

LESSON 1

MY CHURCH AND I

OBJECTIVES

1. To understand what a church is.
2. To be thankful that we are a part of the body of Christ.
3. To understand the roles and responsibilities of a pastor, deacon, and elder.
4. To encourage students to respect the pastors as those chosen by God to lead the church.
5. To understand what it means to have fellowship.

MEMORY VERSE

“And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.”

(Acts 2:42)

PRAYER

1. In the name of Jesus Christ, we pray. Thank You, Lord, for gathering us here this Sabbath so we can worship You.
2. Please give us the wisdom to understand that we are part of the body of Christ.
3. We are grateful for the blessing to be part of this big family in Christ, and ask that You give us the strength to do our best when serving You.
4. Finally, we ask that You guide today’s class so that we can learn more about those who serve You.



Overview

1. Bible Discovery

- Practices of the Early Church
- What "Church" Means for Us Today
- Ministers of the Early Church
- Ministers in Our Church Today

2. Linking to the Ten Basic Beliefs—One True Church

3. Life Application

- Fellowship
- We Can Help the Church
- Testimony: The Blessings of Fellowship

4. Activity—We Are All One Family



Background Knowledge for Teachers

Power from the Holy Spirit

Jesus promised His disciples that they would receive power to bear witness of Him after receiving the Holy Spirit. Notice the progression:

1. They received the Holy Spirit.
2. He gave them power.
3. They witnessed with extraordinary results.

Power from the Holy Spirit is not limited to strength beyond the ordinary—it involves courage, boldness, confidence, insight, ability, and authority.

Tongues of Fire

Since the first time God poured out His Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2), believers who receive the Holy Spirit have been able to speak in tongues. Speaking in tongues is audible, and the person praying often has movements of the body, which can be seen. Jesus’ disciples said that they, as well as observers, could “see and hear” the pouring out of the Holy Spirit (see Acts 2:33; also Acts 10:45-47).

If the Holy Spirit dwells in you, you can speak in tongues whenever you pray. Speaking in tongues is not a one-time experience only. Through prayer in tongues, “the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered” (Rom 8:26).

When you ache so deeply that mere words cannot convey your pain, or when a “thank you” hardly expresses your appreciation to God, the Holy

Spirit prays for you, replacing your earthly words with a spiritual language. You will find prayer in the Spirit more satisfying because the Holy Spirit enables you to know God's will and truth. He will express your needs more effectively than human language can.

The word "fire" in "tongues of fire" symbolizes God's purifying presence, which burns away the undesirable elements of our lives and sets our hearts aflame to ignite the hope of God in others.

Breaking of Bread

"Breaking of bread" refers to communion services that were celebrated in remembrance of Jesus and were patterned after the last supper that Jesus had with His disciples before His death (Mt 26:26-29). It also refers to the sharing of bread, i.e., having meals together.



Reaching Out to Your Students

As your students enter their later elementary school years, peer pressure becomes an increasingly crucial factor in their decisions, and may either be a positive or negative influence on their attitude toward the church. While some students come to church without much thought simply because their parents bring them, others come for social reasons: they come because their friends are at church. This lesson stresses the need for Christian believers to gather for education, fellowship, and worship.

Children at this age also want to earn recognition by producing something and gaining satisfaction as a result. The Bible, on the other hand, emphasizes humility and working for God in secret. As a result, they may not enjoy coming to church as much, or put less effort into their duties. During this lesson, try to help your students understand that they are in church because God brought them there for His purpose; they are a necessary part of His body, and each time they don't attend church, God misses them.

In keeping with the theme of serving God as one body, this lesson also focuses on the responsibilities that our church ministers have. Try to help your students learn to appreciate their work and the kinds of burdens they have to bear as shepherds of the church.



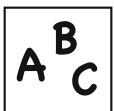
Opener

5 Minutes

"Missing Limbs"

This warm-up activity will attempt to demonstrate to your students what it really means to be one body in Christ, and how important each of them are within the church. Begin by assigning each student a "missing limb" (e.g., their dominant hand/arm, a foot/leg, or even one of their eyes). They aren't allowed to use this part of their body for the next few minutes. Then, assign them various activities that are obviously difficult without the use of those body parts. For example, folding a piece of paper, fetching an item from across the room, or catching a ball.

Explain to your students that each of us are a part of the body of Christ, and that each of us are just as valued or important as each part of our own bodies. We may be a foot, a hand, or an eye, but each of us are vital components in the church, each with our own roles prepared for us by God.



Vocabulary

Pentecost: The Pentecost has many names in the Bible (the Feast of Weeks, the Feast of Harvest, and the Latter Firstfruits). Celebrated on the fiftieth day after Passover, the Pentecost is traditionally a joyous time of giving thanks and presenting offerings to God for the new grain of the summer wheat harvest in Israel.



Bible Discovery & Spiritual Teaching

30-35 Minutes

In our lesson today, we're going to learn more about how the idea of a "church" came about, and about some of the responsibilities our church ministers have today. In order to study this, we're going to take a look at the very beginning—how the church began.

Did you know that in biblical times, people didn't worship in church buildings? They visited temples, or worshipped at altars instead. So how did the idea of gathering in one building come about? Let's open our Bibles and turn to Acts, chapter 2.

Before we begin reading, do you remember what happened to the disciples after Jesus ascended to heaven? He told them to wait for the Helper who would come. So they obeyed and waited, gathering in Jerusalem and praying together. It was during one of these gatherings that the Day of Pentecost occurred. The Holy Spirit came down for the very first time!

But what does the Holy Spirit have to do with the beginnings of church worship? Let's read verses 1-8. The sight and sound of the Holy Spirit gathered many, many people around the building in which the disciples prayed. The people had gathered—it was now time to preach to them! Let's continue by reading verses 14-21 and 37-41. That day, timid Peter who denied Jesus three times stood and, with the power of the Holy Spirit, preached to and converted three thousand people! Can you imagine such a sudden increase in the number of Jesus' followers? It was with this huge company of people that the idea of a church began.

Practices of the Early Church

The early church was very different from what we might imagine, because the peoples' lives during that time were unlike ours today. They lived simple lives in harmony with one another, but they didn't have one big building in which they could gather. Instead, they met at different houses to worship together. Let's read Acts 2:44-47.

FOR TEACHERS

Have the students turn to the Bible Discovery worksheet and fill in the first section. Answers have been provided.

Let's list what these verses say the early believers did.

- Shared their belongings ("had all things in common")
- Sold their belongings to share among the needy
- Broke bread together daily
- Had gladness and simplicity in their hearts

- Praised God
- Gained favor among the people
- Continued to grow in number

Later on, at Antioch, a thriving church was founded, with both the Jews and the Gentiles as members. This is when the believers were first called "Christians" (Acts 11:26). Paul said we "are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God." We are His temple, "built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit" (Eph 2:19, 22).

What "Church" Means for Us Today

A church is made up of its members, not the building itself. "Church" comes from a Greek word that means, "called out assembly." The Jews had been "called out" from the nations to be God's special people. Today, the church is made up of people who believe in Jesus and follow Him obediently. Most importantly, the church comprises people who were bought with the blood of Jesus Christ (Acts 20:28). The Bible uses different imagery to help us understand what Jesus' church is like.

FOR TEACHERS

Have your students turn back to their worksheets and fill in the second section. The answers have been provided.

(1 Corinthians 12:12) *"For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ."*

(Romans 12:5) *"So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another."*

(Matthew 12:49-50) *"And He stretched out His hand toward His disciples and said, 'Here are My mother and My brothers! 50 For whoever does the will of My Father in heaven is My brother and sister and mother.'"*

The Church Is One Body

According to the verses we just looked up, the Bible describes the church in two ways. First, the church is one body. People who believe in Jesus are linked together, as parts of a body are linked together. Each person has a special job in the body, just like the arms, legs, and other parts of our body. When we view the church as a body, it helps us realize that each of us is important, and that each of us has a different way to serve God and other people.

The Church Is One Family

The second way the Bible describes Jesus' followers is by

saying we're a family. Christians in the New Testament era called each other brothers and sisters. This was because they loved each other as such (1 Tim 5:1-2). The church, then, is made up of people who are family. We will not be alone if we take time to become friends with others in church. Even though we are not blood related, the blood of Jesus Christ has washed us all. We should love and support each other as a spiritual family.

Ministers of the Early Church

We just learned that, as part of the body of Christ, each of us has our own role as different "limbs." One of these roles is that of a pastor who leads the church. One of Jesus' favorite metaphors for spiritual leaders was that of a shepherd—a person who tends God's flock. In fact, the definition of the word "pastor" is "to shepherd." The flock that the pastor must shepherd refers to the church members. A shepherd must lead, feed, nurture, comfort, and protect the sheep. These are all responsibilities that a pastor—or a minister as we sometimes call them—must shoulder.

Timothy

To better understand what it means to be a minister, let's first look at a biblical example. Some of you may know of Timothy, a young disciple who learned about ministering a church from Paul. The first time we hear of Timothy, the Bible describes him as someone who was "well spoken of by the brethren" at Lystra and Iconium (Acts 16:2). What do you think it means to be "well spoken of"? Just from this statement, what kind of a person do you think Timothy was? [Allow students to discuss and give their own answers.]

Overall, I think we can agree that Timothy was a good Christian who lived according to Jesus' teachings. It was because of this characteristic that Paul chose to bring him along to help him in his travels (v. 3). Now, Timothy became so important a worker that Paul actually wrote two letters addressed solely to him.

We don't want to just study Timothy's characteristics, though. We want to examine what kind of responsibilities he had to shoulder. Let's turn to a few verses together and list out some of the commands Paul gave to him.

FOR TEACHERS

Once again, have your students turn to their worksheets and work as a group to fill out the appropriate section. Answers have been provided.

1 Timothy 1:3-4; 6:20 – *Guard the church members against false doctrine.*

1 Timothy 1:18 – *Wage the good warfare.*

2 Timothy 1:6 – *Stir up the gift of God (rely on the Holy Spirit).*

2 Timothy 2:2; 4:2 – *Teach the gospel to faithful men, convince, rebuke, and exhort.*

2 Timothy 2:3 – *Endure hardship.*

2 Timothy 4:5 – *Be watchful and endure.*

Ministers in Our Church Today

Just like Timothy pastored the Ephesian church, we also have ministers who pastor our church today. Let's read Ephesians 4:11-13. This verse talks about how God has chosen some people to be apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and ministers. So what is the purpose of pastors according to this verse? To equip the saints, to engage in the work of the ministry, and to edify the body of Christ.

FOR TEACHERS

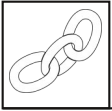
Have students turn to the worksheet and fill in the blanks below as you go over them. Make sure the students have filled in the blanks before moving on.

Let's now turn to Acts 20:28. Pastors also need to be "overseers" of the flock, to shepherd the members of the church by "feeding" them with spiritual food.

Can you think of some of the things your pastor has done for your church? These are some of the roles and responsibilities of our church ministers:

- Evangelism (Mt 28:19)
- Administering the sacraments (Acts 8:38)
- Teaching and preaching (2 Tim 4:2)
- Shepherding God's sheep (Jn 10; Ezek 34:2)

It all comes to this: the pastor is here to help give understanding of God's Word, and exhort the people to be like God in speech and in action. Pastors are not business employees or hired hands, but those called to be God's holy servants for our benefit. How many of you pray for our local ministers? They have many difficult responsibilities that they have to shoulder, so let's remember to keep them in our prayers every day!



Linking to the Ten Basic Beliefs

2-5 Minutes

One True Church

As the true church, we are one body, chosen by God to fulfill His purpose. Because we are His body, we ought to move as one, working together and treating each other as brothers and sisters with love. Although it may be difficult because many members are still strangers to us, we should do our best to get to know one another through fellowship and worship. It is also important to remember that as one body, each of us has our individual responsibilities, given especially to us by God Himself. We must always remember that He chose us specifically for His purpose, and if ever we decide not to attend church, or to skip on our duties, Jesus always misses us.



Check for Understanding

5 Minutes

- 1. What special event occurred when the apostles gathered in Jerusalem and prayed together? What do we call this day?** The Holy Spirit came down for the first time. The Day of Pentecost.
- 2. Name three things the early believers did together.** They shared all they had, sold their belongings to give to the needy, broke bread together daily, had gladness and simplicity in their hearts, praised God, gained favor among the people, and continued to grow in number.
- 3. What are two ways the Bible describes the church?** The church is one body and one family.
- 4. What does "pastor" mean? Who is the flock?** It means to shepherd. The members of the church are the flock.
- 5. How does the Bible first describe Timothy?** He was "well spoken of by the brethren."
- 6. Name two duties of our church ministers today.** They must evangelize, administer the sacraments, teach and preach, and shepherd God's sheep.



Life Application

10 Minutes

1. Fellowship

[Hand out Life Application Worksheet #1 to the students and keep a copy for yourself to reference. Answers have been provided below.]

- Colossians 1:18 says, "He is the head of the body."
- Let's read 1 Corinthians 12:14-27.
 - Who gave the members their various functions? (v. 18)
 - What bad attitudes can lead to disharmony in the body of Christ? (vv. 15-16, 21)
 - Why are there no unnecessary functions (members) in the body? (v. 20-22)
- Answers may vary. If time allows, you may ask students to share their drawings.

2. We Can Help the Church

[Hand out Life Application Worksheet #2 to the students and keep a copy for yourself to reference. Ask students to read the scenarios, and then ask them to write down what they would do in that scenario. After, choose some volunteers to share their answers with the class. Suggested answers have been provided.]

- Haley should introduce herself to the family. Then, she could offer to show the children, or even the entire family, around church and bring them to see the RE classrooms after eating lunch with them.
- Billy should ask the student to stop running and come back to clean up the pencils and books. Then, he should tell all the E1 students that the church is not a playground, and that it is important to respect church property.

3. Testimony: The Blessings of Fellowship

[Hand out Life Application Worksheet #3 to the students and keep a copy for yourself to reference. Ask the students to take turns reading the testimony, and then go over the questions as a class.]

Questions to Think About

- 1. How did the fellowship impact this brother's life?** The people in the fellowship made him feel like he wasn't alone in the new environment. They made him feel like there were people who understood him and who cared about him.
- 2. What do you think his life would have been like if he had not joined this fellowship?** He would have been very lonely and possibly tempted to follow his school friends in what they were doing. He might even have gotten lost in his journey of faith.
- 3. Do you have a fellowship in your area? Please share what it's like.** Allow students to share. If they don't have anything to share, share about your own fellowship if you have one.



Activity

We Are All One Family

10-15 Minutes

Objective: To help the students remember that in church, we are one family, and that each family member plays an important part.

Materials

- Construction paper
- Photos of each student, either prepared beforehand or printed the day of, if you have a photo printer available
- Scissors
- Tape

Instructions

For this activity, we will create a bulletin board decoration for the classroom.

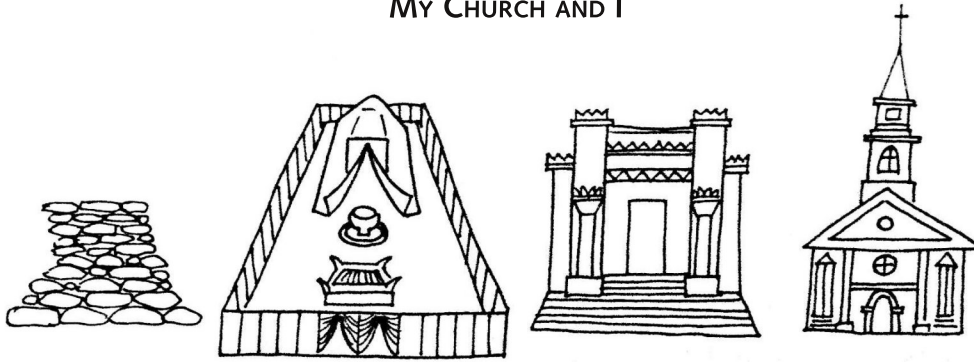
1. Take a photo of each of the students and print them out.
2. Give the students colorful construction paper.
3. Ask them to create a church with a big banner that says, "In Jesus Christ, We Are All One Family."
4. Have them tape their photos inside the church.

The photos will serve as reminders that we are all in God's church together, and that each one of us is an important part of the church.

HOMEWORK ANSWER KEY

1. True
2. False; three thousand
3. The early believers shared all they had, sold their belongings to give to the needy, broke bread together daily, had gladness and simplicity in their hearts, praised God, gained favor among the people, and continued to grow in number.
4. The church is one body and one family.
5. It means to shepherd. The members of the church are the flock.
6. He was "well spoken of by the brethren."
7. Our church ministers must: evangelize, administer the sacraments, teach and preach, and shepherd God's sheep.

MY CHURCH AND I



Practices of the Early Church

Open your Bibles to Acts 2:44-47 and try to list all of the practices of the early church members in the box below.

What "Church" Means for Us Today

Look up the following verses and write them below.

1 Corinthians 12:12

Romans 12:5

Matthew 12:49-50

Ministers of the Early Church

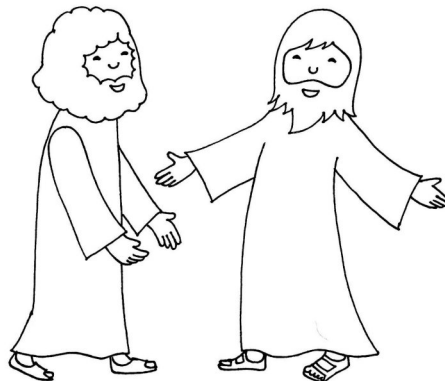
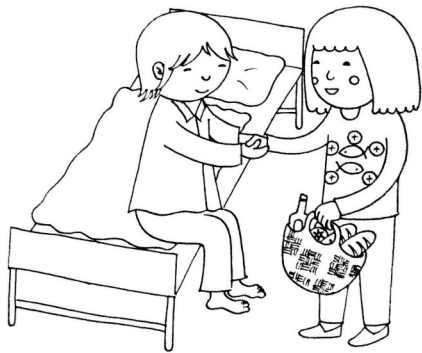
What kinds of responsibilities did Timothy have as a pastor? Turn to the following verses and write them down.

- 1 Timothy 1:3-4; 6:20 _____
- 1 Timothy 1:18 _____
- 2 Timothy 1:6 _____
- 2 Timothy 2:2; 4:2 _____
- 2 Timothy 2:3 _____
- 2 Timothy 4:5 _____

Ministers in Our Church Today

- 1. Pastors also need to be _____ of the _____, to _____ the _____ of the _____ by _____ them with spiritual food.

- 2. Some of a minister's duties consist of _____, _____ the _____, _____ and _____, and also _____ God's _____.



FELLOWSHIP

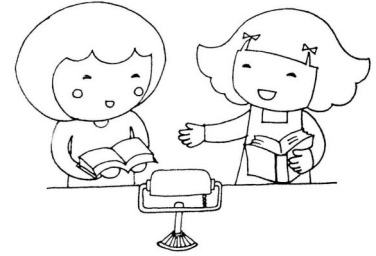
1. God uses the analogy of a body to describe the relationship believers have with one another and with Jesus Christ. But who is the head of the body?

Colossians 1:18 says, "_____ is the head of the body."

2. Each believer is given different but equally important responsibilities in this spiritual body, the church. Let's read 1 Corinthians 12:14-27.

a. Who gave the members their various functions? (v. 18)

b. What bad attitudes can lead to disharmony in the body of Christ? (vv. 15-16, 21)



c. Why are there no unnecessary functions (members) in the body? (v. 20-22)

3. "Fellowship" is from the Greek word koinonia, which means, "sharing in common." So what kinds of things can we share, and with whom? Pair up with a friend or two and come up with some things that we can share, and with whom we can share these things. Then, draw what you came up with in the boxes below.

WE CAN HELP THE CHURCH

Even though we are young, what we do makes a difference! As Paul encouraged Timothy, "Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, and in purity."

Instructions: Read the following scenarios and write down what you would do in that scenario.



Scenario #1

Haley went to church on Saturday. After the morning sermon, a church council member announced that there was a family visiting from another state. One of the kids in the family was around the same age as Haley. After the announcement, Haley went to get lunch. In the lunch line, she noticed that the visiting family was right behind her in the line.

If you were Haley, what would you do next as part of a church that shows love?



Scenario #2

After RE class ends, Billy sees some E1 students playing tag around the church. To avoid getting tagged, some of the kids are running pretty quickly. Billy sees one of the E1 students knock down some pencils and books from a table.

If you were Billy, what would you do next to help the church?

TESTIMONY: THE BLESSINGS OF FELLOWSHIP

There was a brother who moved to a new area. Moving to a new area was a big challenge. He had to adapt to a new school, new friends, and a whole new environment.

Thank God, in that area there was a strong fellowship. They had a prayer meeting every Wednesday night, when the members would come together to share about their week and their prayer requests, then pray for thirty minutes. From these prayers, he felt that there was something in this fellowship that he couldn't find in any other group or club—a family in Christ.



During the year, he faced a difficult trial. He felt pressure to conform to what his school friends were doing. There were other friends who would listen to his concerns, but he didn't feel like they had the heart to sympathize. However, when he brought this up to the fellowship, he finally felt that there were people who sincerely cared about his situation. They offered him words of encouragement from their own experiences, which he cherished. But it was their willingness to pray for him that really touched his heart.

How many people are there who honestly intercede on your behalf to the heavenly Father when you go to them with an issue? All the words and ideas in the world can only do so much, but truly it is only prayer that can bring about a resolution. Through the prayer and support in this fellowship, he received the strength from God to overcome the trial he was facing. From that point on, he felt the spiritual peace and confidence to stand strong in front of his school friends.

Questions to Think About

1. How did the fellowship impact this brother's life?
2. What do you think his life would have been like if he had not joined this fellowship?
3. Do you have a fellowship in your area? Please share what it's like.

E2 Year 2 Book 2 Lesson 1—My Church and I Homework Assignment

Name: _____ Parent signature: _____ Date: _____

Weekly Bible Reading: _____

Bible Reading: Check each box when you complete that day's reading.

Prayer: Check each box after you pray to God that day.

	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Read							
Pray							

What I Learned from the Bible This Week

1. _____

2. _____

Memory Verse

Please write down this week's memory verse. (Acts 2:42)

True or False

- Jesus' disciples were gathered in Jerusalem when the Holy Spirit descended. _____
- With the help of the Holy Spirit, five thousand people were baptized on the Day of Pentecost. _____

Short Answer

3. Name three things the early believers did together.

4. What are two ways the Bible describes the church?

5. What does "pastor" mean? Who is the flock?

6. How does the Bible first describe Timothy?

7. Name two duties of our church ministers today.