

BODY BUILDING

WHY THE CHURCH STILL MATTERS

HOT

SHOTS

Body Building: The Church

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Introduction

Eighteen-year-old Heather was so excited. She was graduating in three weeks, and she would finally be an adult. She had so many plans that it would take months to work her way down the list. At the top of the list, however, was one thing she would do right away, a decision she had made years ago. As soon as she was free to make her own choices, she would walk out of church for the last time. Church to Heather was boring, restrictive and hypocritical. Her parents made her go every time the doors were open. But now she was free—well, almost. Twenty-one more days...

Kevin looked up as he rode his bike past the huge stone and glass structure. The church was an imposing sight with its twelve-foot oak doors and eighty-foot steeple. He had never been inside City Avenue Baptist Church and had no idea what purpose the church served in his town. Kevin's dad was basically an atheist, and Kevin had been inside a church only once in his life, for a friend's funeral. Kevin wasn't sure what he believed, but it would never have crossed his mind to enter this church to find out anything about God. It just didn't seem very welcoming...

Maria loved going to church. From the time she was saved at a youth camp two years ago in seventh grade, Maria attended church every chance she got. The pastor's sermons were so challenging that she sensed herself growing spiritually every week. Her church was her spiritual lifeline since no one else in her family was saved. Over time, however, Maria began to wonder if there was more she should be doing. Was there more to the Christian life than sitting in the pew? Could she, a fourteen-year-old babe in Christ, serve in some area of the church? The thought excited and scared her all at once. She decided to talk to Pastor Bill about it next Sunday...

If the truth were known, many parents and youth pastors would be surprised to hear what teens think of the church. Too often adults assume that teens understand what the church is and why it is here. In reality, teens seldom have a clear understanding of God's program for this age, the local church.

This study seeks to present the biblical portrait of the church, to inspire teens to value the church and to motivate them to serve God in their local church.

How To Teach This Study

Hot Shots are written with the firm belief that teens learn much better when they are actively involved in the learning process. Teaching does not have to be dry, boring lectures or fruitless question and answer sessions. The most remembered lessons are those that included taste and touch, humor and drama, discussion and study. Active learning uses all these elements and more. It places the student shoulder-to-shoulder with the teacher instead of twenty feet away. It brings stories to life and gives information meaning. It changes thinking, speech, behavior and life.

The sections in each lesson have a specific function within the lesson.



The Warm-Up is an exercise that creates a sense of togetherness and begins the meeting with a fun game or interesting discussion.



The Bridge introduces the subject content with a thought-provoking illustration.



The Content is the explanation and application of the lesson.



The Closing summarizes experiences and calls for a commitment from the teens.

Different active learning styles are used to reinforce and illustrate the content, including: discussion, role play, question and answer, sight, smell, taste, video, music and many more.

Before you start the study...

Read the Introduction, Course Objectives and Overview. It is important that you understand the scope of this study before you start teaching it.

Before each lesson...

1. Read through the lesson and take note of the Lesson Aim, Objectives and materials needed for active learning segments.
2. Plan ahead to modify the lesson if necessary. Your facilities or equipment may limit you. Substitute your own ideas if necessary.
3. Each lesson is designed to be taught in 20–30 minutes. Preparation will enable you to shorten or lengthen the lesson to meet your time limit.
4. Use excitement when you teach! An excited teacher communicates that what he is saying is important, and the teens will notice. If you can't get excited about an active learning segment or a warm-up, develop your own that will work with your teens.



Course Objectives

By the end of this course the students will:

- Understand the true nature of the church.
- Be amazed at the central place the church has in God's program.
- Learn what the church is supposed to do and be.
- Know the enemies and obstacles of the church and how the church should respond.
- Discover their role in the life of the local church.

Overview

Lesson 1: A Body, A Bride And A Building: Understanding The Nature Of The Church

- **Lesson Aim:** To help teens learn the biblical metaphors of the church that reveal its true nature
- **Texts:** Various

Lesson 2: Mission Incredible: The Amazing Way God Plans To Spread The Gospel

- **Lesson Aim:** To help teens see the importance of the church in the world
- **Text:** Matthew 28:18–20

Lesson 3: What Do We Do Now?: What The Church Does

- **Lesson Aim:** To help teens understand what the church is supposed to do
- **Text:** Acts 2:42–47

Lesson 4: Fighting For Her Life: Keeping Poison Out Of The Body Of Christ

- **Lesson Aim:** To help teens believe the need for the church to fight for unity and doctrinal purity
- **Text:** Various

Lesson 5: Enlisting For Jesus: Knowing Where I Fit In The Church

- **Lesson Aim:** To help teens learn how they can use their gifts to build up the body
- **Text:** Various

Recommended Reading

Dever, Mark. *Nine Marks of a Healthy Church*. Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2000.

MacArthur, John. *Ashamed of the Gospel: When the Church Becomes Like the World*. Wheaton: Crossway, 1993.

_____. *The Body Dynamic*. Wheaton: Victor, 1996.

_____. *The Master's Plan for the Church*. Chicago: Moody, 1991.

Mack, Wayne A. & David Swavely. *Life in the Father's House: A Members Guide to the Local Church*. Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 1996.

Mayhue, Richard. *What Would Jesus Say About Your Church?* Johnson City, TN: Christian Focus Publications, 2002.

Spurgeon, Charles. *Lectures to My Students*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1979.

Whitney, Donald. *Spiritual Disciplines within the Church: Participating Fully in the body of Christ*. Chicago: Moody, 1996.

LESSON 1

A Body, A Bride And A Building: Understanding The Nature Of The Church

What is the church? To most adults who have been saved for awhile, it's pretty clear. But to children and teenagers, the picture may be a little cloudy. Before we can expect teens to get excited about the church, we have to be sure they know what it is. The Scriptures paint several vivid pictures that help us see clearly the beauty of the church.



To help teens learn the biblical metaphors of the church that reveal its true nature



Students will:

- Verbalize their thoughts about the church.
- See the connection between the church and the human body.
- Hear how the joy of a bride should characterize believers' joy in Christ's church.
- Practice the kind of encouragement that builds the church.



Various texts

Several New Testament passages use metaphors to describe God's plan for His church in the present and in the future. This lesson will zero in on those passages to find out what God says about how the church ought to function.

What You Need

Paper or small notepad for each teen in the group
Pens or pencils

The Lesson



Hand out a piece of paper to the teens, and ask them to write down words that come to mind when they think of church. Have the teens hand them to you and then read them one

by one, skipping duplicate words. When you come across interesting descriptions, ask the whole group, “Why would you think of the church as _____?” Take 3–7 minutes to discuss the descriptions.



Say, “God has a few descriptive words about the church that help us understand the true nature of the church and why He created it. We’ll look at four pictures of the church used in the New Testament.”

A Human Body

1 Corinthians 12

TOur bodies are amazing creations. The human body is composed of interconnected organs, muscles, bones, nerves, glands and blood. Each body part plays a role in contributing to the health and functions of the whole person. When one part fails to work, the whole body is affected, and medical help is sought to heal the sick member. The brain is the computer of the body. It sends signals via the nervous system that tell the body when to run or jump or chew. It also maintains the necessary functions such as breathing, heart pumping and blinking.

This picture of the body tells us much about God’s design for the church.

The body is a single entity made up of diverse parts.

Ask the teens, “If you had to lose the use of one part of your body, which would you lose and why: eyes, ears, mouth, legs and feet or hands? How would the loss affect your ability to function? How could an injury in one part lead to damage to another part?”

Just as a body is made up of eyes, ears, hands, feet, etc., the church is made up of different kinds of people providing different kinds of service to the church. God never intended that a church be filled with cookie-cutter Christians who all look alike, act alike and serve alike. Instead, a diversity of gifts contribute to the single goal of building up the whole church. When we see someone walking down the street we don’t say, “There goes a collection of body parts.” We say, “There goes Steve.” A body put together is a single person. A church with diverse members and gifts is a single, unified church.

Each part plays an important role.

Not many people think about their livers or endocrine glands on a daily basis. We do notice our eyes and hair and teeth every day; however, the lack of attention on the former does not make them unimportant. Serious health problems can result from a sick liver or glands—far more than unhealthy hair or teeth. In the same way *no one* in the church is unim-

portant. Some people think that because they sing or preach or teach they are more important than others. Paul says, “Not so!” Others feel they are less important because they “only” work in the nursery or sweep floors or drive a bus. Again, this is not true. *Every* person is important to the health of the church. The service of some may be more obvious, but they are not more important.

The head of the church is Jesus Christ.

What if every part of your body decided to do its own thing? Without a brain directing the function of all the parts, you would have chaos in your body. When a church is not being directed by its head, Jesus Christ, chaos and dishonor to Him results in the church. God intends for every member to bow the knee to the lordship of Christ in his or her life and in the church. The pastor is not the head of the church, neither are the deacons nor anyone else. The Bible as God’s Word is the guideline for the church, and Jesus is the head.

A Bride

Ephesians 5:22–33

The second picture of the church is a bride. The focus is not on wedding bells and cake but on the bride herself. The church is the bride of Jesus Christ. This has several implications.

A future wedding will take place.

The church is preparing itself for the return of Jesus. This time on earth, therefore, is a preparation time for that great event. As believers, we ought to be looking forward to the rapture when Jesus takes us out of this world to be with Him forever. Just as a bride-to-be lives with the excitement of her impending wedding, so we should set our hearts on Jesus, not on things of this world.

Purchase some of the following items from a thrift store or dollar store: makeup, hairspray, jewelry, gaudy shoes, white table paper and any other items that may be useful. Divide the teens into groups, and have each group select a girl to be the “bride.” Give each team three minutes to make their bride look as much like a bride as possible. When the time is up, ask the teens to evaluate how much the other teams’ brides look like a real bride. Ask them what is the difference between what they did and what a real bride would do on her wedding day. Then ask what would be communicated about her devotion to her bridegroom if she showed up for her wedding looking like what the teens have just put together. Likewise, what do we communicate about our devotion to Christ by the time we spend preparing ourselves for Him?

What You Need

Cheap cosmetics and other items that could be used to make a girl quickly look like a bride

An engagement ring has been given as a promise of the wedding.

Every woman in love looks forward to the day when the man she loves slips a diamond ring on her finger and asks that four-word question, “Will you marry me?” The diamond ring is not the prize—the man is. The ring is the sign of the promise to marry. Jesus has given us a sign of His promise to return for us—the Holy Spirit. The Spirit who dwells in a believer is the engagement ring of the Christian. The Spirit indwells us, illumines our minds to understand Scripture and assures us that we are Christ’s.

The bride is to be pure and devoted to the groom.

When a woman agrees to marry her love, she makes a commitment to separate herself from all other men and devote herself to her future husband. The church is to be separate from the corrupting influence of the world and its anti-Christian philosophy and to be devoted wholly to Jesus Christ. To be worldly and compromising is to be an unfaithful spouse. Jesus expects his church to be pure, unstained by sin and standing against error by remaining faithful to the Word of God.

A Building

1 Corinthians 3:9–20

Church buildings come in all shapes, colors, sizes and styles. People often mistake the building for the church. The church, however, is the people, not the building in which they meet. The picture of the church as a building has two main components.

The building is to be built by positive and biblical communication between believers.

A word from the world of construction is used frequently in the New Testament. “Edify” carries the sense of “building up” an edifice or building. Believers are repeatedly called upon to edify one another in the church (Rom. 14:19; 15:2; 1 Cor. 14:12). This is done through encouragement, mutual concern for each other’s welfare and the clear and understandable communication of God’s Word. Every time you speak encouraging words to others or consider their needs and apply the Word of God accurately to a situation, you help to build the church.

Bring enough sheets of blank paper so that there will be one for each teen. Pass out one piece of paper to each teen, and have them write their own name on it. Then ask them to pass their sheet around the room, and instruct everyone else to write a short note of encouragement to the teen whose name is on the sheet. (You may need to divide the group into much smaller groups, and you will want to limit the time

What You Need

A piece of paper for each teen

Pens and pencils

to no more than about 30 seconds on each person's sheet.) The teens may write down a character quality they see in the person, or it may be something for which they want to thank the individual. The more directly the encouragement applies to the person whose name is on the sheet, the better. When everyone is done, return the sheets to the owners so they can see what others have written. Then discuss the activity with the group, and ask them how reading what others have written can be a benefit in strengthening their commitment to being more like Christ.

The work is to be done in conjunction with others.

Just as no one builds a house on his own, so also no one builds a church by himself. God's work is to be done together, building side by side, with each person contributing his or her unique gifts to the construction.

A Family Fellowship

1 Timothy 5:1–2

The family is a metaphor for the church that stresses relationships in two aspects: brother/sister relations and the need for fellowship.

Believers ought to view men and boys as brothers and women and girls as sisters. Failing to understand this picture of the church often results in a lack of concern for one another. Brothers and sisters usually have great love for and intense loyalty to one another. If Christians see each other in this way, they will treat each other differently.

We don't live in isolation from others. We need others to help us, teach us, encourage us, comfort us, rebuke us, etc. A family is a group of individuals who nurture and support one another. No one is left behind.



Talk about how your teens relate with one another. Practice how the group should react to a visitor (who will now be seen as a family member) entering a youth meeting by greeting her with a smile, sharing names and asking basic questions and inviting the visitor to sit with you).

Ask the teens which picture of the church has helped them the most in understanding how God designed the church. Close in prayer asking God to make each teen see the church as He sees it.

LESSON 2

Mission Incredible: The Amazing Way God Plans To Spread The Gospel

Everybody needs a mission—a challenge set before us that motivates us to strive toward a worthy goal. Sports teams have missions, and so do businesses. But what about the church? Is your church striving for a worthy goal or just going through the motions? When teens see the church on a mission, they will be moved to join in. So, what should the church’s mission be?



To help teens see the importance of the church in the world



Students will:

- Contemplate the mission of the church.
- Discuss the importance of the church.
- Experience the urgency of the church’s mission.
- See the need to practice biblical priorities.



Matthew 28:18–20

Christ shared His mission for His disciples several times in the gospels and in Acts. These verses in Matthew provide a clear explanation of both the motivation and methods for fulfilling the mission.

The Lesson



Distribute copies of the “What’s The Motto With You?” handout. Give the teens three minutes to complete as many as they can, then give them time to create a motto for the church. Award a small prize to the teen with the most correct mottos. Share the various mottos for the church.

Ask, “What is the church’s motto?”

What You Need

Copies of “What’s The Motto With You?”

Pens or pencils



Say, “A motto is supposed to capture the essence of the thing it represents. So what mottos would tell us what the church ought to be in this world?”

Motto #1: “The Chosen Vehicle To Carry Out God’s Plan In This World”

TIn the Great Commission, Jesus assigns the eleven disciples the task of making disciples of every nation. This mission did not stop with the disciples, but it is carried on today. The Book of Acts records the beginning of the mission and what it became—the church. Acts 2 describes the beginning of the church when the disciples first preach the Gospel to people from all over the world. By the end of the chapter, the word “church” is used to identify what grew out of the ministry of the eleven disciples who received the Great Commission.

What is the Great Commission? It is the official motto of the church—to make Christ-followers (disciples) of people all around the world. This is the only group or institution that God has given to accomplish the task. Governments cannot make disciples, schools cannot and even families cannot. Only the church has been given the power, authority and ability to make disciples.

Individuals can lead others to Christ and even teach them the Bible. But only in the setting of a church can a believer fulfill all the requirements of discipleship.

Group Discussion

What are some of the aspects of discipleship that can only take place in a church: having a pastor shepherd you (Heb. 13:17), fellowshiping with an identifiable group of believers (Acts 2:41—they knew who was a part of their group), corporate worship and accountability (1 Cor. 14:23–32), giving offerings to a corporate body of believers (1 Cor. 16:2).

What does this motto mean, then? It means that the hope of the world lies with the church. If the church doesn’t make disciples, no one else can or will. If the church drops the ball, no one else will pick up the slack. This should make us feel at least a little pressure to do our parts in this life-saving effort! This means that all of us are actively to be making disciples because we are the church!

Motto #2: “The Chosen Structure Within Which The Christian Is To Worship And Grow”

Since the time of the apostles, there have been Christians who have abandoned the local church for one reason or another. Some don’t want

accountability to other people. Others don't want a pastor to shepherd them and help keep them on the right path. Some don't want to have to commit to being at church every Sunday or to serving in a ministry that requires faithfulness. Others simply think they don't need the church and can worship God alone at home or in the woods.

The writer of Hebrews addresses this problem in Hebrews 10:24–25 when he urges his readers not to forget that they need one another. Verse 24 reminds them that they cannot live the Christian life alone. We need one another to live the Christian life successfully. The New Testament pattern of fellowship was primarily in the local church. Verse 25 tells us that the primary way we encourage one another is to gather corporately on a regular basis. The Christian who sees no need to attend church is, among other things, a selfish Christian. Even if he did not sense the need for fellowship, God wants him to give encouragement through fellowship to others who need it. More than two dozen times in the New Testament we are commanded to do something to “one another.” This is a catch phrase that refers to how members of a church are to relate to one another.

Scripture Search

Assign the following verses to the students, and have them take turns reading the verses. On a whiteboard or overhead projector, write down what the following verses command us to do to one another.

- Romans 12:10; 13:8; 14:13; 15:7, 14; 16:16
- Galatians 5:13
- Ephesians 4:2, 32
- Colossians 3:16
- 1 Thessalonians 4:9, 18; 5:11
- Hebrews 3:13
- 1 Peter 1:22
- 1 John 3:11, 23; 4:7, 11

The church is also the place where God wants a Christian to grow. Ephesians 4:11–16 describes the process God designed to bring Christians to full maturity. First, God gave pastor–teachers to equip us. Equip means to mend something broken and outfit for a journey. Next, they are to do the work of the ministry. This, in turn, builds up the body of believers. When the church is built up it becomes unified, mature, Christlike, stable and functional. The final picture is of a healthy, strong body that is able to function effectively. The point is that a person who separates himself from the church cannot possibly become what this passage describes.

Motto #3: “The Primary Place Of A Christian’s Giving, Service And Fellowship”

God has blessed Christians in America with many helpful Christian organizations that are not churches. Christian colleges, radio stations, publishing companies, television programs, discipleship organizations, music

ministries, mission boards and Christian theme parks are just a few of the “para–church” organizations that assist the church in its work. This means that they come alongside the church to help it. If these were all taken away, the church would be at a great loss, but it would not stop the church from being able to fulfill its mission.

Sometimes para–church ministries interfere with the role of the church. Sometimes they encourage believers to give money or time in service without first making sure believers have served and given to their local church. Sometimes it is the Christian himself who gives his allegiance and first fruits to a para–church organization. Although these groups are important and deserve our giving and service, they should never come before the church.

In the New Testament the only entity that existed was the church. Money and service were primarily given through the church. Fellowship was found primarily through the local church. We must remember that our obligations as believers ought to be met first in the local church of which we are members. Additional giving and service to worthy para–church ministries is a good thing as long as it remains secondary.

This principle becomes apparent in our priorities. Our priorities are seen in how we distribute our love, time, money and service. Trying to chart priorities is difficult. Obviously, God comes first in our lives, but what comes next? Some would say work, others would say family and still others would place church next.

What You Need

White board or overhead projector
with transparencies

Several sheets of card stock paper

A mild strength double-sided
adhesive (masking tape or sticky-
tack would work)

Game: “Top Priority”

Before the start of the meeting, list the numbers 1–7 on a white board or overhead transparency. Then, take some time to list, on different pieces of heavier stock paper, several influences on teens’ priorities. Here are some topics:

- Friends
- Sports
- Music
- Boyfriend/Girlfriend
- Parents
- Church
- Devotions
- Hobbies
- Work
- Shopping

(Make sure you have more topics than spaces.)

Shuffle the topics and then draw them randomly from a basket one at a time. As you draw the topics, ask the teens where this priority should be placed on the list. As you go, ask the teens to evaluate whether some topics have been put in too high a place, when they need to move some up that have been put too low or when they need to remove one that doesn’t make the list. Ask them to compare the order of priorities in your youth group and amongst a broad cross–section of teenagers with what the Bible

teaches about priorities. Discuss what our priorities communicate about how important our relationship with God is to us.

Suggest the list below as a good model for how our lives ought to be prioritized. It shows the central commitment to God, the implications of that commitment for our lives and some secondary priorities. It shows that all areas of our life must be balanced.

- God
- Church
- Family
- Community
- Job
- Personal enrichment (reading, exercise, etc.)
- Friends
- Political involvement
- Time-consuming hobbies



Close by asking teens to bow their heads and ask themselves if they could adopt the mottos for the church seen in Scripture. Pray and ask God to make it true in their lives.

Key for “What’s The Motto With You?”:

1. Nike
2. Burger King
3. Gatorade
4. Capital One
5. Microsoft
6. Allstate
7. Wheaties
8. BMW
9. Campbell’s
10. Kentucky Fried Chicken
11. United States Army
12. Ace Hardware
13. American Express
14. Bounty paper towels
15. Volkswagen
16. Visa
17. John Deere
18. Hallmark
19. Yellow Pages
20. Federal Express

What's The Motto With You?

Can you identify the advertising pitch of these famous products?

| | | |
|----|--|--|
| 1 | Just do it! | |
| 2 | Have it your way. | |
| 3 | Is it in you? | |
| 4 | What's in your wallet? | |
| 5 | Where do you want to go today? | |
| 6 | You're in good hands with | |
| 7 | Breakfast of champions | |
| 8 | The ultimate driving machine | |
| 9 | Mmm! Mmm! Good | |
| 10 | Finger lickin' good | |
| 11 | Be all that you can be. | |
| 12 | The place with the helpful hardware man | |
| 13 | Don't leave home without it. | |
| 14 | The quilted quicker picker-upper | |
| 15 | Drivers wanted | |
| 16 | It's everywhere you want to be. | |
| 17 | Nothing runs like a Deere. | |
| 18 | When you care enough to send the very best | |
| 19 | Let your fingers do the walking. | |
| 20 | When it absolutely, positively has to be there overnight | |

Now create a motto for your church: