

What is the Church?

Warm Up

What is your favourite family memory? If this is too difficult for you because of family circumstances, what would your ideal family experience be?

Background and context

The Bible describes the church (Greek: *ekklesia*, meaning "assembly") not as a building, but as the diverse, unified *people of God*—the **Body of Christ**, His **family**, the **Bride of Christ**, and a living **Temple**—composed of all believers worldwide, meeting locally for worship, fellowship, teaching and service, functioning as God's chosen instrument to reveal His wisdom to the world.

Thinking it through: Main discussion/activity

This study explores the different ways the Church is described in scripture and looks at the different characteristics and functions of the Church.

Read: 1 Corinthians 12:12-27; Ephesians 4:15-16.

1. What is the metaphor used and why is it a good way of describing the Church?
2. Why is **v18-21** an encouragement to those who feel like they might not 'belong'?
3. **Ephesians 4** uses the word ligament (NIV) what is the function of a ligament? How do you act as a ligament in the Church?

Read Ephesians 2:19; Galatians 4:5-7.

4. How is the Church described? What do we become when we accept Jesus?
5. What are the rights and responsibilities of being in a family? What other benefits are there?

Read Ephesians 5:25-27; Revelation 19:7; Ephesians 2:19-22; 1 Timothy 3:15; 2 Corinthians 6:16; Hebrews 8:10

6. How else is the Church described? How do these add to your understanding of the Church?

Discipleship and Application

Read: 1 Corinthians 11:18; Acts 20:7; Matthew 16:18; Ephesians 1:22; Ephesians 3:10; 4:11-12; 1 Timothy 3:15.

7. What are the functions and characteristics of the Church as described in scripture?
8. How else can you describe the function of the Church?
9. All believers have an important part to play in the Church. What is your role and ministry in the global church and at VBC? How can you exercise your gifts under the leadership of VBC?

Try to leave 15-20 mins to talk about prayer needs of the group and to pray.

There are many creative ways of praying together: writing prayers, using candles as a focus, reading prayers or praying for each other in pairs.