

The Early Church

Acts 2:42-47; 4:32-37

MEMORY VERSE

ACTS 2:42

And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

As many sheets of construction paper as the number of children in your class, scissors, crayons or markers, and heart-shaped templates.

A "Corpus Christi" body template and scissors.

A large bag of sugarless candy (enough to give each student 4-5 pieces).

ATTENTION GRABBER!

Of One Heart

Make several different sized heart-shaped templates out of construction paper. Take them around the class and have the students trace one of the shapes. They may color or decorate their hearts, but when they are done, have them form groups that have the same size heart as theirs.

Explain that the early church was of one heart. Even though there was diversity in their individual make-up, the Lord made all their hearts the same. The Lord is the reason they were unified.

LESSON TIME!

The Book of Acts tells the story of how the church began. Today we think of the church as a building, but really the church is the people, many different kinds of people who believe in Jesus. After Jesus had risen from the dead and went to be in Heaven, His disciples taught about Him and people began to believe. Jesus poured out His Holy Spirit upon this small group of believers. They began to tell others about Jesus and many more people gave their lives to Jesus. This is how the church began. **We are members of the body of Christ and we need to help one another.**

ACTS 2:42

And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.

The new Christians continued to do four things. They followed the teaching of the Apostles, they had fellowship with one another, they broke bread, and they prayed. We can do the same by reading the Bible and following it, by attending church and church functions, by breaking bread in communion, and by praying constantly.

Here we see the four most important things we need as Christians in order to grow. When we are being fed spiritually through Bible study, spending time with other believers, taking communion often and praying we will grow up into strong Christians.

We can also see that this is what a church is supposed to look like. If a church is making any other thing more important than these four things then we need to be careful. So this helps us to know that we are in the kind of church that Jesus wants us to be in and that will help us to grow.

ACTS 2:43

Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles.

Fear, or reverence, came upon all the people. The apostles performed miracles. The people knew of God's awesome works and His love for them and they walked in awe of Him. When the church came together in unity and was doing those things that pleased Him we see that they got a lot accomplished.

Jesus still wants to accomplish a lot of things in our world today. He can do that through each of our lives when we work together in unity and obey those things that He wants us to do. What a blessing it is to be able to serve Jesus and to serve Him with all of our brothers and sisters at church.

ACTS 2:44-45

Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common,

and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need.

The people of the early church sold their belongings and shared with one another. They all took care of each other and lived together in peace. **We are members of the body of Christ and we need to help one another.**

It is important that we help one another. When we see one of our brothers or sisters who need something we should be willing to help them. We shouldn't look the other way and refuse to help them. When we see someone who is hungry or in need, it can be a wonderful opportunity to share Jesus' love with them.

Paul talked about how a body functions in 1 Corinthians 12. He said that when one part of the body is hurting it affects the rest of the body. If our foot hurts it means that we probably can't walk very well so it affects the rest of our body. So we need to help that person who is hurting so that we all can function the right way and be a healthy body.

ACTS 2:46-47

So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart,

praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.

The people of the early church did all of these things daily. They came together and had fellowship, they had meals with each other, went to the Temple together and they were glad of heart. They had simple lives focused on God. They praised God and all of the people admired the way they lived in peace. As they continued, God added more and more people to the church and they believed in Jesus. God blesses obedience to His word.

Corpus Christi

Cut the “body” curriculum template into several pieces. Pass out the pieces to different groups you have formed from your class. Have each group of children list the things that the body part they received does. Have the class come back together to discuss how these parts correlate with the Body of Christ.

Have your class work together to piece back together the puzzle. Explain that we all work together as a body to complete the work of Christ.

ACTS 4:32

Now the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul; neither did anyone say that any of the things he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common.

The believers all lived in peace because they all wanted to serve the Lord. Their love for God brought them together and they all shared in His love. They were not selfish with the things God had blessed them with. They all gave what they had to people who needed it. **We are members of the body of Christ and we need to help one another.**

ACTS 4:33

And with great power the apostles gave witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And great grace was upon them all.

The apostles went out telling people about Jesus and how He died and came back to life. God anointed the apostle’s witness so that the people continued to believe in Jesus and His resurrection. (Possibly omit this last sentence, the original wording did not make sense so I took a guess at what they meant and re-worded it) We need to do the same thing today. It is important for us to remember what the Lord wanted the early church to do and to do the same things. Jesus wants to use our lives for His glory.

ACTS 4:34-37

Nor was there anyone among them who lacked; for all who were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the proceeds of the things that were sold,

and laid them at the apostles' feet; and they distributed to each as anyone had need.

And Joses, who was also named Barnabas by the apostles (which is translated Son of Encouragement), a Levite of the country of Cyprus, having land, sold it, and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet.

No one was forced to sell their possessions or land but did it out of love for Jesus and one another, and they used it to help those in need. As a result, none of the believers went hungry or cold. They gave their money to the apostles and the apostles distributed it to the needy people. A man called Barnabas was one of the people who sold his land. **We are members of the body of Christ and we need to help one another.**

The early church is an example for us to follow. We, as Christians, should all get along and enjoy fellowship with each other. We should care for each other and not let each other's needs go un-met. We should be reading the Bible and praying daily, as well as going to church and having communion often. Just as the apostles shared the gospel, we should be telling people about how they can be saved by believing in Jesus. **We are members of the body of Christ and we need to help one another.**

Candy In Common

Have the class form a circle. With a large bag of small sugarless candies, pass out very uneven portions to your students; make sure some children are given a larger portion than others. Have each child say how many he has. If it's a few, ask for a volunteer that has more to give to the child that has less. Continue this process until everyone has the same amount.

Explain how the early church had all things in common. If someone was in want, someone else that could provide gave what he had to help.

PRAYER

Lead the children in a prayer of commitment to encourage and support our brothers and sisters in Christ. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the gospel, give them an opportunity to do so.

