



I Wonder...

LESSON 12: INTERMEDIATE 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

- 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.



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 that 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
- (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 help them feel heard and cared for.
(15 minutes)

Small Group Session 1

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 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.

Instruct the kids to write 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 affirmations. 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 affirmation they picked, encourage the group to cheer, clap, or show their appreciation for the person receiving the affirmation.

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

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 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.