

Leader's Guide

Let's Explore Our Faith

Lesson 10 - The Church

Aims:

- To know what it means to be part of the Body of Christ
- To understand how the local church helps believers to grow
- To reflect on the Church's importance to them based on what the Bible teaches

Preparation:

- Read the *Article of Faith 5*. (concerning the Church) Also read the *Article of Practice 1.*. (concerning ordinances) Note questions that come to mind as you view these articles. Any question(s) you have may be the same one(s) your students ask.
- Read the Scriptural basis for this lesson: *Ephesians 1:22-23a, 2:19-21; Revelation 19:7; 1 Corinthians 11:23-29, 12:12-31; Hebrews 10:25; Romans 6:1-7, 16:5; Acts 2:42-47, 16:30-34; Matthew 28:19-20;*
- Highlight the connections between the key points of the lesson and the Scripture passages referenced.
- Prepare the student lesson.
- Consider asking your pastor to be part of this class. He may be a help in talking with students and/or parents about being baptized or sharing in communion.

Needed:

- Student workbook, Bible and pencil for each student
- Copy(ies) of *MC Constitution with Articles of Faith and Practice*
- Marker board, markers and eraser
- Blank sheets of paper, one per student
- Markers

Getting Started:

Begin your class with a short prayer. Ask God to help students understand what He wants to say to them about the importance of being part of a church.

Distribute *Student Workbooks*, Bibles and pencils. Students answer first question on page 1, describing what their church looks like. Ask, **What is your earliest memory of going to church?** Volunteers answer. Then say, **What does your church look like?** Again let volunteers answer, this time sharing their answers from the first question. Talk about the colors, windows, pews, floors, the activities, the people, etc. Guide the discussion to point out that most of us—if asked what the church looks like or is—would describe the building we call a church.

Then say, **But the Bible never uses the word *church* to identify a place or building of worship.** Write the word *Church* on the marker board. **Instead, the word *church* always refers to people—people who believe in Jesus.**

The next statement can help you understand where your students are in deciding to follow Jesus. Say, **if you have received Jesus as your Savior and Lord, raise your hand.** Wait for a moment to let students respond, and continue. **Then YOU ARE the Church because the Church is people who believe in Jesus.** Underline the letters "U" and "R" in the word *Church* emphasize that the Church is people. Because many of us have a foggy picture of the Church, we struggle being all God wants us to be. Stress that we need a clear view of what the Church is and how important it is to God. Say, **The Bible gives us some pictures of what the Church is like that can help us better understand and appreciate the Church.** Assign students to read Ephesians 1:22-23a, Revelation 19:7, and Ephesians 2:19-21. Instruct students to fill in the blanks as the verses are read. (*Answers: body, bride, household, building*) Say, **What awesome pictures—His body, His bride, and His house.** Make the point that each of these pictures describes the special relationship Jesus has with the Church—those people who believe in Him, your students if they have decided to follow Jesus. **Clearly the Church is important to God, and it should be to us.**

Study:

Direct the students' attention to the paragraph in the workbook under the *Article of Faith* heading. Read *Article 5.a.* and *5.c.* from the Constitution one phrase at a time as students follow along. Have students circle any words that are new to them. (Words printed in **bold** are listed in the Glossary.) Take time for students to discuss possible meanings for new terms they identify and look those up in the Glossary. Then discuss the paragraph, noting any concepts that may require more explanation during the study time.

Have a volunteer read the paragraph after the *Article* that addresses the Church. Note: In this lesson, we will use *Church* with a capital "C" when referring to the universal or worldwide body of Christ (all believers everywhere). When discussing one single congregation we will use *church* with a lower case "c."

Work through the remaining study material as a group. As needed, ask students to read the Scripture passages aloud and/or divide into smaller groups for research-and-respond.

Question 1. How does the Body Work?

Christ is the Head of the Body. The concept is pretty easy to understand—just as the different parts of the body work together directed by the brain, believers are to work together directed by Jesus Christ.

The Body of Christ is an Organism. The Church is not an organization, like a business. Some of its functions are business-like, but in fact, the Church is an organism, a living group of people who believe Jesus. In Greek, the word *Church* actually means *called out ones*. The *Church* is people who have been *called out* to follow Jesus.

The Body of Christ is Universal. Again, a pretty simple concept to understand. All true believers everywhere make up the Body of Christ. Explain to students that a person, who goes to church, is not necessarily part of the universal Church. Ask students, **What makes a person part of the universal Church?** The answer: believing in the Lord Jesus. Also, you cannot see the universal Church like you can see a local congregation's building. The universal Church is spiritual and invisible.

Every Part of the Body Has a Special Place. Ask each student to name a body part. If your group is small, you may want to go around a second time. No repeating parts. For example, once "heart" has been mentioned, it cannot be said again. Have students work in pairs to rank the body parts in order from *most important to least important*. Have pairs share their listings. Then ask, **Which body part would you be willing to give up for \$1,000?** Allow responses. Help students to understand that even the part they think is least important may be too important to give up. Also, it might be possible to live without some body parts, but it is always more difficult. After some lively discussion, make the point that every part is important! The same is true with the Church. Have the same pairings read 1 Corinthians 12:12-31 and complete the True/False exercise together. (Answers: F, F, T, T, F) Every believer in the Body of Christ has a special place in the Church, and we belong to each other because we belong to Christ. If a part that seems unimportant is taken away, the Body isn't as useful or effective. Direct pairs to complete the 1 Corinthians 12 job hunt. (See *Scripture for possible answers*.)

Now direct the students' attention to *Article of Faith* box. Read *Article 5.b.* and *5.d.* from the Constitution one phrase at a time as students follow along. Again have students circle any words that are new to them and take time to discuss possible meanings for new terms they identify. Look those up in the Glossary.

Help students clearly understand the difference between a local church and the universal Church. A **local** church is a smaller group of Christians organized to serve God together and who meet in a specific location. The Bible teaches that God wants Christians to be part of a local church. He knows we benefit from celebrating, cultivating, caring, and communicating Christ together. Have students look up Hebrews 10:25 and fill in the blanks. (Answers: *meeting, encourage*) Explain that some professing Christians think they can follow Jesus without being involved in the spiritual life of a local church, but the price is high. Their personal relationship with God will be powerless. Stress that God in His wisdom gave us the local church.

Question 2. What should the Body do?

Briefly explain that believers do not have to meet in a church building to be the Body of Christ. Even today, some churches meet in homes, rented schools, remodeled stores or warehouses. Stress that believers are the Church, wherever they meet.

methods, focus on understanding the concepts, rather than memorizing the words. As a large group, work through the paragraph stating what the Missionary Church practices. (Answers: *immersion, united, death, into, burial, under, resurrection, out*)

Then ask, **Have you ever taken communion?** Let students respond. Ask for a volunteer to read the paragraph on The Lord's Supper. Briefly share with the students how Jesus—on the night He would be betrayed—led the very first communion as part of the Passover Meal with His disciples. The Passover Meal represented God's covenant or agreement with Israel in the Old Testament. The Lord's Supper represents God's covenant with believers.

Have the students look up the 1 Corinthians 11 passage, and answer the questions to discover what the Bible teaches about baptism. (Answers: *bread, cup, His death, examine ourselves, until He comes again*) Explain to the students that to *examine ourselves* means to confess any sin and ask God to forgive us, so that our hearts are clean and right before God when we take communion. Then read the paragraph describing the various methods of communion. *Note:* Just like with baptism, focus on understanding the concepts, rather than memorizing the terminology. As a large group, work through the paragraph stating what the Missionary Church practices. (Answers: *symbols, remember, worship, believers, depend, strength*)

Just before the review, take time to summarize the key points of this lesson on the Church.

Let's Review.

Work as a group to complete the review. Assign students to read a sentence using the correct word. (Answers: *body, everywhere, organism, a different, God, Jesus, believer, immersion, represent, grow*)

Emphasize the *Scripture to Learn*. To teach Matthew 28:19-20 to students, have them write their own paraphrase. Read the verse together a couple times. Present a little background information on this verse, and talk about what it means. This was Christ's final command to His followers before ascending to heaven. He tells them His purpose for the Church. We call this

Ask, **When they do meet together, what should a church do? Where can we look to discover what a church should do?** Allow students to respond. Guide the discussion to point out that the New Testament church is a good place to look. We can learn several principles from looking at what they did when they met together. Have students look up Acts 2:42-47 and list the four main things the early church committed themselves to. (Answers: *apostles' teaching, fellowship, breaking of bread, prayer*)

Direct the students' attention back to part 5.b. of the *Article of Faith*. Based on what the Bible teaches, our *Article of Faith* identifies other important activities a church should do. Now divide your group into pairs or small groups to complete the matching exercise. (Answers: *E, D, A, G, B, C, H, F*) Emphasize that when a church does what it *should* do, the people *and* the church grow.

Articles of Practice. Remind students what the *Articles of Practice* are—those 11 statements from the Missionary Church *Constitution* that say how we should live for God. Point out that two of the practices or activities relate directly to the Church and were commanded or *ordained* by Jesus Christ for His Body. Read *Article* (concerning baptism and the Lord's Supper) from the Constitution one phrase at a time as students follow along. Again have students circle any words that are new to them and take time to discuss possible meanings for new terms they identify. Look those up in the Glossary.

The next statement can help you understand where your students are in deciding to follow Jesus. Say, **Have you been baptized?** Let students respond. Ask for a volunteer to read the paragraph on baptism. *Leader,* some of your students may have been baptized as infants. Be careful not to belittle or minimize that act on their behalf. If the topic comes up, simply point out that having their baby baptized is something parents do for their child. Explain that the baptism Jesus commands and our church practices is the decision of a person—adult or child—who wants to publicly show they have received Jesus as their Savior and Lord.

Have the students look up the Romans 6, Acts 16, and Matthew 28 passages, and answer the questions to discover what the Bible teaches about baptism. (Answers: *death, burial, resurrection; believe in the Lord Jesus Christ; the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit*) Then read the paragraph describing the various methods of baptism. *Note:* When dealing with the terminology of

passage the *Great Commission*. Christ's command is to *make disciples*, and we do this by going, baptizing, and teaching. Now have the students write the verse in their own words.

My Response:

As a follow-up to last week's lesson say, **Raise your hand if you kept your promise to spend daily time praying and studying God's Word over the last week.** Encourage the students to continue this practice on their own, even though it's not part of this week's response.

Refer students to the beginning of the lesson where they answered the question about what their church looks like. They should have a better understanding of what the Church is according to Scripture. Say, **Now based on what you have learned, on a separate sheet of paper, draw a new picture that will remind you of what the Church is, how the Church works, and or what the Church should be doing.** Have markers available for this exercise. Across the bottom of their picture, have students finish the sentence—*The Church is important to me because . . .*

Close in prayer, thanking God for making us part of His body when we receive Him and designing us to grow and serve Him in the local church.

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What does your church look like?

Write or draw your answers.

When we say the word *church*, right away most people think of the building where they meet to worship God. But it might surprise you to know that in the Bible, the word *church* always refers to people—*people who believe in Jesus*. So, if you have asked Jesus to be your Savior and Lord, then actually you don't go to church—you ARE the Church!

The Bible does, however, give us some pictures of what the Church is like that help us better understand what the Church is and how important it is to God.

What does the Church look like in the Bible?

Read Ephesians 1:22-23a and fill in the blanks.

“And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him (Jesus Christ) to be
head over everything for the church, which is his _____.”

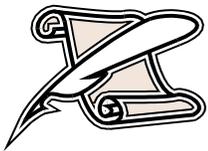
Read Revelation 19:7 and fill in the blanks.

“Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding
of the Lamb has come, and his _____ (the church) has made herself ready.”

Read Ephesians 2:19-21 and fill in the blanks.

“Consequently, you are ...fellow citizens with God’s people and members of God’s _____...built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him the whole _____ is joined together.”

These pictures describe the special relationship Jesus has with the Church. Clearly the Church is important to God, and it should be to us.



Article of Faith

*We believe that the invisible and **universal** Church is an **organism** composed of all believers in the Lord Jesus Christ who have been called out from the world, separated from sin, and vitally united by faith to Christ, its living **Head** and Sovereign Lord. (part a)*

We believe the characteristic marks of the members of the true church are faith in Jesus as the Son of God, love for God and for those of like faith, obedience to God’s commandments, and victory over the world. (part c.)

This *Article* explains what the Bible teaches about the Church. To better understand the Church and why we need it, let’s look more closely in the Bible at the picture of the Church as the *Body of Christ* and answer two main questions: *How does the Body work?* and *What should the Body do?*

Question 1. How does the Body work?

Unscramble the following words and place them in the correct spaces below.

PRAT DAHE SALVERUNI MSINAGRO

Christ is the _____ of the Body.

Just as the brain in our heads controls what we do, where we go, and what we say, Jesus is the Head of the Church. He is the One in control of the Church, because He is the One who died on the cross and rose again so that we could be saved and know God personally. As His Body, we are to do what He says, go where He says, and say what He says.

The Body of Christ is an _____.

An organism is a living body, such as a plant or animal. In the same way, the Body of Christ, or Church, is an organism—a living group of people who believe in Jesus, love God and love others, and obey His commands.

The Body of Christ is _____.

That means the Church is worldwide. All true believers everywhere make up the Body of Christ. So if you have believed in Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord, you are part of the Church with believers of different color, with different languages and customs, in different countries—all around the world.

Every _____ of the Body Has a Special Place.

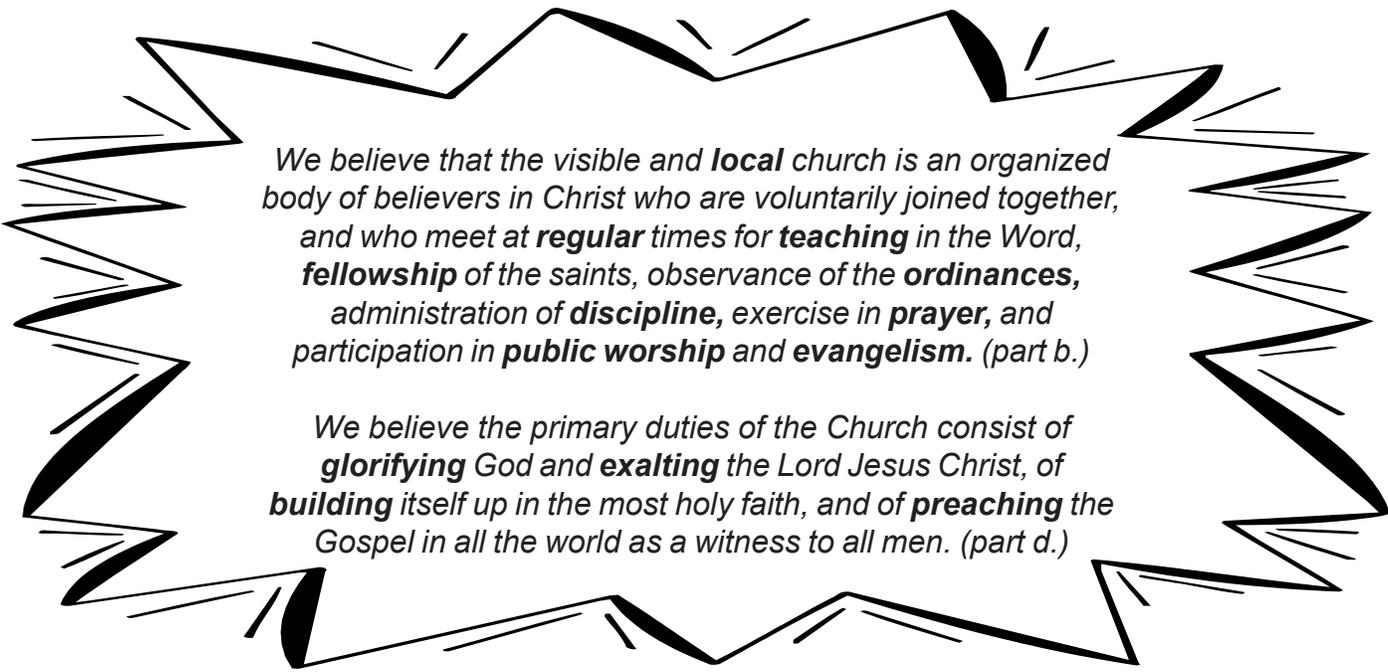
Think about your body. It has many different parts and each part has a different job. But all the parts are important. The same is true about the Church. The Body of Christ has many different believers and each with a different job. But all the believers are important.

Read 1 Corinthians 12:12-31 and circle “T” for True and “F” for False beside each statement about the Body of Christ, the Church.

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| T | F | The body is made up of only one part. |
| T | F | Some parts of the body are there for no reason. |
| T | F | No part can tell another, “I don’t need you!” |
| T | F | God arranged the parts as He wants them to be. |
| T | F | All the parts of the body should care about each other. |
| T | F | Only the most important believers are part of the body of Christ. |

Just imagine if all the parts of our human bodies were the same. Our bodies wouldn't work. The Body of Christ is no different. If all the believers were the same, the Church wouldn't work right. The Body of Christ has many different believers, with many different jobs—all important!

Read 1 Corinthians 12:28-30. List four different jobs believers may have as part of the Church, the Body of Christ.



*We believe that the visible and **local** church is an organized body of believers in Christ who are voluntarily joined together, and who meet at **regular** times for **teaching** in the Word, **fellowship** of the saints, observance of the **ordinances**, administration of **discipline**, exercise in **prayer**, and participation in **public worship** and **evangelism**. (part b.)*

*We believe the primary duties of the Church consist of **glorifying** God and **exalting** the Lord Jesus Christ, of **building** itself up in the most holy faith, and of **preaching** the Gospel in all the world as a witness to all men. (part d.)*

The Church is people—all the believers everywhere. Now just imagine what it would be like if all the believers everywhere had to meet together each Sunday in one place. Obviously, it would be impossible. *Thank God for designing us to serve Him in local churches.*

A **local** church is a group of Christians—all part of the universal Church—organized to serve God together and who meet in a specific location. God knew we needed the encouragement and care of a smaller group of believers to help us follow Him. So God gave us the local church.

Read Hebrews 10:25 and fill in the blanks.

“Let us not give up _____ together, as some are in the habit of doing, but
let us _____ one another—and all the more
as you see the Day approaching.”

Question 2. What should the Body do?

Believers do not have to meet in a church building to be the Body of Christ. In New Testament times, local churches met in homes, instead of separate buildings. (See Romans 16:5.)

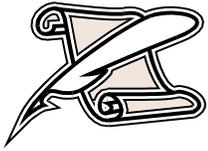
But they did do certain things when they met together. We can learn several activities the Body should do from looking at what the New Testament church did when they met together.

Read Acts 2:42-47 and list the four main things the early church committed themselves to do.

It was amazing! The Bible says the apostles did miracles, and the believers saw themselves as a family—sharing everything they had, meeting together daily and praising God. No doubt, people liked what they saw these early Christians do.

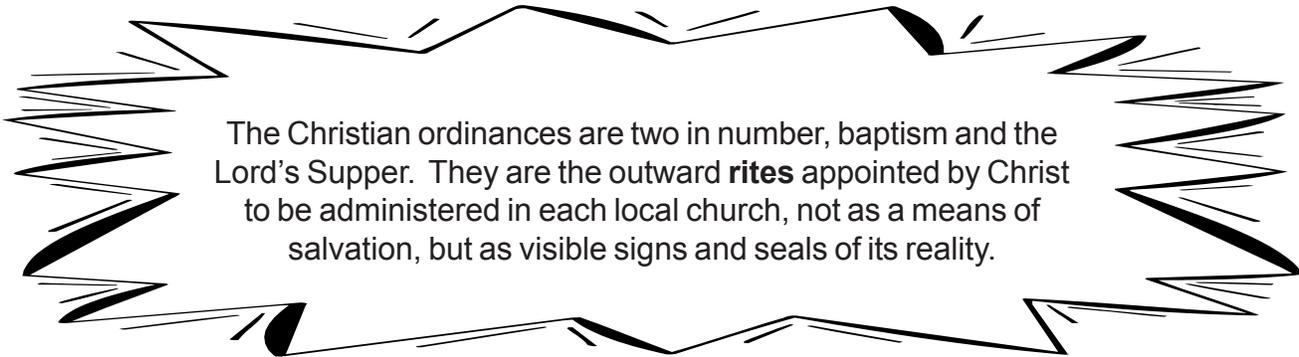
Match each of the following phrases from our *Article* about what the church does when it meets together with what it means.

- | | | |
|---------------------------------|-------|---|
| A. Meet at regular times | _____ | Help correct a believer who is living in sin |
| B. Teaching in the Word | _____ | Celebrate baptism and the Lord's Supper together |
| C. Fellowship in the saints | _____ | Have scheduled meetings and activities |
| D. Observance of the ordinances | _____ | As a group, praise and glorify God |
| E. Administration of discipline | _____ | Study the Bible together |
| F. Exercise in prayer | _____ | Care for and encourage each other |
| G. Public Worship | _____ | Work together to help new people believe in Jesus |
| H. Evangelism | _____ | As a group, talk with God |



Articles of Practice

Most of our attention during this study has been on the *Articles of Faith* from the Missionary Church Constitution—those 6 statements about what we believe the Bible teaches us. But maybe you will remember from our very first lesson that the Constitution also has 11 statements that say how we should live for God or *Articles of Practice*. Two of those statements relate specifically to the Church. In fact, Christ commanded or “ordained” the Church to do them, so we call them *ordinances*. They are ceremonies commanded by Christ to remind us of a spiritual truth.



The Christian ordinances are two in number, baptism and the Lord’s Supper. They are the outward **rites** appointed by Christ to be administered in each local church, not as a means of salvation, but as visible signs and seals of its reality.

Baptism. Baptism is an outward evidence of our faith in Christ. Normally believers are only baptized once. When a person is baptized, they are publicly testifying that they have personally received Jesus as Savior and Lord.

Look up the Bible’s verses to answer the following questions about baptism.

Romans 6:1-7. Baptism pictures the believer united with Christ in what three events?

Acts 16:30-34. What must a person do before he is baptized?

Matthew 28:18-20. In whose name are we to baptize people?

Christians practice three different ways of baptism: sprinkling water on the head (called *aspersion*), pouring water over the head (called *effusion*), and dunking a person totally under the water (called *immersion*). **Use the words in the word bank to fill in the blanks.**

WORDBANK: death out immersion resurrection into burial united under

The Missionary Church baptizes people by i_____. We believe it is the best symbol of our being u_____ with Jesus in His d_____ (when we go i_____ the water), His b_____ (when we are u_____ the water), and His r_____ (when we come o_____ of the water.)

The Lord's Supper. The Lord's Supper, like baptism is an outward evidence of our faith in Jesus. By eating a small piece of bread and drinking a little cup of juice or wine, Christians remember that Jesus' body was sacrificed and His blood shed for the forgiveness of our sin. Another name for the Lord's Supper is communion.

Look up the Bibles verses to answer the following questions about communion.

1 Corinthians 11:23-24. What element of communion represents Christ's body?

1 Corinthians 11:25. What element of communion represents Christ' blood?

1 Corinthians 11:26. What do you proclaim each time you participate in communion?

1 Corinthians 11:27-29. What should we do before we participate in communion?

1 Corinthians 11:26. How long should we continue to share the Lord's Supper?

Like baptism, not all Christians understand the Lord's Supper in the same way. Some believe that the bread and juice actually become the body and blood of Jesus when they are blessed (called *transubstantiation*). Others believe that the bread and juice contain the actual body and blood inside them (called *consubstantiation*). Most Christians believe that the bread and juice represent Christ's body and blood (called *symbolic*).

Use the words in the word bank to fill in the blanks.

WORDBANK: depend worship remember strength believers symbols

The Missionary Church believes the Bible teaches that the bread and juice are only
s_____ of Jesus' body and blood that help us to r_____

His death. Most Missionary Churches share communion as part of the
w_____ service at least once a quarter, and only
b_____ may participate. Just as we need to eat regularly to stay physically
alive, sharing the Lord's Supper reminds us that we need to d_____ on Jesus
daily for spiritual s_____.

Remember, the Church is important to God and should be important to us. We become part of the universal Church when we accept Jesus as our Savior and Lord. Christ gave us the local church to help and encourage us to follow Him. When the Church obeys Jesus' commands, learns from the example of the New Testament church, and does what it should do, then individual believers grow—the local church grows—and the universal Church grows!



Let's Review.

Read each statement below. Cross out one of the bolded words or phrases to make the sentence read correctly.

Another name for the Church is the **BUREAU** **BODY** of Christ.

The universal Church is made up of all believers **EVERYWHERE** **IN NORTH AMERICA**.

The Body of Christ is an **ORGANIZATION** **ORGANISM**.

The Body of Christ has many different believers and each with **A DIFFERENT** **THE SAME** job.

THE GENERAL BOARD **GOD** had the idea for the local church.

JESUS **MOSES** commanded the Church to observe the two ordinances.

Before participating in either baptism or communion you must be a **MEMBER** **BELIEVER**.

IMMERSION **ILLUMINATION** is baptizing by dunking the person completely under the water.

We believe that the bread and juice **BECOME** **REPRESENT** Jesus' body and blood.

When the Church does what it should do, believers **GROW** **LIVE PERFECT LIVES**.



Scripture to Learn.

"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I will be with you always, to the very end of the age." Matthew 28:19-20 (NIV)

My Response .



At the start of this lesson you were asked to draw a picture of what your church looked like. Now based on what you have learned, **on a separate sheet of paper, draw a new picture that will remind you of what the Church is, how the Church works, and/or what the Church should be doing.**