

Church

First Third

15 Min *How are you?*

15 Min *Evaluation: What has become of the goals from the last meeting?*

10 Min *Vision*

Second Third

10 Min *Worship*

10 Min *Learning from the Book of Acts. Share with each other: What did you learn from Acts 5-8? What is the Holy Spirit teaching you? Use your filled out worksheets for the Book of Acts.*

20 Min *New lesson*

? Based on the chapters of Acts you have read so far, how would you define church? Discuss briefly.

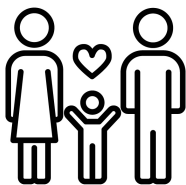
Now give each participant a copy of this worksheet.

When people hear the word “church,” many think of a building. However, this has nothing to do with what the New Testament says: “church” refers to the followers of Jesus. Jesus never said that we should build church buildings; rather, He wants to build a community of people. We are to allow ourselves to be built into this work as “living stones” (1 Peter 2:5).

For many, the Sunday “church service” is the essential element of church. Here, too, there are many misunderstandings – the New Testament says that our “church service” should be to make our lives available to God (Romans 12:1).

The following three images are helpful in rediscovering what Jesus actually means by his church:

Church as a family



When we accept God’s offer and are reborn, we become a member of God’s family. Every spiritual child needs a spiritual family. God is our heavenly father, and as followers of Jesus, we are like brothers and sisters. Family means a safe place to grow and to learn who we are as children of God. Family provides care, and we learn how to live in relationships.

Church as a body



We are the body of Jesus – that’s how the New Testament describes the relationship between Jesus and His followers. A body means that everyone is a part and has a special role. Jesus is the head; we need to be connected to Him so that He can coordinate everything and lead us. We’re supposed to work together just like a body does. That way we resemble Jesus and He can work through us.

Church as a team



A team is a group of people who decide to work together for a common vision. They train together and do whatever is necessary to reach the goal. Jesus wants His church to be united for His kingdom. He shows us who we could build a team with and who should train us.

? What do the three images of church (as a family, as a body, as a team) look like in your life?

Final Third

25 Min *Practice: Take a sheet of paper and go with your group through the elements of church (see Start Training lesson "Church"). Write down the number of believers and the number of baptized people in your group, draw a big circle and decide for each element of the definition whether it's present in your group. If yes, write it inside. If no, write it outside of the circle.*

Elements: worship, fellowship, prayer, training, multiplication, leaders, baptism, Lord's Supper, offerings, covenant

5 Min **My personal goals until next time:**



Use your people list, pray and set your personal goals:

Inspired from the study of Acts or from this lesson I want to obey God next week in this point:

I will share my story with God with _____ .

I will study Acts 9-12 and write down what God is teaching me (using the *Acts Worksheet*)

I will train _____ just as I have been trained

I will pray for the people on my list every day

10 Min *Pray for each other*