



I Wonder...

LESSON 12: LARGE-GROUP

Why should I go to church and how do I choose one?

MAIN IDEA

The local church is the body of Jesus in the world. When one of his followers is missing, the church is lacking that person's gifts and talents. It is not complete. God is present in all churches, but he wants us to be connected with one that will help us grow in our faith, our knowledge of him, and our service to him.

BIBLE PASSAGES

- Hebrews 10:25
- 1 Peter 4:16
- Matthew 5:16
- John 10:35
- Ephesians 4:16

BIBLE VERSE

Again I say, don't get involved in foolish, ignorant arguments that only start fights. A servant of the Lord must not quarrel but must be kind to everyone, be able to teach, and be patient with difficult people.

2 Timothy 2:23-24, NLT



Prepare your heart to teach.
Plan for the lesson.



Introduce the story of the Gospel.
(10 – 15 minutes)



Play large-group games.
(25 minutes)

Prepare



Prepare your heart to teach.
Plan for the lesson.

QUESTIONS

- How can you be praying for the students this week? Are there any specific students or requests you can pray for?
- Are any changes and additions needed for the Large-Group Lesson?
- Is there anything specific you need to communicate to the small-group leaders?

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- J-E-S-U-S cards (using five pieces of construction paper, write one letter from the name Jesus on each)
- Stopwatch or timer

Large Group



Introduce the story of the Gospel.
(10 – 15 minutes)

REVIEW

Quickly review last week's lesson and Bible verse:

Ask, **Why is it important to respect your teacher?** (Because s/he is an authority God has placed in your life, and s/he is a gift to you.) **How is your teacher like a light bulb?** (Often unappreciated, a light bulb is very helpful for seeing things clearly.)

Remind the students that they also learned that it is important to pay attention and learn everything they can in school because they do not know what their future holds or how they might use what they are learning now.

Review Psalm 139:16

Consider doing "Who is Jesus?" Call and Response.

WHY SHOULD YOU GO TO CHURCH?

Make sure children know it is ok if they don't attend church. You don't want to shame anyone who doesn't go to church.

Show by raising your hands.

Ask,

- **How many of you attend a church regularly with your families?**
- **How many of you attend a church alone?**
- **Why is it important to go to church at all?**
- **What do you think of when I mention church?** (take responses)

Say, **Church is a gathering of people who love and follow Jesus. Each week people meet to worship and serve him. Although many people think of a building when they imagine church, it is not a building.**

OBJECT LESSON: EVERY LETTER (PERSON) COUNTS

Ask for five children to come forward. Give each one a letter card, but ask them not to look at what it says until you say so. Tell them that the goal is for them to arrange themselves as quickly as possible to spell the name, JESUS. Give them the go signal and have them spell out JESUS with the cards they are holding. (You might even time them.)

Now choose five new volunteers and challenge them to do this task even faster. After playing two or three rounds, secretly tell two of the children to sit down and not participate in the game. Doing this, the remaining three children cannot spell J-E-S-U-S.

Explain, **This illustrates why it is important for Jesus' followers to gather together in a local church. Each person has a spiritual gift to contribute to the church. If you are not there, the church is not complete. You miss out, and the others there also miss out.**

WHY WE NEED EACH OTHER

Look up and read Matthew 5:16 and John 13:35.

Ask the children, **What job has Jesus given to us?** (To do good works, to love one another and to be a light in the world) **In order to do this job well, we need other Christians.**

Read Hebrews 10:25 and 1 Peter 4:16.

Ask, **What are the purposes described for meeting together?** (encourage one another and praising God)

WRAP IT UP

Introduce today's (optional) Bible verse, which is Ephesians 4:16.

Imagine a fun and colorful car. This car represents the church, which is like a big family of people who love and follow Jesus. Each part of the car represents a different aspect of the church, showing how all parts are important and work together.

- **Jesus is the most important part of the church. He is the engine and the steering wheel that controls and allows the car to have the power to move. Without Jesus, the car wouldn't run!**
- **The headlights are like the church's eyes. They help the church see where it's going and show love to others, just like Jesus did.**
- **The body of the car is made up of lots of different people, each with their own special talents. Some might be good at singing, others at helping, and others at teaching. Together, they make the church strong and have special gifts and talents to share.**
- **The wheels are like the people who go out to help others and tell them about Jesus.**
- **The doors are open wide, inviting everyone to come and join the church family.**
- **Inside the car, it's cozy and friendly, just like when we spend time together at church.**
- **Inside the car, there's a cozy and friendly atmosphere, just like when we spend time together at church. It's where we learn, laugh, and grow together.**

This car represents the church. It shows that when all parts of the church work together, amazing things can happen! But when there are parts missing, it can impact the ability of the car to work. Each part is important, and together, when each part is doing its job, the car runs smoothly and is a wonderful experience.

In the same way, when believers stay away from church, they are cutting off parts of the body and making it look strange while causing it not to function as well as it could.

Games



Play large-group games.
(25 minutes)

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Chairs (one less than the number of players)
- Music player with a selection of songs
- Space to set up the chairs and for players to move around
- Large empty can or cone
- Soft ball (like a soccer ball, volleyball OR playground ball)
- Two goals

LARGE-GROUP GAME: MUSICAL CHAIRS

Materials: Chairs (one less than the number of players), music player with a selection of songs, space to set up the chairs and for players to move around.

How to play: Arrange the chairs in a circle, with the seats facing outward. There should be one less chair than the number of players.

Make sure there's enough space around the chairs for players to walk or run without encountering obstacles.

All players start by standing in a circle around the chairs while music plays. When the music starts, players walk or dance around the chairs in a clockwise direction. As the music plays, the designated person in charge of the music (could be the host or a designated DJ) stops the music at random intervals. When the music stops, players must quickly find a chair to sit on. Since there is always one less chair than the number of players, someone will be left without a chair. The player who doesn't find a chair is eliminated from the game. After each round, remove one chair from the circle and resume playing music. Repeat the process until there are only two players left and one chair remaining. The player who manages to sit on the last remaining chair when the music stops wins the game.

LARGE-GROUP GAME: KICK THE CAN

Materials: Large empty can or cone

How to play: Designate a large playing area. This could be a backyard, a park, or any open space. Place the empty can in the center of the playing area.

Choose one or more players to be "it". These players are trying to tag others while protecting the can. The other players scatter within the playing area. The goal for the hiders is to avoid being tagged by the "it".

After counting to an agreed-upon number (e.g., 30 or 60), the "it" players begin trying to tag the other players. When those who are "it" tag another player, they must sit in a designated spot called jail. If one of the players successfully kicks the can, all the players in jail are freed, and the player who is "it" must count again while the other players scatter and another round begins. The game continues until either all the players are captured, or a player successfully kicks the can without being tagged.

Variations:

- The captured player joins the player who is "it" to help tag the remaining players until all have been captured.

Large Group

- **Freeze Tag:** Instead of tagging players, the person who is “it” can freeze them by tagging them. Frozen players must stay frozen until another player touches them to unfreeze them.
- **Time Limit:** Set a time limit for each round. If the person who is “it” doesn’t find all the players within the time limit, the hiders win that round.

LARGE-GROUP GAME: HANDBALL

Materials: A soft ball (like a soccer ball, volleyball, or playground ball), two goals

How to play: Divide the students into two teams. This game works best in a large area. Students can run and throw the ball to each other, but while a student has the ball, he or she cannot move. To score, students must hit the ball into the goal using his or her head. It is similar to Ultimate Frisbee, but uses a ball instead.



I Wonder...

LESSON 12: PRIMARY SMALL GROUP

Why should I go to church and how do I choose one?

MAIN IDEA

The local church is the body of Jesus in the world. When one of his followers is missing, the church is lacking that person's gifts and talents. It is not complete. God is present in all churches, but he wants us to be connected with one that will help us grow in our faith, our knowledge of him, and our service to him.

BIBLE PASSAGES

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BIBLE VERSE

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2 Timothy 2:23-24, NLT



Prepare your heart to teach.
Plan for the lesson.



Connect with the kids, and help them feel heard and cared for. (15 minutes)



Facilitate activity and study to help kids know and love Jesus. (20 – 25 minutes)



Lead kids to live out the mission of the Gospel. (5 – 10 minutes)

Prepare



Prepare your heart to teach.
Plan for the lesson.

QUESTIONS

- How can you be praying for the students this week?
- Are there any specific students or requests you can pray for?
- Are there any adaptations you can make to the lesson this week to better serve the kids in your small group or make your small group more effective?

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Cupcakes, 1 per child
- 1 fake cupcake (put a small balloon or vegetable shortening in the shape of a cupcake in a cupcake liner. Frost and decorate it to look just like the real cupcakes)
- Printout 1, cut out
- Printouts 2A and 2B, cut out
- (Optional) Paper (for Compliment Chain activity)
- (Optional) Pens or markers (for Compliment Chain activity)
- (Optional) Small pieces of paper or sticky notes (for Positive Affirmation)
- (Optional) Pens or markers (for Positive Affirmation)
- (Optional) Jar or container (for Positive Affirmation)
- Bible Verse Cards, 1 per child

Connect



Connect with the kids,
and show them that
they are heard and cared for.
(15 minutes)

Small Group

ICEBREAKER

Distribute name tags and snacks. Choose one of the following icebreaker activities to do together while children eat their snack:

- Option 1: Ask the children to share their highs and lows (the best and worst things that happened to them either today or from the past week).
- Option 2: Ask the children to take turns sharing how they're feeling today using the "How Are You Feeling?" chart (from the CKC Games Bag).

PRAY TOGETHER

Collect prayer requests from the students. The leader or a student can pray for the entire group, or a leader can pair up students and invite them to pray for one another.

BEING PART OF A GOOD GROUP!

Open up with some questions about being part of a good group.

Ask, **Have you been part of a good group?** (This could be a group of friends, a team sport, band, or other group that has a variety of people who help one another.)

Being part of a group where people have differences or different roles and responsibilities can be a great experience. When you see people who have different strengths but use them to help each other, it can be a place where everyone feels welcome and can use their strengths to build a great team.

- **Have you been to a church?**
- **What has been the best part of the church you went to?**

Explain, **Jesus created the church so that people who love him and follow him could come together to worship him and to help one another.**

Choose one of the following activities. Leader Note: If you are not able to start or complete one of the activities, you can try to fit them in for the second session for small groups.

ACTIVITY OPTION 1: COMPLIMENT CHAIN

Gather the kids into a circle or seated in a line. Give each child a piece of paper and a pen or marker. Start by having one child write their name at the top of the paper. Once each student is done writing their name, have everyone place their names in front of them. Place the cut-out compliments (from Printouts 2A and 2B) in the center of the circle. Go around the circle and allow the students to place a compliment by the names of the other students. For example, "Sarah, I love how kind you are to others."

Take time to read the compliments for each student. You may also consider allowing students to add any compliments to each person as you go around in the circle. Encourage the kids to be creative and thoughtful with their compliments. They can focus on personality traits, talents, or actions that they admire in each other.

Say, **Church can be a great opportunity for people to encourage each other and help one another grow in a relationship with God. This activity was a chance to encourage each other and it helps build each other up.**

Leader tip: Consider the age and maturity of your group. You may find it more helpful to write on the paper or sticky notes for your students. You may need to give suggestions using Printouts 2A and 2B. Also consider allow the students to go around and give verbal compliments. Make sure students understand they are to use encouraging words.

ACTIVITY OPTION 2: POSITIVE AFFIRMATION

Begin by explaining to the kids the importance of uplifting and encouraging each other with positive affirmations.

Have each child write their name on the top of a few pieces of paper or sticky notes (one for each child participating). Distribute the papers or sticky notes evenly among the children.

Instruct the kids to think of a positive affirmation or compliment about the person whose name is at the top of the paper. For example, "Sarah, you have a great sense of humor!" or "David, you are always so kind to everyone." Encourage the children to be genuine and specific with their affirmations, focusing on traits, actions, or behaviors they admire about each other.

Once everyone has written their affirmations, collect all the papers or sticky notes and place them in a jar or container. Shake the jar/container to mix up the names. Have each child take turns picking out a paper or sticky note from the jar/container, making sure they don't pick their own name. As they read aloud the name they picked, encourage the group to cheer, clap, or show their appreciation for the person receiving the affirmation.

Continue this process until all the students have been given affirmations or encouragement.

Say, **Church can be a great opportunity for people to encourage each other and help one another grow in a relationship with God. This activity was a chance to encourage each other and it helps build each other up.**

Heart



Facilitate activity and study to help kids know and love Jesus.
(20 – 25 minutes)

Small Group Session 2

WHY SHOULD YOU GO TO CHURCH?

Ask, **Do you attend church regularly with your family? Do attend a church alone? Why is it important to go to church at all?**

Say, **Church is a gathering of people who love and follow Jesus. What are the reasons people go to church?** (take responses)

The purpose of going to church is first to worship God and learn more about him.

At church, you also have the opportunity to learn about what God has called you to do and spend time building relationships where you are encouraged by others and encourage others to grow in your faith and relationship with God.

Each week, people meet to worship and serve God. Although many people imagine a building when they think of church, it is not a building.

OBJECT LESSON: FINDING THE RIGHT ONE

Say, **It can be very hard to choose which church to go to. Many of them look the same...kind of like these cupcakes.**

Distribute the cupcakes. Pretty soon one student will realize that they have received a fake cupcake and will be very disappointed. (Give them a real one after that.)

Ask,

- **Do you think all churches are the same?**
- **Which church does God go to?** (He is everywhere!)
- **What kind of church would God want us to go to?**

Say, **In choosing a good church, it is important to know that there are many different kinds. We should stay away from any church that does not teach the truth about Jesus.**

Church is an important place to meet when you love God and want to continue to grow in your relationship with him. It is important to find a church that helps you grow.

Here are some things that they might want to look for in a church:

- **A church that will help them and their family become more like Jesus—to know him, love him, and serve him better and better.**
- **A church that is loving and helps all people.**
- **A church that believes Jesus is the only way to God.**
- **A church that loves kids and plans activities to help you grow.**

THE CHALLENGE TO MEET

Read Hebrews 10:24-25 out loud.

Ask:

- **Why is it important to go to church if you believe in Jesus?**
- **How can the church help you with your relationship with Jesus?**
- **What are some things you can do to help others?**
- **What are some ways you can encourage others and help motivate them to love and do good for others?**

Say, **It is important to go to church so that you can help others and they can help encourage you. Together each person can help motivate others to do what is right, to love other people, and do good things to serve others.**

Church is also a place for people who love God to spend time together worshipping him.

Hands



Lead kids to live out the mission of the Gospel.
(5 – 10 minutes)

Small Group Session 2

WRAP IT UP

Say, **You will never find a perfect church because all churches are full of imperfect people.**

Looking at our cutouts, those children who already have a church can be challenged to pray for their church to be stronger.

Read 1 Thessalonians 5:11.

Say, **When you find a good church that teaches you the truths about Jesus, gives you a place to worship him, and allows you to support others and be supported by others, you do feel like you are a part of a close family. It's a place to grow in your relationship with Jesus and work to help others do the same!**

RESPONSE & REFLECTION

Tell them that if they don't know what church to be involved with, they can pray and ask for God to lead them. (You can also invite them to yours!)

If time permits, review the (optional) Bible verse with kids.



I Wonder...

LESSON 12: INTERMEDIATE SMALL GROUP

Why should I go to church and how do I choose one?

MAIN IDEA

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Prepare your heart to teach.
Plan for the lesson.



Connect with the kids, and help them feel heard and cared for. (15 minutes)



Facilitate activity and study to help kids know and love Jesus. (20 – 25 minutes)



Lead kids to live out the mission of the Gospel. (5 – 10 minutes)

Prepare



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QUESTIONS

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Connect



Connect with the kids, and help them feel heard and cared for.
(15 minutes)

Small Group Session 1

ICEBREAKER

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Choose one of the following activities. Leader Note: If you are not able to start or complete one of the activities, you can try to fit them in for the second session for small groups.

ACTIVITY OPTION 1: COMPLIMENT CHAIN

Gather the kids into a circle or seated in a line. Give each child a piece of paper and a pen or marker. Start by having one child write their name at the top of the paper and then write a compliment about themselves below their name. For example, "I am kind to others."

Once they've written their compliment, they should fold the paper so only the compliment is visible, not their name, and pass it to the person on their right. The next child will read the compliment, then write another compliment below it, this time about the person whose name is at the top of the paper. For example, "Sarah is always helpful".

They fold the paper again, hiding the previous compliments, and pass it to the person on their right. Repeat this process, with each child reading the previous compliment, writing a new one for the person named at the top of the paper, and then passing it on.

Encourage the kids to be creative and thoughtful with their compliments. They can focus on personality traits, talents, or actions that they admire in each other. Continue passing the papers around until each child receives their original paper back. Once everyone has their paper back, have them unfold it and read all the compliments written about them.

Say, **Church can be a great opportunity for people to encourage each other and help one another grow in a relationship with God. This activity was a chance to encourage each other and it helps build each other up.**

ACTIVITY OPTION 2: POSITIVE AFFIRMATION

Begin by explaining to the kids the importance of uplifting and encouraging each other with positive affirmations. Have each child write their name on the top of a few pieces of paper or sticky notes (one for each child participating). Distribute the papers or sticky notes evenly among the children.

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Continue this process until all the affirmations have been read. Afterward, encourage the kids to keep their affirmations somewhere they can see them regularly, like on their bedroom wall or in their school binder, as a reminder of the positive qualities others see in them.

Say, **Church can be a great opportunity for people to encourage each other and help one another grow in a relationship with God. This activity was a chance to encourage each other and it helps build each other up.**

Heart



Facilitate activity and study to help kids know and love Jesus.
(20 – 25 minutes)

Small Group Session 2

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Here are some things that they might want to look for in a church:

- A church that will help them and their family become more like Jesus—to know him, love him, and serve him better and better.
- A church that is loving and helps all people.
- A church that believes Jesus is the only way to God.
- A church that loves kids and plans activities to help them grow.

THE CHALLENGE TO MEET

Read Hebrews 10:24-25 out loud.

Ask,

- **Why is it important to go to church if you believe in Jesus?**
- **How can the church help you with your relationship with Jesus?**
- **What are some things you can do to help others?**
- **What are some ways you can encourage others and help motivate them to love and do good for others?**

Say, **It is important to go to church so that you can help others and they can help encourage you. Together each person can help motivate others to do what is right, to love other people, and do good things to serve others.**

Church is also a place for people who love God to spend time together worshipping him.

Hands



Lead kids to live out the mission of the Gospel.
(5 – 10 minutes)

Small Group Session 2

WRAP IT UP

Say, **You will never find a perfect church because all churches are full of imperfect people.**

Looking at our cutouts, those children who already have a church can be challenged to pray for their church to be stronger.

Read 1 Thessalonians 5:11.

Say, **When you find a good church that teaches you the truths about Jesus, gives you a place to worship him, and allows you to support others and be supported by others, you do feel like you are a part of a close family. It's a place to grow in your relationship with Jesus and work to help others do the same!**

RESPONSE & REFLECTION

Tell them that if they don't know what church to be involved with, they can pray and ask for God to lead them. (You can also invite them to yours!)

If time permits, review the (optional) Bible verse with kids.

Bible Verse Cards

BIBLE VERSE

Again I say, don't get involved in foolish, ignorant arguments that only start fights. A servant of the Lord must not quarrel but must be kind to everyone, be able to teach, and be patient with difficult people.

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Printout 1

A church that will help them and their family become more like Jesus—to know him, love him, and serve him better and better.

A church that is loving and helps all people.

A church that believes Jesus is the only way to God.

A church that loves kids and plans activities to help them grow.

A church that loves people and wants to help those in need.

A church that loves people and wants to tell others the good news about Jesus.

Printout 2A

You're incredibly
creative!

I love how kind
you are to others.

You have a fantastic
imagination!

You're such a good
friend to others.

Your enthusiasm
is infectious!

You're really good
at problem-solving.

You have a wonderful
sense of humor!

I'm so impressed by
how hard you work.

You're a great
listener.

You have a
beautiful smile.

I appreciate your patience
and understanding.

You're always willing
to try new things.

Your thoughtfulness shines
through in everything you do.

You're so helpful
and reliable.

Printout 2B

I admire your
perseverance.

You're an excellent
team player.

Your positivity
brightens everyone's day.

You have such
a caring heart.

You're so respectful
towards others.

Your determination
is truly impressive.

I'm so proud of the effort you
put into everything you do.

You have a knack for making
people feel included.

I'm impressed by your
willingness to learn and grow.

You're a fantastic role
model for others.

You have such a gentle
and caring nature.

Your positive attitude
is contagious!

I admire your
honesty and integrity.

You have a fantastic
sense of empathy.