

CHURCH

HIGHER SESSIONS

AIM

In this session, we are aiming to study the following:

That we are created to be connected, not just to God, but to each other.

That the Church is God's community for his people.

That whilst the Church makes mistakes, it is also the hope for the world and it is vital that we are a part of it.

DESCRIPTION

This is session 4 of 6 and is designed to help the young people understand church.

In this session we will look at the importance of being connected to other people; that it is something that we are created to do but whilst other people can make things more beautiful, they can also make things messier!

We are all called to be a part of something bigger called the Church, we are all different and all have a different role to play. In this community we learn to follow Jesus together, learn how to love others, be patient with each other and see a

world transformed through love.

All Higher sessions are designed to be used as part of a 6 session follow up program in schools, youth groups or other youth work situations with new Christians or young people exploring faith. It has been created with the understanding that this is the start of the journey and should be delivered in an engaging and relevant way.

PRAYER

Thank you God for friends and the people that you put around us!

Thank you for community and that you want us to learn from and grow with other people. Help us to love other people like you love us.

Helps us also to learn from them, to journey with them and, together with you, make a difference to the world we live in.



Church - Intro

Time:1 min

Materials:

Welcome the group and make sure they feel safe and wanted as they explore this sessions topic.

Example opener:

“Welcome back to Higher sessions, we are so excited you are here, continuing your first steps into what it means to have faith in God.

Today we are going to be chatting about the church and how important it is.

Wherever you are today in your relationship with God, this is the right place for you!

It’s all about asking questions, and getting to the bottom of why God is such a big deal to some people.”



Church - Do & review

Time:4 min

Materials:

Review with the group how they got on in last sessions **DO** activity.

During the next week ask your group to try out what they learned in the last activity of this session: finding what you love doing and try doing it with God. This might have been putting worship music on whilst they ran, or playing the x-box, it might have been listening to a bit of the Bible whilst they get ready in the morning. They would have done it for a week and should have written down anything that stood out to them during this time!

Get them to share their experiences and encourage them if they need it to either try again this week if they didn't do anything or to keep doing the different things they are challenged to do.



Church - Opener

Time: 5 min

Materials:

- **A sheet of sticky dot stickers per person**
- **laptop with projector and sound**

This opener is aimed at getting the young people to realise how many connections they have with people already and how minor or important those connections may be.

Give the young people a sheet of stickers each and tell them that they have two minutes to talk to different people and find as many connections with them as they can. Once they find a connection with that individual they must move to someone else and talk to another person - though they can return to people within the two minutes. For every connection that they find with people they should swap a coloured dot with another player. The person with the most dots at the end of the two minutes wins. Different 'connections' may include attending the same school, having the same favourite food or living on the same road.

Example link

"Today we are going to spend some time looking at how we are not only created to be connected to God but also to each other! We are made to be with other people, to be in community and connected to something much bigger than ourselves!"

Play the group 'Church' AAA sessions video

click on this link <https://vimeo.com/154713879>

Or search '**Church AAA sessions**' on '**vimeo.com**'

Ask the group what they think of this video.

What stood out for them?

What are there experiences of church?



Church - Game

Time:7 min

Materials:

- **plastic cups**
- **rubber bands**
- **string**

This game is designed to get the group working together and give an example of how working together is important.

Preparation: tie one end of a piece of string to the elastic band and continue to do this with different pieces of string for however many people you want to be in each team so that everyone in a team has a piece of string to hold.

Split your group into small teams of 3 or more. Give each team 5 plastic cups at the end of a room, some standing, some fallen over etc. and give them the band with the string tied to it. Explain to the teams that their goal is to move their cups one at a time to the opposite end of the room and to stack the cups into a pile. The first team to do this will win. The catch is that they can only touch the cups with the string and elastic band and each player must be holding ONE string each. The teams should pull their string to stretch the elastic band and carry the cup as a team, placing it at the other end of the room. Players cannot use two hands.

Example link

"Sometimes doing things with other people can feel like hard work and we can feel it would be much easier to go it alone! It would have been much easier for one of you to pick up a cup and walk it to the other end of the room!"

However, we are made to be connected - to do things with other people, because when we work with other people we learn, we can get the best out of each other and learn about ourselves in the process!"



Church - Game 2

Time:5 min

Materials:

- **balloons**

This game is meant to be fun and competitive, to show how working together makes this game may easier.

Split your group into smaller teams and ask the teams to stand in a circle and put their arms around each other's shoulders. When all of the teams have done this throw one (or two!) inflated balloons into the middle of the circle. Explain to the teams that they must stay in their team circle but try to stomp on the other teams balloons to pop them, they can defend their own balloons but must not pick them up. The team with the last unpopped balloon wins.

Example link

Although things can be easier on our own, they are often nowhere near as fun and when a group of people are drawing

together to work for a common cause or passion you not only achieve more but learn that other people have got your back – they want the best for you and can bring the best out of you! This was always God’s plan, that’s why he created the Church!



Church - Explore

Time:8 min

Materials:

- **large sheet of paper**
- **pens**

This part of the session will start to help the young people to explore their understanding and experiences of church.

If you have a larger group then split the young people into smaller discussion groups and give each group some paper and two different coloured pens. Otherwise you can do this as one group.

Ask each group to draw a large church on their paper (it needs to be big enough to write inside). Ask the young people to list the good things that they think or have heard about the Church and then write these things inside the picture of the church. Then ask the young people the bad things that they think or have heard about the church and ask them to write these things on the outside of the picture of the church.

Example link

“A lot of people have different opinions about the Church, about what it is, what it does and the things it gets wrong or right! The basic idea of the Church is that it is a group of people who have given their lives to following Jesus and they get together to form a community. In a way what you are doing now is church!”

The Church isn’t about the building but about the people who meet together to learn about God together and live their lives together. The problem is, that because the church is made up of people, we don’t always get it right!”

Now ask the young people to think of some negative character traits that they see either in themselves or their friends. Ask the young people to then take a different coloured pen and write these on the inside of the church alongside with the good things.

Example link

“Just because we have decided to follow Jesus and become part of a community, the Church, it doesn’t mean that we stop getting things wrong. In some ways, it means that we fit into the church perfectly because we are a group of people who make mistakes but we’re trying to live differently!”

Now ask the young people to return to the original colour that they were writing in and along side their negative words to write the opposite of this word. Eg. ‘Selfish/ Generous’. Then ask everyone to read out what they have written on the insides of their churches.

Example link

“We are not a part of the church because we are perfect, we are a part of the church because God knows we work best in community and together we are trying to be the best version of us that we can be even though we still do make mistakes!”



Church - Teaching

Time:3 min

Materials:

- **Bibles**
- **PDF - 1 Corinthians poster**

This part of the session is looking at the Bible and what it has to say about church.

Read: 1 Corinthians 12: 12-21

Example explanation

“When the Bible was written there was a sense of communities being divided: between Jews (the people who did believe in God) and Gentiles (those who didn’t); the rich and the poor; and many more. However, one of the ways that the Church is described in the Bible is being like ‘The Body of Christ’ – like being Jesus body on earth, and we’ve all got a part to play no matter who we are or what our story is. The truth is that there is a place for you in the Church! You are different from other people and you will bring things to God’s community that are really needed. Not only that but you may well learn from other people as well!”



Church - Chat

Time:10 min

Materials:

- **PDF print out of Proverbs poster**

This chat time is to start to get the young people to understand why God might have wanted us to be in community.

Ask the young people to get into groups of three or four and read Proverbs 27:17 from the poster

- What do you think it means for ‘iron to sharpen iron’?
- Do you have people around you that are different from you? What do you learn from them?
- Can you think of a time when someone you know has helped you to become a better person even though it may not have been easy?



Church - Prayer

Time:3 min

Materials:

- **Picture frame with glass**
- **sharpies/ glass pens or similar**

Explain to the group that whilst the church is not perfect, we can choose what we want to contribute and that can start now. Ask the young people to think of one word each (or a couple if you have a smaller group) to describe the type of community that they would like to be a part of eg. 'generous', 'forgiving', 'fun', 'trustworthy'. When each person has their word (ideally different ones) ask them to carefully write that word onto the glass of the picture frame.

Example close to prayer time

"We get to create this kind of community, but the best way that we can do that is by ensuring that we take responsibility for ourselves behaving this way. We will all mess up and make mistakes, but we should help each other through our mistakes, forgive each other quickly and cheer each other on and as we begin to grow together we begin to make a difference to the world around us. You are a part of this body, this is Church."



Church - Do

Time:5 min

Materials:

This is something for the young people to go away and do from the session.

It's time to help make the young people take a bold step this session. Invite them to a church service and see how they get on. Maybe you could look at having a special welcome for them at church.

It might be also worth chatting to the group about how they feel about this and if you need to think about special permissions.