

## Lesson 2: The Church As The Body of Christ

**What we want students to learn:** That when they profess faith in Jesus, they become a vital part of the Church, the Body of Christ.

**What we want students to do with what they've learned:** Challenged by their identity as part of the Body of Christ, students will evaluate how effectively they're living as representations of Christ in their day-to-day lives.

**Scripture Focus:** Galatians 3:26-29, Matthew 16:13-20, Ephesians 2:19-22, 1Corinthians 12:27, Colossians 1:18

**Overview:** Salvation is a pretty cool thing. (That's a major understatement.) If all God did was save us from our sins, it would be awesome beyond measure. But in His love and grace, God saw fit to have our salvation be the key that ushers us into an incredible fellowship, not just with God, but with other Believers, as well. Our confession of Christ assures us that we become part of a vibrant collection of people who have also seen Christ for who He is. In this lesson, your students will see that this collection of people even includes the very first people to confess Christ as Lord. What's more, your students will learn that the Church is pictured as the Body of Christ, positioned to represent Christ on this earth. Your students will be challenged to ask themselves if they're lives give testimony to the fact that they are a part of the Global Body of Believers.

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## Teacher Prep Video

The *elements Teacher Prep Videos* are short videos designed to help you grasp the main points of the lessons as you prepare to teach.

To access your "The Church Teacher Prep Video," click on the URL below.

- <https://youthministry360.com/the-church-teacher-prep>

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## Bible Background

The **Bible Background** is designed to help you provide some context for the Scripture you'll be studying. *The Details* gives you background info for each book, while *The Main Point* gives you an overview of how the passages are used in the lesson.

- **What do we mean by "context"?** In every **ym360** Bible study lesson, you'll notice we make a point to encourage you to provide the context for the passages you study. By "context" we mean at the very least helping students know *who* wrote the book, *when* it was written, and *why* it was written.
- **What's The Big Deal?** When we teach the Bible without giving context, students don't get a "big picture" understanding of the story of the Bible. But this view is vital to grasping the story of God's plan of redemption for humankind. As you teach, use the Bible Background to help summarize the context.

## The Details

### Galatians

- **Author:** Paul, the persecutor-of-Christians-turned-missionary, is the author of the Letter to the Galatians (see Acts 7:57-8:3 and 9:1-31). After his conversion on the road to Damascus, Paul set out on

several journeys to proclaim about the salvation that is available through Jesus and His death and resurrection. Several churches were planted as a result of Paul's leadership, including the church in Galatia.

- **Time frame:** Paul wrote his letter to the Galatians sometime between 48 and 53 AD, most likely by 49 AD.
- **Purpose:** The primary purpose for Paul's letter to the Galatians was to respond to a particular issue: a group of Jews—claiming to also be Christ-followers (many early Christians were Jewish Christians)—had begun to argue that Christians are not just saved by faith, but that they also were required to keep the Mosaic Law. This, of course, went against everything Paul knew to be true about Jesus. The main thrust of Paul's teaching was that there is no work we could accomplish to be saved (Ephesians 2:8), including the keeping of the Law (Galatians 2:16).

### Matthew

- **Author:** Matthew, a former tax collector, was a disciple of Jesus and a firsthand witness to the stories he relates in his Gospel.
- **Time frame:** Most people hold to Matthew's Gospel being written in the late 50's or 60's AD, though there are some who think it was written after the destruction of the Temple in 70 AD.
- **Purpose:** Matthew was writing to a primarily Jewish audience to convince them that Jesus was indeed the long-awaited Messiah. But he was probably aware of a Gentile audience, as his Gospel makes the case that the saving truth of Christ is for all nations.

### Ephesians

- **Author:** The Apostle Paul wrote the letters to the Ephesians and Titus. Of course we know Paul as the one-time chief enemy of the Church. After his miraculous conversion on the road to Damascus, Paul would go on to have a position of great importance in the early Church and beyond. He wrote 13 of the 27 books of the New Testament.
- **Time frame:** Ephesians was probably written by Paul from prison in the latter years of his life, sometime around 60 or 61 AD.
- **Purpose:** Paul had a very close relationship with the church in Ephesus. It seems as if the motivation for the letter was simply that the church would know how he was faring in his imprisonment. But, true to form, Paul couldn't help but teach. The letter covers general teaching on the work of Christ to redeem believers, unity among believers, and how believers are supposed to conduct themselves.

### 1 Corinthians

- **Author:** The Apostle Paul wrote 1 Corinthians to the Church in Corinth.
- **Time frame:** Paul's first letter to the Corinthians was written from Ephesus in the spring shortly before Pentecost. We are unsure of what year, but it was likely between 53 AD and 55 AD.
- **Purpose:** Paul's first letter to the Corinthians was written to a divided church to call them to become united for the sake of the Gospel. He was calling the church to lay down the things that divided them in order to fully embrace the one thing that is strong enough to unite them: Christ crucified!

### Colossians

- **Author:** The Apostle Paul identified himself as the author of Colossians.
- **Time frame:**
- Most people believe Colossians was written sometime between A.D. 61 and 63, during Paul's first imprisonment in Rome (Acts 28:17-31).
- **Purpose:** Ultimately, this letter's purpose is to emphasize the supremacy of Christ over everything. Paul was writing to combat the spread of false teachings among the church at Colossae. The exact

heresy being refuted is not certain and may have been a blend of multiple influences. The legalism, mysticism, and asceticism corrupting the pure faith in Colossae were moving attention away from Christ, placing it instead on self-discipline and the awe of other spiritual things.

## The Main Point

You're going to help students understand that when they profess faith in Jesus, they become a vital part of the Church, the Body of Christ. You'll walk them through the following points, using the Scripture passages to back it up.

- You'll begin by helping students see that when we come to faith in Jesus, God welcomes us into His family, the Church. You'll support this teaching point with the Galatians passage and the Matthew passage.
  - *Then, you'll* help students grasp that our confession of Christ as Lord automatically enables us to join in the literally countless number of people throughout time who have made the same confession. You'll highlight the words of Paul in Ephesians.
  - Then, looking at the 1 Corinthians and Colossians passages, you'll lead students to see that the Bible depicts the Church as the Body of Christ, with Christ as the head, each and every believer included as a vital part.
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## Lesson Plan

The **Lesson Plan** contains three elements: An introductory activity called *The Lead In*; the Bible study section called *The Main Event*; an application-focused segment called *The Last Word*.

### The Lead In

- **Goal:** Students will work in pairs to overcome obstacles in order to complete a puzzle.
- **Set Up:** You will need a blindfold and child's board puzzle for each pair of students and a way to time the group. (These items will also be used in the closing so keep them accessible during Bible study).

FIRST, either put students in pairs or have them select a partner. Once this is done, have them sit together and give them the following instructions. Say something like:

- **In a minute I will give each pair of you a blindfold and then a puzzle. One of you will wear the blindfold. You will be the one putting the puzzle back together. Your partner will have eyes and a voice but no hands. Work together to put the puzzle together. I will time our group to see how long it takes us to complete all of the puzzles.**

NEXT, give each pair a blindfold and have them choose who will wear it and put it on. Once the blindfolds are on, give each pair a puzzle and have them place the pieces on the floor in random order. On your command to go, the person who is blindfolded will need to put the puzzle back together using the instructions given by his or her partner. Make sure the person who can see does not use their hands.

Time the group and make a note of how long it takes them to complete all puzzles. (*Note: The point is for this to be somewhat difficult so you may want to around and make sure the pieces are pretty mixed up. You could even spread them out a little!*)

FINALLY, transition to "The Main Event" by leading a discussion using the following questions. Ask:

- **Why was it hard to put together the puzzle when you couldn't see?**

- **What was it like relying on your partner to help you “see” what you were doing?**

Transition into “The Main Event” by saying something similar to the following:

- **In this activity, you had to rely on someone else to “see” the puzzle. We’re about to look at a story from Scripture where someone saw something that was revealed by someone else, kind of like your partner revealed to you where the puzzle pieces were. The big difference about what we are about to see is that the revelation that was made was life-changing, not just for the person who made it originally, but for all those who would make it for centuries to follow. Let’s take a closer look at what this story is.**

## The Main Event

- **Goal:** The idea is for students to learn that when they profess faith in Jesus, they become a vital part of the Church, the Body of Christ.
- **Set Up:** None

FIRST, review the previous lesson using the following points:

- **God called His people, the Israelites, to live holy lives. He established the beginning of His Church through them.**
- **All who confess Christ as Savior and Lord become part of the Church.**
- **We are also called to live a holy life as part of this “kingdom of priests” in order to make the gospel known.**

Continue this review by having students turn to Galatians 3:26-29. As they are finding it, give the context of the passage using the Bible Background information in the details section. Either read or have a student read this passage aloud to the group. After the reading, say something like:

- **When we come to faith in Jesus, God welcomes us into His family, the Church. As we are reminded in this passage, no one who places their faith in Christ is excluded! While there was a point in time when there were restrictions placed upon who was part of God’s chosen nation, those restrictions were lifted when Christ came. He fulfilled all the requirements of the law so salvation could be made available to all.**
- **How does it make you feel knowing the lengths God went to in order to include you into His family, the Church?**
  - *Answers will vary.* Allow students to ask any questions or share any thoughts they may have in regards to this concept and passage.

NEXT, continue by having students turn to Matthew 16:13-20. As they’re turning to this passage, give them some context using the Bible Background in the details section as well as the following points:

- **The site of this passage is Caesarea Philippi, a region known for its worship of the nature god, Pan, and also the home of a temple dedicated to Caesar Augustus. By identifying Himself as the Messiah at this location, Christ is establishing that His Kingdom is greater than that and of Caesar and that He is superior to the mythical gods the people worshiped.**
- **In this passage is the first time the disciples call Christ “Messiah.” Peter contrasts Jesus, the living, breathing Son of God, with lifeless pagan deities, such as the false god Pan who was represented in the nearby pagan temple.**

Then read or have a student read Matthew 16:13-20. Continue the discussion with these questions:

- **According to how the disciples answered His question, what were some of the identities Jesus was given by people he encountered?**

- *Answer:* John the Baptist, Elijah, Jeremiah, one of the prophets.
- **How did Simon Peter’s answer differ from the other disciples? How did he know the answer to the question?**
  - *Answer:* Simon Peter identified Christ as the Messiah, the Christ, the Son of God. The only way he was able to answer this question was divine revelation. God revealed the identity of Christ to Simon Peter. This is the connection to the opening activity. Peter was only able to know Jesus’ because God led him to.
- **Today, when people talk about churches or building churches, what are they typically referring to?**
  - *Answer:* The building in which a congregation meets, a place where Christ-followers go to learn about God, fellowship, and participate in spiritual activities
- **Obviously, when Jesus talks about building His church He isn’t going to build a building on top of Peter! What is it that He means?**
  - Answers may vary but allow students to wrestle through these thoughts as necessary.

If you choose, you can give students a little behind the scenes look into the scholarship behind this passage, which happens to have a rich history of historical disagreement about its interpretation. Say:

- **The interpretation of this passage is much deeper than it seems. Buckle your seatbelts because we’re going to dig in for a minute here!**
- **There are generally two ways people have traditionally thought about Jesus’ words to Simon Peter as He says He is going to build His Church on Peter:**
  1. One is that Peter, as a person, holds a great deal of important as the foundation of the Church. This is traditionally a Catholic understanding of this passage.
  2. The other is that Peter’s confession is what God will use to build the Church. This has traditionally been the Protestant understanding of this passage.
- **The Catholic Church has interpreted this passage where God intended to build His church on Peter, the person.**
  - They hold that Christ is establishing Peter as the leader of the Church that was to come.
  - This is where the Catholic Church gets the concept of the Pope, the leader of the Catholic Church.
  - Catholics believe Peter was the first leader of the Church, more-or-less, the first Pope (this is probably an oversimplification, but it will work to get across the idea that this passage has been the source of some controversy over the years.)
- **The Protestant view of this verse is that Christ would use Peter’s confession, his words, rather than Peter himself, to build His Church.**
  - By identifying Christ as the Messiah, Peter’s confession, and every similar confession that would follow throughout the centuries, serves as the foundation of The Church.
  - Through confessing Christ all people can become part of the Church, as we talked about previously.
- **By identifying Christ as the Messiah and Son of God, what was Simon Peter confessing?**
  - *Answer:* He was saying that Christ was the One sent by God to fulfill His promise to save people from the curse of Sin. He was identifying Christ as Savior.

NEXT, continue your discussion by transitioning to the next point by saying something like:

- **Peter identified Christ as the Savior who was promised from the beginning. This set the foundation for the start of the Church. In the same way, our confession of Christ as Lord automatically enables us to join in the literally countless number of people throughout time who have made the same confession.**

Have students find Ephesians 2:19-22 in their Bibles. Read or have a student read this passage aloud. After it is read, ask:

- **When a building or house is built, what's the first thing necessary to ensure it will be sturdy? Why is this an important step? (You may cross reference Matthew 7:24-27)**
  - *Answer:* A foundation is laid. It is necessary for there to be a firm resting place so the rest of the building can withstand wind, rain, and other elements. Without a firm foundation a building will collapse.
- **Knowing this, why is Christ the ideal foundation for the Church?**
  - *Answer:* He is faithful and unwavering. He can always be trusted to keep His Word and promises.

Explain to students that while Peter was a great man and a disciple used by God in great ways for the spread of the Gospel and Church, putting Christ as the foundation of God's Church is the only way to be certain we are built on unwavering Truth. Say something like:

- **There is no firmer foundation than God's Son, the Messiah. The confession of Christ as Messiah Peter made is what began the building of the Church. When we confess Christ as Savior and Messiah, we become another "brick" that grows the Church, along with anyone else who makes the same confession!**
- **Let's review briefly: Who did we determine can be part of the Church?**
  - *Answer:* Anyone who places their faith in Christ. There are no exclusions based on gender, race, or social status. We are all equal because of our faith in Christ.
- **We learned last week from Galatians 3:28 that "There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ." What conclusion can we draw from this verse about age? Are "young" people excluded from being one with other believers in the Church?**
  - *Answer:* NO! The opposite extremes pointed out in this verse can be applied to age also. If you have placed your faith in Christ, you are much a member of the Church as those much older and even younger.

FINALLY, move to the final portion of the discussion by saying something like:

- **The Bible depicts the Church as the Body of Christ, with Christ as the head, each and every believer included as a vital part.**

Then, have students find 1 Corinthians 12:27 and Colossians 1:18 in their Bibles. Have them open to 1 Corinthians 12 and put a marker in Colossians 1. Read or have a student read 1 Corinthians 12:27. Then read or have a student read Colossians 1:18. Say something like:

- **Paul is clear in his letters that once you place your faith in Christ you are a part of the body of Christ. As every part of our human bodies serve some purpose, so you serve a purpose in the body of Christ. By describing Christ as the head of the body, or the Church, what does that tell us about His role?**
  - *Answer:* Without Him, the Church would cease to exist.
- **When you think about how a body functions, knowing Christ is our head, how should the Church function?**
  - *Answer:* Christ is the leader. Like our brains, He causes every part function together for a common purpose, which is making His Gospel and glory known.
- **YOU are part of this Body. You are a vital part of this body! How does that affect what you may have previously thought about your role in the Church?**

- Answers may vary but help them to see that they are not to simply be consumers or partakers of what the Church offers but they also have a “job” or role that requires them to be involved and give and serve, also.

Transition to “The Last Word” by saying something like:

- **We all play a part in the Church. In order for it to function properly and efficiently, we must do our part to fulfill that role. Let’s try our puzzles again.**

## The Last Word

- **Goal:** Students will evaluate how effectively they’re living as representations of Christ in their day-to-day lives.
- **Set Up:** Make sure you have available the puzzles and timer used in “The Lead In.”

FIRST, have students return to their original pair. Tell them they will put the puzzle together again. Distribute the puzzles but no blindfold. Again, have them put the puzzle together while you time them.

When they have completed the puzzles, share the new time with them and compare it with the original time. After this, close out your discussion using the following questions:

- **How was this time different than the first? Was it easier to complete the puzzle? Why?**
  - *Answer may vary* but make sure to point out that it is easier to when all parts are fully functioning (i.e., without the blindfold)
- **In order for the Church to function as God intended and be all that God created it to be, all who have made the confession of Christ as Savior and Lord, as Peter did, must realize that they have a vital role. Just as you were more effective and efficient at completing your puzzle without the barrier of the blindfold and one set of hands, the Church is more effective and efficient when all work together . . . including different ages, genders, and races.**
- **Is it hard for you to think of yourself as a “vital” member of the Church? Why or why not?**
  - *Answer will vary*
- **How can you be involved in the Church beyond attending youth group?**
  - *Answers may vary, be prepared to discuss specific ways your group can be involved in your local church.*

FINALLY, end the Bible study by challenging students to always remember that, regardless of their age, they are a vital part of the Church, both universally and locally. Encourage them to actively seek ways to serve and participate in the local church. Pray for them as you end your time.

- Don’t forget to distribute the “The Church Lesson 2” devotions to your students. If you’re printing them, have them available for students as you wrap up class. If you’re texting a link, posting them on Facebook, or some other means of electronic distribution, make sure you inform students of when they will be receiving them.
- Consider texting students a couple of times during the week to encourage them to follow through with reading the devotions.

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## We Want To Hear From You . . .

- Do you have questions about a lesson?
- Something that worked particularly well you want to share?

Please do not hesitate to email us with your questions, comments, or concerns, at [feedback@youthministry360.com](mailto:feedback@youthministry360.com).