and wife. A husband and wife are supposed to be so close to one another that they almost act like one single person in their thinking, their speech, and their choices and actions.

When a couple has this kind of close friendship, they would obviously find any form of disloyalty painful. For instance, if the wife were to start forming a close friendship with another man, the husband would feel deeply hurt. In fact God would call the wife an 'adulteress' because of her close friendship with another man.

This is how God feels about us. He wants a relationship where we are so close to Him that we think like Him, speak like Him, and act like Him.

What is the Church?

Instead of doing this, if we start getting close to the “sinful world” and think, speak and behave like it, the Lord feels very hurt. He feels as though we have betrayed Him ... just like an adulteress betraying her husband.

So the Lord expects His bride not to ‘flirt’ with the world by making compromises. Rather He expects us to completely give up everything that is worldly or sinful.

Video Presentation

Video: Support Your Church

Duration: 2 minutes 35 seconds

According to this video what should be our attitude towards our local church?

Local churches have many shortcomings in them because they are made up of imperfect believers. However we must never forget that our imperfect local church is the Bride of Christ. We must never talk disrespectfully about our church because that would anger Jesus the Bridegroom.

Rather we can pray about the shortcomings in our church, and pray for our church members, so that the church becomes more and more Christ-like.

What are some things we can do to support our local church? How can we minister to the Bride of Christ?

(Ask the children to write down in the Student Workbook some practical ways in which they can serve both in the Adult Church and in the Children’s Church.)



APPLICATION

Let's summarise all that we have learnt today:

Jesus has given us—the church—an incredibly high status as His Bride. We must respond to this great love by:

- By devotedly clinging to Him even in the wilderness of lack and suffering.
- By choosing to please Him rather than please ourselves.
- By refusing to flirt with the world through compromises and worldly choices.

Because the Church is Christ's Bride I must not criticise it, but rather support and serve it.

Reflect on what practical steps you can take to practice these things in your own life.

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 show how the church helps us grow in God's Word and Fellowship.
- To emphasise the importance of regular church attendance.
- To discover exactly what Christian fellowship involves.



SCRIPTURE PORTIONS

Luke 2:46, 4:16; Hebrews 10:24-25; Philippians 2:3-4; Galatians 6:1-2; James 5:16



MEMORY VERSE

Acts 2:42: "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer."



RECAP

- What did we learn about last week?
- What are the three ways in which the Bride of Christ must respond to His unconditional love?
- This week what did you do to please God rather than please yourself? 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.



ATTENTION GETTER

Discuss: Why Attend Church?

Ask

Why do Christians insist that we attend church every single Sunday? Is this really necessary? Explain why or why not.

(Ask the children to write down their opinions in the Student Workbook.)

Video Presentation

Video: Why should I go to Church?

Duration: 2 minutes 13 seconds

According to this video what are the 3 main reasons why we should attend church?

- To hear the Word of God so that we can practice it in our lives.
- To have friendship with other believers—to serve and be served.
- To see God working in the lives of other believers and learn from this.



TEACHING CONTENT

Read Luke 4:16 and explain what was Jesus' habit (His custom).

Going to the synagogue on the Sabbath day.

Why do you think Jesus went to the synagogue every single Sabbath? Was He trying to become a better Christian?

Jesus was already perfect and didn't need any improving. Then why did He attend the synagogue?

- In childhood, Jesus attended the synagogue as He needed to study the Scriptures and learn the Jewish doctrines—He had to educate His mind just like all the other children. Whenever He came across Bible passages that He couldn't understand, He turned to learned elders with His doubts, and got them clarified (Luke 2:46).
- However, after growing up He continued to attend, probably to have fellowship with other Jews, to teach, do miracles and to pray. He ministered in the synagogue. In Luke 4:16-27 this is what we see Jesus doing. He read out from the Scriptures and then preached.
- Moreover, Jesus strongly believed that, "Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4). Jesus enjoyed listening to His Father speaking to Him through His Word; but there were no Pocket Bibles available in those days. The synagogues were the only places where Old

Testament Scrolls were stored. Who knows how many hours Jesus sat with those scrolls, meditating on the Word and communicating with His Heavenly Father!

If the perfect Jesus attended the synagogue regularly, we need to do it too.

- We must learn from the Word just as He did.
- We must serve the people in the church just like He did.
- And we must spend time in corporate prayer with other believers, just as He used to.

If the perfect Jesus attended the synagogue regularly, imperfect people like us need to do so even more! It is in the church that we are taught from God's Word; it's the place where we learn and grow in 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.

Video Presentation

Video: Why is Fellowship Important?

Duration: 1 minute 48 seconds

According to this video, believers are meant to be like glowing embers. As long as they stay together, they burn bright. But when they isolate themselves from other believers, they grow cold.

According to Hebrews 10:24-25, how does Christian fellowship benefit us?

When we maintain close friendships with other believers, we are able to help one another. We are able to encourage each other to make the

necessary sacrifices to do good deeds. We motivate each other to be more patient and loving towards people whom we may not like. We hold one another accountable and make sure that we have regular personal devotions. In this way we help each other stay on fire for God.

According to Philippians 2:3-4, what does Christian fellowship involve?

True Christian fellowship involves not being selfish, not putting my own interests first. It involves considering the needs of other believers as more important, and serving them rather than myself.

According to Galatians 6:1-2, what does Christian fellowship involve?

It could involve helping someone who is backsliding. If we know the person well, we should make the effort to spend time with them and find out why they are drifting away from God. Usually when someone takes personal interest in a believer who is backsliding, the person feels the love of God tugging at them and they return. But if nobody bothers about the drifting believer, they ultimately leave the church and go back into the world. So it is important to maintain close ties with other believers, so that they can support us and we can support them in return.

According to James 5:16, what does Christian fellowship involve?

Christian fellowship involves praying for one another. Sometimes, if the problems we are facing are due to some sinful decision that we took, then it helps to share this with another believer. By taking another person into our confidence, we make ourselves accountable to them, and this helps us not to repeat that sinful action in the future.



APPLICATION

As we can see, Christian fellowship involves far more than just standing in a circle after church and discussing school or sports. One of the simplest ways to have Christian fellowship is to get involved in a Church Life group.

If there aren't any in your locality, see if you can team up with a few others from the Children's Church. You could probably meet informally twice a month in someone's home, just to pray for one another's needs. The rest of the month you could stay in touch by phone and motivate each other to walk strong with God and maintain regular personal devotions. You can encourage each other through life's challenges, pressures, temptations and hardships, and be a blessing to one another. This is what God wants for His church.



CLOSE WITH PRAYER



THE LOCAL CHURCH



Equipping the Saints



LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To teach that God expects all of us to do ministry-work.
- To explain that it is the pastor's job to equip us—so that we can do ministry.
- To show how we can be ministers of God in different areas of influence.



SCRIPTURE PORTIONS

Ephesians 4:11-12, John 4:39-41, Exodus 31:1-5, Acts 9:36-39



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?
- How were your accountability partners an encouragement to you this week?
- Did you pray for anyone from church this week? Name them.
- 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 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

Video Presentation

Video: Doing the Work of Ministry

Duration: 1 minute 57 seconds

Can we say that Mitch is doing ‘ministry’?

Yes

Do all Christians have to do ministry work for God? Or does God expect only specially-called people to do ministry?

(Ask the children to voice their opinions.)

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 role of the congregation to actually go out into the world and do the Gospel-sharing, serving of the poor, performing of miracles, etc.

What kind of ‘ministry’ can children do? Can you think of any suggestions?

(Ask the children to voice their opinions.)

We will look at some ordinary people in the Bible and see what kind of ministry work they did. Then we will look at what God expects of us today.



TEACHING CONTENT

How did the Samaritan woman minister to God? (John 4:39-41)

She did not preach from the pulpit. She simply shared with others her personal encounter with Jesus. She talked about the things He said and did for her personally.

Can we minister like the Samaritan lady? What are some things we can do?

We can tell our friends what Jesus is doing for us daily. We can talk about how our family has been blessed, how prayers have been answered, how the Lord strengthened us in times of great suffering, etc. We can help them know that Jesus is truly a 'living' God who is very much alive.

How did Stephen minister to God? (John 4:39-41)

Stephen served as a 'waiter.' However, he didn't work in a five-star hotel and get large tips. He served as a waiter for poor widows who couldn't reward him in any way for all his hard work.

Can we minister like Stephen? What are some things we can do?

We can visit a person who is not keeping well and spend time with them. We can help a beggar out of our pocket money, etc.

How did Bezalel minister to God? (Exodus 31:1-5)

He did the artistic craftwork for the tabernacle. He was not a Priest or Levite. He simply used his God-given talents to do craft-work for God.

Can we minister like Bezalel? What are some things we can do?

If you are really good at Math, etc., you could help others in Children's Church who are struggling in those subjects. If you know a musical instrument, you could teach it to others. These are ways in which you can serve the Body of Christ.

How did Dorcas minister to God? (Acts 9:36-39)

She helped the poor and made clothes for widows.

Can we minister like Dorcas? What are some things we can do?

We could give away a favorite personal possession to a beggar-child near the traffic lights. We could do this as a sacrifice unto God and

also as an act of service towards that impoverished child. We could help tutor the maid's child in subjects that he is weak at, etc.

Seven Mountains of Influence

The world we live in can be roughly divided into seven main fields:

- Field of Arts and Entertainment
- Field of Business
- Field of Education
- Field of Family
- Field of Government
- Field of Media
- Field of Religion

All of us belong to at least some of these fields.

- For instance, if I attend cricket coaching classes, then I am a part of the Field of Arts and Entertainment.
- Similarly all of us are a part of the Field of Education because we attend school.
- All of us are also a part of the Field of Family.
- Likewise we are also a part of the Field of Religion.

God places each of us in certain specific fields because He has a job for us to do in those fields:

- For instance, if God has given me great skill in cricket, He has done it so that I can gain access into the Field of Arts and Entertainment. I become God's special agent in this field. I am able to share my testimony with the cricket coach. I am able to live out a Christian life in front of all the cricket players who are observing my lifestyle. I am able to win tournaments and testify that the God of the Bible gives me the skill to be a Winner.

- A lot of pastors may have a great burden to minister to student cricket players. But these players don't open up to them because they are strangers. On the other hand, they may open up to me because I am a player like them. The church youth pastors, Sunday School teachers, and Life Group leaders will never get a chance to minister to these cricket players. But I get opportunities every day to talk about Christ with these players because I am one of them. I have a special access to this field of ministry that not even my pastor has! The cricket circles are my mission field!
- In the same way, God has given Christian children special access to the Field of Education. Even if the pastor wishes to teach about Jesus Christ in the school, the principal may refuse to grant him permission. But I have permission to spend as much time as I wish with other students. I can talk to them freely about what Jesus Christ is doing for my family. I can show them how Christ can make a difference in their lives. My school is my mission field.

In other words, ministry-work is supposed to be done by ordinary people like us, who are not in full-time ministry. You are the ones with special access into schools, and different areas of art and entertainment. You have access to people that the pastor will never meet. The pastor will never be able to share the Gospel with the people who attend your tuition or music class. But you can witness to them. Your Sunday School teacher will never be able to minister to the drama team at school. But you can sit with them, pray with them, and show them that your God answers prayer.



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.

Video Presentation

Video: Fruit-shaped Ice Cubes

Duration: 2 minutes 58 seconds

What happens when you drop a fruit-shaped ice cube into a glass of water? What happens to the water?

The ice spreads and changes all the water around it, making it ice-cold.

We are supposed to be like ice-cubes. What should a person do if God ‘drops’ her into the school basketball team?

God expects her to be His special agent in that basketball team. She is His ‘ice-cube’. The same way the ice spreads and changes all the water around it, she too must influence and change the people around her.

How can the above person change the basketball team? Should she preach a short sermon before basketball practice? What are some practical things she can do?

The first thing she needs to do is begin sharing God’s love through her actions. If someone roughly shoves her during practice, she can choose to show God’s love and not shove back. She can be kind and friendly with everyone, refusing to indulge in gossiping and backbiting. She can be encouraging and supportive towards the weaker players on the team.

If she truly reflects the love of Christ, her team mates will notice how different she is, and they will respect her. They will be willing to listen when she talks about Christ.

So no matter which field God has dropped us into, the first thing we can do is reach out and start sharing God’s love with others. This will help people trust us, and then we can start sharing our testimonies of how Jesus has been a blessing to us.

How can we minister to the people among whom God has ‘dropped’ (placed) us? What are some ministry-works that we can do?

- Be a loving and loyal friend to the people around you.
- Never gossip or backbite.
- Pray for the people you come in contact with daily. Pray that God will transform their lives.
- Be quick to forgive and forget when people hurt you.
- Don't say or do anything that would dishonor Christ. Live in a way that wins people's respect.
- Share stories with friends of how Jesus has been answering your prayers.
- If someone is looking low or dejected make an effort to cheer them up.
- Offer to sit with a person and pray with them if they are going through difficult times.
- If you get the opportunity, offer to lay hands on a sick person and pray for their healing.
- Pray for opportunities to share the salvation message with those who show an interest.

These are some ministry-works that God expects us to do, whether we are students, sports persons, singers or politicians. We alone can minister to the people in our field of influence. We are full-time ministers wherever God has placed us.



APPLICATION

List down all the different groups of people in your life. God has dropped you among these people like an ice-cube. He expects you to spread your influence and change their lives. He is sending you as a full-time missionary to them. Write down some practical things that you are going to do over the next few weeks to influence these people.



CLOSE WITH PRAYER



THE LOCAL CHURCH



Women in Ministry



LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To clarify the Scriptures that appear 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 Corinthians 11:4-10, 14:28-40; Acts 21:9; Philippians 4:2-3; Romans 16:1-7; Galatians 3:28; 1 Timothy 2:12-13; Philippians 2:6-7



MEMORY VERSE

Galatians 3:28: “There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”



RECAP

- What did we learn about last week?
- What are some practical ways that we can influence and change the people around us?
- 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

Video Presentation

Video: Women should be Silent

Duration: Play only the first 56 seconds of the video. (The rest of the video has only sarcasm and no scriptural backup.)

Ask

- What are your views on this video? Is Ps. Anderson correct in what he says?
- The pastor quotes 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 in this video. What do you think these verses mean?

(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

Does the Bible mention any women involved in church ministry work? Let us begin by looking at Bible verses that mention women—including those mentioned by Paul himself in his letters:

- 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 would not have spoken favorably about them in his letters.

Read 1 Corinthians 14:34-35**Ask****According to these verses what is ‘disgraceful’?**

It is disgraceful for a woman to speak in the church.

Read 1 Corinthians 11:4-6**Ask****In these verses does Paul forbid women from speaking? Or does he forbid them from doing so in an inappropriate manner?**

Women can speak in church and prophesy. But they must do it with covered heads.

When we look at both these passages together, we realise that Paul was NOT forbidding women from ministering in the church. He was simply against them doing it in an inappropriate manner.

**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.*

Video Presentation

Video: Women’s Leadership Roles in the Church

Duration: 2 minutes 30 seconds

According to Ron Moore who is superior—man or woman? (Galatians 3:28)

All are equal in Christ.

According to Ron Moore why should Adam be considered the leader?

According to the Creation Order, Adam was created first. Later Eve

was created to help this leader. Therefore man is the main leader in the home and in the church.

Do you think Ron Moore is biblically correct in saying a man should always be the main leader of a church?

(Ask the children for their opinions on this subject.)

According to 1 Corinthians 11:4-10 why was Paul so upset with women who prophesied with uncovered heads?

He was upset with the women because they were going against the Order of Leadership established by the Lord. In Paul's times, all women covered their heads except for the prostitutes. The head covering symbolised submission and loyalty to one's husband.

When the women in the Corinthian church began to prophesy and minister with uncovered heads, it must have led to a lot of gossip both inside and outside the church. Outsiders must have got the wrong impression that women belonging to the Christian community were probably "liberated rebels" who no longer believed in submission to the husband, similar to the feminists of today.

Paul was very upset and declared that nobody has the right to go against the Creation Order established by the Lord. The woman must cover her head while ministering, to show that she is in submission to her own husband, as well as in submission to the male leadership of the Church.

Paul did not indicate anywhere in this passage that women should not minister in the church.

Should women minister in the church today with covered heads?

In Paul's times, the head covering was very important. It symbolised submission and loyalty to one's husband.

We don't see this in today's culture. Society no longer regards a woman with uncovered head as someone rebelling against her husband's authority. So there is no need for the women of the church to do it either.

However, they must continue to be submissive to their husbands and to the main leadership of the church, in their *attitude*.

Why do you think Paul was upset with the Corinthian women in Chapter 14 and asked them to keep silent in church? (Look at Vs. 28, 30, 35, 40).

Paul asked three categories of persons to keep quiet in Chapter 14.

- In v. 28 he told tongue-talkers to keep quiet if nobody is available to interpret their message.
- In v. 30 he asked the prophets to stop speaking and sit down if God gave a message to another person.
- In v. 35 he asked women to clarify their doubts at home with their husbands, rather than indulge in heated debates at church.
- Finally, in v. 40 he urged everyone to behave in a "fitting and orderly" manner during the church service.

Based on these verses we can see that Paul was NOT forbidding women from doing ministry. He was simply ordering them not to disrupt the service.

Based on 1 Corinthians 14:35, is it wrong for women to raise doubts in a church gathering? Should they stay quiet even if they have doubts?

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.

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 clearing their doubts about Scripture. He only asked them to submit to the main leadership in matters of doctrine due to the Creation Order of Leadership established by God.

In 1 Timothy 2:12-13 Paul ordered women not to teach or exercise authority over men, as Adam was created first. Then why did he praise Priscilla who taught a man, and Apostle Junia who was leader over men?

Paul praised Priscilla and her husband highly for their ministry work. He spoke favorably of Euodia and Syntyche who were evangelists and preached the Gospel to both men and women. Similarly Paul praised Apostle Junia who exercised authority over a lot of men in her capacity of apostle. These examples clearly show that Paul was not against women leaders or women teachers.

However, he did believe that the main leadership of the church should be male, in line with the Creation Order established by God. Women must submit to the doctrinal stand taken by the main leader because God expects them to. In the video we saw Ron Moore affirming this point when he said that the Main Elder of a church or the Primary Teacher of a church must be male.

With regard to the wrong doctrines and malpractices running in some of today's churches, all we can say is, if a woman knows that the senior male leadership is wrong and cannot submit to it, maybe she should just shift to a different church where the uncompromised Word of God is being taught.

Do you think God is showing favoritism in declaring that a man alone can be the Main Elder of a church?

The Creation Order declares that men and women are equal, as both are created in the image of God. Woman was NOT created in the image of a lesser god. But when Adam fell, sinful man gained authority over woman and began to oppress her. However, now, Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the Fall. So those who accept Jesus now, become equal in Christ. This is why Galatians 3:28 says that there is no male or female in Christ—both are perfectly equal.

An example we can use is of the Father and Jesus. Both are part of the Trinity and absolutely equal. However, their 'roles' differ. Jesus placed Himself under the Father when He chose to come into the world as its Saviour.

He did NOT become inferior to the Father. Fully knowing that He was equal to God, He chose to place Himself under the Father, as clearly mentioned in Philippians 2:6-7. In the same way, the woman, fully knowing that she is equal to the man, must choose to place herself under the male leadership of the church.

This doesn't make her inferior to the man, any more than Jesus is inferior to the Father. She simply chooses to take on the role given to her by the All-wise Father, in the same way Jesus chose to take on the role given to Him by the same All-wise Father.



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 expose the danger of false teachings.
- To encourage Bible Study so that we are not led astray by false teachings.



SCRIPTURE PORTIONS

Revelation 2:12-29, 3:14-22; Colossians 2:1-18, 4:18; 1 Corinthians 1:18, 2:1-2; James 2:17-19; Matthew 26:24, 27:3-5; Mark 1:15



MEMORY VERSE

Matthew 7:15: “Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves.”



RECAP

- What did we learn about last week?
- Why did Paul ask the Corinthian women to stay silent in the church?
- Do you think God was showing favoritism in declaring that a man alone can be the Main Elder of a church?
- 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

Jesus Knocking at the Door

The Student Workbook contains a painting of 'Jesus Knocking at the Door.' Discuss this painting.

Ask

(Please motivate the children to present their thought and ideas.)

- What do you think this painting is trying to say?
- Is there a door knob that Jesus can use to enter inside the house?
- Do you think the artist deliberately avoided drawing a door knob? What was he trying to convey?
- Who do you think lives inside this house? A believer or an unbeliever?

Explain

This painting is based on Revelation 3:20. The idea is that Jesus is standing at the door of our hearts, asking us to open the door and invite Him into our lives. The door has a knob only on the inside. It is up to the person to choose whether or not she wants to open the door. Jesus does not forcibly enter anyone's life.

People generally believe that Jesus is knocking on the door of an unbeliever, waiting for her to invite Jesus into her heart. However we discover this isn't true when we look at Revelation 3:20 in its original context.

Video Presentation

Video: Jesus Knocking at the Door

Duration: 1 minute 48 seconds

Based on this video, is Jesus knocking on the hearts of believers or unbelievers?

Believers

Explain

Just as in the case of the Laodicean church, the Lord may be knocking on our hearts too, urging us to give up the wrong things we are

entertaining, and return to Him. If you hear His voice today, now is the time for you to come back and recommit your life to Him.



TEACHING CONTENT

Jesus sent a message not only to the Laodicean church but to the churches of Pergamum and Thyatira as well. Read through Revelation 2:12-29 and identify exactly what the Lord said to these two churches.

	Church of Pergamum	Church of Thyatira
What did Jesus praise them for?	They refused to deny Jesus even when one of their church members was brutally martyred.	The Lord was pleased with their deeds, their love, their faith, their service and their perseverance. Later they began to do even more than before, even as their love for God increased.
What did Jesus criticise them for?	They were tolerating those who followed the teachings of Balaam and the Nicolaitans, instead of disciplining these people or throwing them out of the church.	They were tolerating a woman who was teaching the believers to indulge in idolatry and immorality.
How did Jesus correct them?	Jesus warned that He would destroy all who followed the teachings of Balaam and the Nicolaitans.	Jesus warned that He would severely punish the false teacher and all those who practiced her false teachings. Those who didn't follow her were asked to sincerely continue holding on to Christ.

<p>What did Jesus promise if they accepted correction?</p>	<p>In the OT, manna strengthened the Israelites. In the same way these believers too would be strengthened by the Lord in their present time of persecution.</p> <p>In heaven they would be given a white stone with a new name on it.</p>	<p>Jesus promised that those who held on to Him would be given victory over the enemy, and they would rule with Christ.</p>
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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 God threatened to kill the children of the false teacher, Jezebel? Isn't He supposed to be a God of love?

We do not know whether this verse refers to this lady's biological children or "ideological followers." Either way, they seemed to be following in her footsteps and preparing themselves to spread the false teachings to other churches. Jesus declared that He would physically kill them so that they wouldn't cause any further damage. Because He is a God of love He couldn't allow them to spread their poisonous teachings and "spiritually kill" the other churches as well.

Why do you think God hated false teachers so deeply? They are not as bad as murderers and terrorists, are they?

(Ask the children for their thoughts and ideas.)

In Colossians 4:16 what did Paul instruct the Colossians to do?

After reading Paul's Letter to the Colossians, he wanted these

Colossian believers to send his letter to the Laodiceans so that they could read it too. In the same way, he had sent a letter to the church of Laodicea. He advised the Colossians to collect that letter from the Laodiceans and read it out in the church of Colossae. To put it simply, it looked like both the churches were struggling with the same issues. So he wanted both of them to go through his letters and see what God had to say to them.

The churches of Colossae and Laodicea were struggling with what issue? Refer to Colossians Chapter 2 vs 1, 8-9, 13, 16, 18; 4:18.

Both these churches were under attack from false teachers who preached Gnosticism. They preached that Jesus is a created angelic being and not really God. Salvation is based on knowing special truths that go beyond merely knowing Jesus as Savior. Those who had this “special knowledge” observed special rituals and considered other believers as inferior to them. Paul was worried that the two churches would believe these false teachings and stray away from the Lord. At the end of the letter to the Colossians, Paul wrote with his own hand so that the believers would recognise his handwriting and be assured that the letter had not come from a false teacher. He probably did the same with the letter written to the Laodiceans.

How did the false teachings affect the Laodicean church? Do you think they responded to Paul's warning and got rid of the false teachers?

Sadly they were ensnared by the false teachings. Gradually the Gnostic “special knowledge” became more important than the things taught in the Scriptures. The more they distanced themselves from the true Scriptures, the colder they became in their Christian walk. Finally, they reached a stage where they thought they were specialists in “gnostic knowledge”—immensely proud that they weren't like the other churches which only knew about the cross of Christ and

nothing else (1 Corinthians 2:1-2). They failed to realise that what they dismissed as ‘foolishness’ had the power to save them (1 Corinthians 1:18).

Video Presentation

Video: Lukewarm in Laodicea

Duration: 2 minutes 56 seconds

What do you think Jesus meant when He said to the Laodiceans, “You are neither cold nor hot?” Why do you think lukewarmness upset Him so much?

‘Cold’ people are like the unbelieving Pharisees who refused to believe in Jesus in spite of witnessing His miracles and listening to His teachings. Such people have made up their minds not to change. Jesus doesn’t worry over such people anymore because they have finished making a clear-headed, well-informed decision against Him. There is no hope left for them.

‘Hot’ people are like the disciples who sacrificed all comforts to go from town to town preaching the gospel. Such people may be in full time ministry or involved in business. Irrespective of where they are, they live for Christ and are sold out for Him. Jesus doesn’t worry over the fate of these people either because their future reward is secure in heaven.

It’s the ‘lukewarm’ people who are in greatest danger because these fools don’t even realise they are in danger. If they are rich like the Laodicean believers, they feel they don’t need Jesus. If they are attending church regularly and putting tons of money in the offering box, they think their ticket to heaven is reserved. They are utterly blind and don’t even realise it. Such people tend to laugh when the Word of God is preached to them. They think these teachings don’t apply to them because they’re too ‘rich’ and too ‘spiritual’ to need the Scriptures. Jesus is upset with such people because they ignore His warnings and words of love and encouragement. If such people continue to ignore Him, Jesus warns He will spit them out.

Do you think Jesus hated the Laodiceans? Explain why or why not.

If He hated them He wouldn't have stood patiently at their door knocking, hoping that they would hear His warnings and open up. He didn't scold them out of hate. Rather He corrected them out of a deep love to save them.

Based on all that we have discussed, why do you think Jesus warned the churches of Pergmaum and Thyatira so strongly to get rid of their false teachers?

Jesus warned, "Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves" (Matthew 7:15).

When Laodicea failed to take this warning seriously, they ended up spiritually dead. Most of the people of this church weren't even true believers! The wrong teachings taught here made them think they were very spiritual and on their way to heaven. As a result they were on the verge of ending up in hell.

Jesus didn't want the churches of Pergmaum and Thyatira to suffer the same fate. So He promised to personally destroy the false teachers if the church leadership failed to take strict action.

What kind of false teachings exist today? Are they dangerous?

(Allow the children to share their views. They may mention the teachings of the Jehovah Witnesses, Mormons, Seventh Day Adventists, etc. All of these are valid examples of false doctrines.)

The most dangerous false teaching today is that saying a salvation prayer will guarantee entry into heaven, irrespective of how you live after that. This teaching has led to 'lukewarmness' among lakhs of Christians. They find the things of God boring and ignore Him most of the time. It's enough for them that they have their ticket to heaven and don't wish to know Him better.

They don't realise, just like the Laodiceans, that they don't really have salvation. They think they are clothed in white robes when actually they are spiritually naked!

A simple way to determine whether or not you truly have salvation, is to take an honest look at your thought-life, your words, and your day to day behavior. If you truly have salvation, you will see the Holy Spirit at work in these three areas, slowly changing you into a new and different person with holy desires. If you don't see such change and transformation in you, then you probably never truly got saved and the Holy Spirit never did enter your life.

The false teaching today is very subtle. It says that it's enough to 'believe' that Jesus is God and that He can save us. James 2:19 points out that the demons 'believe' this even more strongly than we do; but none of them are saved!

Similarly the false teaching says that if you got really emotional while saying the salvation prayer and felt sorry for all your sins, then that guarantees your prayer was genuine. But the Bible points to Judas Iscariot who was filled with remorse over his sins and tried to make amends; he did NOT go to heaven! (Matthew 26:24, 27:3-5)

The truth is that "... faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead" (James 2:17). If a person truly has the Holy Spirit within him, He will show up in the person's thought-life and his actions.

- Jesus did NOT preach that salvation is by saying a salvation prayer.
- He did NOT preach that salvation is by feeling remorseful over past sins and having an emotional experience.
- He did NOT preach that salvation is by having an intellectual belief that He is God and Savior.

Rather, Jesus preached, "The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!" (Mark 1:15)

Salvation involves both believing and repentance. A person may or

may not feel emotional while saying the salvation prayer. But if he makes a firm decision, in that moment that he is finished with his past sinful life, and Jesus is now going to change him into a holy person so that he can live a holy life, it's enough! In that moment the Holy Spirit enters into him, and changes his spirit into a new creation. That day onwards the person will begin to change.

Jesus clearly said that a person who makes a salvation-decision without counting the cost will be thrown out (Luke 14:25-35). True salvation involves repentance and a clear decision to follow Christ.

False evangelists who declare a person saved if he simply says a salvation prayer and sheds a few tears in their meetings, are placing that poor person in danger of the fires of hell!



APPLICATION

Most people don't realise how dangerous false teachings are. Laodicea took them lightly and paid the price for it. The price was very high ... they had to pay for the false teachings with their souls. Many of them must have gone to hell under the false impression that they were spiritually safe and secure.

But how can we know if a teaching is false or true unless we are familiar with what the Bible teaches? It very important to study the Bible on a regular basis, so that we can discover the true teachings and doctrines of Christ.

Also God expects us to practice what we learn from the Bible. He knocks on the door of our hearts if we have backslidden in any areas of our lives. He loves us and wants to protect us from destroying our future. So we must be willing to repent, open the door, and let Him in.



CLOSE WITH PRAYER





Water Baptism



LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To explain the symbolism involved in immersion baptism.
- To teach that believers have zero-interest in sinful things!
- To urge children to renew their minds and refuse the body's sinful demands.



SCRIPTURE PORTIONS

Romans 6:3-14, 8:20-22; John 3:6-8; 1 Corinthians 2:16; 2 Corinthians 5:17; 1 John 3:9; Galatians 5:16-25; James 4:7



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.”



RECAP

- What did we learn about last week?
- Why did Jesus warn the churches of Pergamum and Thyatira so strongly to get rid of their false teachers?
- Mention something new that you learnt during your personal Daily Bible Study this week.
- 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

Immersion Baptism

Discussion

Ask

Do you think sprinkling baptism is okay? Or is immersion baptism the only right method? Give your reasons.

(Ask the children to write down their opinions in the Student Workbook.)

Some Christians say it hardly matters whether we get ‘sprinkled’ or ‘immersed’. Do you think the method really matters? Explain why.

We use symbols every day, and each symbol has its own meaning.

If you want to show someone you love them, what symbol would you use? Would you cup your hands into the shape of a heart? Or would you point your fingers at the person mimicking a gun? By using the wrong symbol, you will convey the wrong meaning to the person. Looking at your finger-gun the person will think you want to shoot them rather than be friends with them!

Baptism too is a symbol. If we sprinkle-baptise rather than immerse, the true meaning of baptism is lost.

According to Romans 6:3-4 what does immersion-baptism symbolise?

It symbolises that we were “buried with [Christ] through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead, we too may live a new life.”



TEACHING CONTENT

Video Presentation 1

Video: Why only Immersion Baptism is Correct

Duration: 3 minutes 39 seconds

Discuss

According to the video, immersion baptism symbolises death and burial. Does this mean all baptised believers should be considered as ‘dead’?

God instituted the practice of immersion baptism because He wants believers to realise that their old sinful self is completely dead and buried (Romans 6:6-7). We only bury completely dead persons; we do NOT bury persons who are partially dead.

So when a believer ‘enacts’ in the baptism tank what Christ has done for him, he is basically admitting before the whole world that his old sinful self is utterly dead and buried. Then the person ‘enacts’ rebirth by coming out of the water. The person coming out of the water is supposed to be a new person ‘recreated’ by the Holy Spirit Himself (John 3:6). He has now been born of the Spirit and is a new creation (John 3:8, 2 Corinthians 5:17). Now he is NOT the other person who died and was buried—he is no longer that other person as that person is dead and buried.

Sadly, hundreds of Christians get baptised every year without understanding this amazing truth that they are “acting out” when they get baptised. They think that they are the same before and after salvation, but this is a lie!

So, baptised people are not ‘dead’ people. They are simply people who are admitting that when they got saved, the old sinful self died and was buried. Now they are a ‘New’ creation, recreated with God’s own DNA i.e., they are born-again (John 3:3). Because they have been freshly recreated with God’s own DNA, they have holy desires and have the power to overcome sin and temptation (1 John 3:9).

Match the Following

The Student Workbook contains a Match the Following exercise. Ask the children to match the verses to the explanations. This exercise will enable them to read the verses for themselves and discover what the Lord says about them. The right answers are given below:

Our Status due to Salvation	Bible References
The old sinful self of the believer is completely dead. The ‘burial’ proves it’s completely dead—we don’t bury partially dead persons!	Romans 6:6-7

Your human parents “gave birth” to the person with the sinful spirit. But you died at the moment of salvation. Then the Holy Spirit created a new person who didn’t exist before. He has “given birth” to the new you, and you are “born of the Spirit.”	John 3:6,8
A believer is called ‘born-again’ because the Holy Spirit creates a new person who didn’t exist before.	John 3:3,7
Because believers are created with God’s own DNA, they have holy desires and do not live in sin.	1 John 3:9
After salvation the believer is a ‘new creation.’ The old person with old sinful desires is dead and gone. Now a new person “is here” with holy desires.	2 Corinthians 5:17
The ‘new creation’ has a new spirit with the very ‘mind of Christ!’ But his “human unrenewed mind” continues to hold onto old sinful desires and thought-patterns.	1 Corinthians 2:16/ Romans 12:2
A believer can choose. If he chooses to follow the desires of his new spirit, he will enjoy a new life. But if he continues to follow the sinful desires of his unrenewed human mind and body, his whole life will be messed up.	Galatians 5:16-25
Because the old self is dead, a believer has as much interest in sinful things as a dead person does, which is basically zero-interest. So don’t give your bodies to sin—because you don’t need to. Rather give your bodies to God, to serve Him.	Romans 6:11-14



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 the practice of baptism symbolises “rebirth as a new creation,” then why do Christians continue to sin? What do you think is the solution to this problem?

At the moment of salvation, the “sinful, sin-loving, sin-enslaved spirit” of a person ‘dies’. The person acts out this truth in the baptism

tank by allowing himself to be completely submerged in the water, symbolising his death and burial along with Christ.

At the moment of salvation, after the person's sinful spirit dies, the Holy Spirit creates a brand-new spirit filled with the very righteousness of Christ. The person is born-again, of the Spirit. He acts out this truth in the baptism tank by rising up out of the water.

So, every true believer is absolutely holy and righteous in their spirit. The Holy Spirit has personally created them this way. But their minds are still 'unrenewed'. The mind still has old thought-patterns and desires. If a person's mind was used to speaking lies in the past, it automatically wishes to lie again the next time the person gets into a sticky situation.

The believer must make a conscious effort every day to teach his mind God's truth. He must explain to his mind that he is now a new creation with holy desires; he no longer 'desires' to sin, he no longer 'desires' to speak lies. He must teach his mind this basic truth and refuse to yield to the temptation of lying.

If a person allows his unrenewed mind to control his life, he will continue doing old sinful things (Galatians 5:16-17). But if he chooses to believe what the Bible says—that he is a new creation with only godly desires—his unrenewed mind will not be able to control him any longer (Galatians 5:24-25). Rather he will begin to think and act with the mind of Christ which dwells in his brand-new spirit (1 Corinthians 2:16).

How holy should a person be to get baptised? Should we wait until we become super-saints?

The Baptism ceremony is NOT a reward that God gives to those who have proved to Him how holy they are. It's not like an Olympics awards ceremony where medals are given out to only the winners.

Rather the baptism ceremony is something the believer undergoes, to declare to the world that God has made him a winner. By getting

baptised he declares that his old sinful self is dead, and he is now a 'new' person with holy desires and the power to live a victorious Christian life.

So a person doesn't have to wait until he becomes super-holy before getting baptised. Even a brand new believer can declare what God has done for him by getting into the water and participating in the sacrament of baptism.

Video Presentation 2

Video: Sin is 'unnatural' for a Believer

Duration: 2 minutes 21 seconds

Baby spiders eat their mother from the inside out, to survive and grow strong. According to the video, why do they do this? And how do fallen humans do the same thing?

Sadly, when Adam sinned, he brought death and decay into the world. All of creation was affected by his selfish action of eating that fruit (Romans 8:20-22). Because of him, it became 'natural' for lions to eat lambs, and for baby spiders to start feeding on their mother while she is still alive! In a fallen world it's perfectly 'natural' for animals to do these things. In the same way it's perfectly 'natural' for humans to lie, steal and kill.

Nobody teaches a baby spider to chew on its mother's trembling flesh. The action comes to it 'naturally'. Even if you preach to the baby spider for one hour, in spider-language, about what a wicked thing this is, it will not be able to control itself. In the same way, people do sinful things because it comes 'naturally' to them. If you preach to them how sinful they are, they may feel guilty and even begin to weep, but the next time temptation comes, they again succumb because it's the 'natural' thing to do—it's part of their 'nature'.

So according to the video, sin, violence and killing are 'natural' for all unbelievers and animals.

The preacher says that “sin is contrary to the nature” of the believer. What does this mean in simple everyday language?

Its ‘natural’ for a donkey to bray. But if you heard your cat braying that would be highly ‘unnatural’! Braying is “contrary to the nature” of your cat.

It’s the same with believers. At the moment of salvation, the Holy Spirit creates a brand-new spirit for the believer, filled with the very righteousness of Christ. The old sinful person is dead and buried. This is why 1 John 3:9 declares confidently that a believer does not live in sin because God’s DNA is in him.

So it’s ‘natural’ for a believer to live a godly life. The same way a cat can meow because this is its ‘nature’, the believer too is ‘naturally’ able to live a holy life because holiness is in his nature. The ‘cat dna’ inside the cat makes it meow. In the same way the God DNA inside the believer makes him live a godly life (Please read aloud 1 John 3:9).

Because a cat possesses ‘cat dna’, it’s highly ‘unnatural’ for a cat to start braying. Braying is not in its ‘nature’. In the same way, because a believer possesses God DNA, it’s highly ‘unnatural’ for believers to live in sin. Sinning is NOT in their ‘nature’.



APPLICATION

Most believers continue to live in sin just like the unbelievers because they think it’s a ‘natural’ thing that nobody can avoid. They think the same way baby spiders can’t avoid eating their mother, believers too can’t avoid sinning. They don’t realise that its ‘unnatural’ for them to sin. The same way its ‘unnatural’ for a cat to bray, its ‘unnatural’ for a believer to sin.

What you believe in your mind determines what you become. If you believe that you are a helpless sinner who will never be able to live in victory, that’s who you will always be. However, if you choose to believe the Scriptures, and begin to resist temptation, you will find yourself walking in victory more and more.

- The next time you lose your temper and scream at someone, don't say "I can't help it because bad temper is part of my nature." The bad tempered person died and was buried with Christ at the moment of salvation. The Holy Spirit has now created you into a new person with His DNA. Love, patience and gentleness are in your DNA now—NOT an uncontrollable temper. Start teaching your mind this and refuse to lose your temper. Pray for the Holy Spirit's help and make a conscious effort to use the spirit of love and self-control which resides in your New spirit.
- Similarly, the next time you are tempted to watch something immoral on TV, don't say, "I can't help it because I'm sinful and weak." The weak and sinful person you once were, was buried with Christ at the moment of salvation. The Holy Spirit has now created you into a new person with His DNA. Holiness and purity are in your DNA now—NOT lust or immorality.

Your unrenewed mind and body are filled with old baggage.

- Your mind is still crammed with selfishness, bad-temper, lust and pride.
- Your body is still used to old habits like cigarettes or pornography, and it continues to want them.

But your spirit is brand new, filled with the righteousness of Christ. You have absolutely no interest in sinful things.

Romans 6:11-14 says that you are as interested in sinful things as a dead person! A dead person is too dead to feel interested in or tempted by sin. You too are that dead according to the Bible! If you stand on this truth and begin to resist temptation, Satan will flee from you.

Today make a resolution to begin practicing James 4:7. Choose to believe that you are totally dead to sinful things and firmly begin to resist Satan.

Water Baptism

- Teach your mind that the old sinful person is dead and you no longer have an interest in sinful things.
- Refuse to yield to the sinful demands of your body because you are a new person with God's holy DNA and godly desires.

Enter into the waters of baptism to declare what God has done for you. If you take water baptism firmly believing the truths explained above, the power of the cross will be released into your life and you will see yourself being transformed on a daily basis.



CLOSE WITH PRAYER





The Lord's Supper



LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To teach that Communion is a proclamation of Christ's work on the cross.
- To show how we can release God's Power into our lives through Communion.



SCRIPTURE PORTIONS

Hebrews 7:2-3; Genesis 14:8-20; Ephesians 3:10-11, 6:12; 1 Corinthians 15:56-57; Isaiah 53:5



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?
- If the practice of baptism symbolises “rebirth as a new creation”, then why do Christians continue to sin?
- How did you renew your mind 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 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

Why Communion?

Ask

Why do we participate in the Communion Service? What are the different reasons why we do it?

(Encourage the children to voice their opinions.)

Video Presentation 1

Video: Last Supper with Dot and Bouncy

Duration: 3 minutes 35 seconds

Why do you think Jesus asked His disciples to remember the Last Supper even though it was such a sad event?

(Ask for opinions.)

Do you think the Last Supper was really a sad event?

It is true that the disciples were heavy hearted that day (Luke 22:45). But Jesus didn't ask them to remember the event for its 'sadness'. He wanted them to remember the event for a different reason, which we will discuss later.

According to this video why do we have Communion?

We do it to show that we want to have 'close fellowship' or communion with Jesus. We do it to show that we are willing to share in His suffering—to be broken just like Him. This basically means that we are willing to do whatever Jesus tells us to do, even if it is painful.

Is this the only reason why we have Communion? To show that we have made a commitment to live for Him?

(Ask the children to think of 'other' reasons why we have Communion.)



TEACHING CONTENT

Can you think of an Old Testament story where someone participated in something similar to a Communion Service?

(Ask the children to suggest different stories from the Old Testament.)

Let's watch the video of an Old Testament story now. There's a 'meal' mentioned in this video, and there's a special term used to describe this 'meal'.

- First, watch carefully and identify what this 'meal' is called in the video.
- Second, identify whom Melchizedek is compared to in the Bible.

Video Presentation 2

Video: The Priest-King and the Meal

Duration: 3 minutes 03 seconds

Ask

In the video, Melchizedek is compared to whom?

Jesus Christ

Read Hebrews 7:2-3. In these verses, Melchizedek is compared to whom?

Verse 3 describes him as "resembling the Son of God." So the Bible compares Melchizedek to Jesus.

The video describes the meal of bread and wine as what?

Victory meal (The term is mentioned at '1 minute 02 seconds' in the video).

Explain

Almost everything we see in the New Testament was already mentioned in the Old Testament!

- For instance in the Old Testament we see manna being mentioned. Then in the New Testament, Jesus called Himself our spiritual manna (John 6:32-35).
- Similarly, the Old Testament describes sacrificial lambs that were sacrificed for the forgiveness of sins. Then in the New Testament, Jesus Himself became the sacrificial lamb.
- In the same way, the Priest-King gave Abraham bread and wine as a symbol of victory. In the New Testament Jesus too gave bread

and wine to His disciples, and asked them to carry on the practice to future generations.

Read the Story of Melchizedek as given in Genesis 14:8-20, and discuss:

According to Genesis 14:20 how did Abraham gain victory over his enemies?

God Most High delivered his enemies into his hand.

Do you think God would have given Abraham victory if he had just sat at home praying for Lot?

We see in this story that Abraham loved Lot enough to go into battle for him. He did his part sincerely. Then God did His part and granted Abraham victory in battle.

According to Ephesians 6:12 does God expect believers to do spiritual battle?

We are not asked to do earthly battle against “flesh and blood” or human enemies. However, we are expected to do spiritual battle on a daily basis against “the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.”

Will God grant us victory in battle the same way He did for Abraham? Read 1 Corinthians 15:57.

Because the Lord has broken the power of sin and death on the cross, we can be guaranteed victory in any battle that we face against the forces of darkness.

Explain

Some believers grumble that God is not doing any miracles for them. But they forget that Abraham ‘fought’ for his miracle. He fought and God gave the victory.

One important way that we ‘fight’ is through spiritual proclamations.

Ephesians 3:10-11 says, “His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, according to his eternal purpose that he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

When we—the church—‘confess’ aloud the promises written in the Bible, we openly declare to the spiritual rulers that we believe these verses to be true, and we truly expect these promises to be fulfilled in our personal lives. It’s our declaration that God’s Word will prevail and that the works of the enemy will not succeed in our lives.

The Communion Service is a proclamation of the completed work of Christ on the cross. Every proclamation is powerful in the spiritual realm and hence we can expect to receive the power of the Cross invading our lives as we partake in the Lord’s Supper.

If you remember, Melchizedek gave Abraham the “victory meal” because God had given him victory over his enemies. Jesus too gave His body and blood as a “victory meal,” symbolising the victory He has won for us.

In the first video, Bouncy says to Dot, “Why did Jesus ask His disciples to remember the sad event of His leaving? Why couldn’t He ask them to remember happier events?” The answer to this is simple! Jesus asked His disciples to remember that supper because it symbolised a victory meal! Every time they hold bread and wine in their hands in future, they will be reminded of how Jesus won victory for them on the cross! It was to be a ‘happy’ memory—not a sad memory.

This is the reason why the pastor in most churches says, “Let us ‘celebrate’ the Lord’s Supper.” It’s the ‘celebration’ of the greatest victory ever won for us! According to 1 Corinthians 15:56-57, because Jesus defeated sin and death on the cross, victory is now guaranteed in every encounter that we have with Satan!

Only three things prevent believers from enjoying this victory on a daily basis:

- Ignorance of these Biblical truths
- Deliberate indulgence in habitual sins
- Doubt and unbelief

We will now watch the testimony of a young lady who partook of the Lord's Supper in a meaningful manner, making a spiritual proclamation that brought her great victory.



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.

Video Presentation 3

Video: Healing Power of His Blood

Duration: 5 minutes 40 seconds

In the video what comparison did Vicky draw between her blood and the blood of Jesus?

Vicky spoke about how imperfect her human blood was. It was the defective genes in her blood that gave her baby Down's Syndrome. However Jesus' blood is perfect because He is sinless.

On the cross Jesus took all our imperfections upon Himself, and in exchange He gave us His perfection. Isaiah 53:5 says that He was crushed for our iniquities and by His wounds we are healed. So, on the cross Jesus won two things for us—forgiveness for our sins as well as healing for our physical bodies.

As a result, when we are cleansed by Jesus' blood, we are made whole, both in spirit and body. In our spirits, we are made whole as all our sins are cleansed away. And in our bodies too we are made whole if we claim healing for ourselves.

Vicky used to think earlier that healing must be ‘earned’? What are some ways that Christians try to ‘earn’ their healing?

Christians generally make statements like, “God will definitely heal him because he is so godly” or “The Lord heals those who serve Him faithfully.” So, people try to earn healing by doing good deeds.

However, on the cross Jesus did two things for us that CANNOT be earned:

- A person can try to live the holiest life possible, but it will not ‘earn’ him a place in heaven—because he still *falls short of God’s perfect standards*. He has to humbly hang his head and admit that he is *not good enough to ‘earn’ salvation*. All he can do is humbly **believe** that Jesus will forgive him *even though he doesn’t deserve it*, and **accept** this forgiveness *as a free gift*.
- In the same way, a person can try to live the holiest life possible, but it will not ‘earn’ him healing either—because he still *falls short of God’s perfect standards*. He has to humbly hang his head and admit that he is *not good enough to ‘earn’ healing*. All he can do is humbly **believe** that Jesus will heal him *even though he doesn’t deserve it*, and **accept** this healing *as a free gift*.

Vicky was able to obtain healing for her baby because she stopped trying to earn it. Instead she humbly **believed** that Jesus had healed her on the cross, and **accepted** the healing on behalf of her baby.

How can the Communion Service bring healing to our bodies? What must we do?

Every time you hold the wafer and juice in your hands, make a spiritual proclamation. Holding the wafer, say to the Lord, “I remember what you did for me on the cross. Your body was broken for me so that I could have forgiveness and healing. I believe what you said in Isaiah 53:5 and I thank you that because of your ‘stripes’, healing has now started manifesting in my body. I thank you for my healing.”

In the same way, holding the juice, say to the Lord, “I remember what you did for me on the cross. Your blood was shed for the forgiveness of my sins under the new covenant. I believe that under the new covenant healing is mine. I thank you for my healing.”

You may experience the healing immediately after partaking of the Lord’s Supper in this meaningful manner. However, in some cases, even though the healing process began at the moment you made your spiritual proclamation, it may take time to manifest in your physical body.

You must continue to confess aloud that Isaiah 53:5 is true and that healing will manifest in God’s perfect time. You must not stop believing or allow doubts to set in. If doubts arise, repent and reassert your faith that God did not lie in Isaiah 53:5. Draw strength from God by meditating on His Word, and continue to fight until the healing manifests fully in your body.



APPLICATION

Jesus asked us to partake of the Lord’s Supper in remembrance of Him—in remembrance of the victory He won for us on the cross. So every time you participate in the Communion Service make a spiritual proclamation. Declare to the “rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms” what Christ has accomplished for you. Declare to them that the works of the evil one will not prevail in your life.

Second, stop thinking that you can ‘earn’ healing through your good deeds. Your good deeds will never be perfect enough for that. Be humble enough to admit that you can never make yourself worthy enough to ‘deserve’ His healing. Instead humbly choose to accept healing from Him as a free gift.

Third, get rid of the three things that can obstruct your victory:

- Ignorance of these Biblical truths

- Deliberate indulgence in habitual sins
- Doubt and unbelief

Dig into the Word of God and allow the Lord to teach you more and more on this subject. Then your ignorance will go away. And your doubts and unbelief will clear up.



CLOSE WITH PRAYER



