



LINK247

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Big Idea — *This Link247 series is designed to rekindle young adults' love for the church by rediscovering a Christ-centered vision for life together in Christian community.*

- **Week 1 — The Church Is Community**
Rediscover the original scriptural meaning of the church as the community of Christ.
- **Week 2 — Invitation to Community**
Rediscover the biblical model for inviting people into the church community.
- **Week 3 — Community of Saints**
Discover how life as saints in the community of Christ is different from life as sinners in the world.
- **Week 4 — Missionary Community**
Explore how the community of Christ is a missionary community like our missionary God.

LESSON MAP



Each LINK247 lesson follows the same lesson map. This map is designed to help you connect students with biblical truth. Each lesson has options to help you tailor the lesson to best fit the group you are teaching. Listed below are the elements in each LINK247 lesson.

1

LAUNCH

Begin by choosing a Launch option that will connect with the group of students you are teaching.



2

UNLOCK

Next, using the outline provided, walk through the Bible with the students.



3

INTERSECT

Then provide practical applications for students to apply the truth in their everyday lives.



4

ARRIVE

To end, conclude the message by choosing one or more of the Arrive options.



I
 LOVE
 My
 CHURCH

WEEK 1 – THE CHURCH IS COMMUNITY



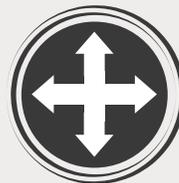
SERIES BIG IDEA

This Link247 series is designed to rekindle young adults' love for the church by rediscovering a Christ-centered vision for life together in Christian community.



BIBLICAL PASSAGE

Acts 9:2; 11:26; 19:29



BOTTOM LINE

Rediscover the original scriptural meaning of the church as the community of Christ.

LESSON OUTLINE



1. LAUNCH

Option 1 — Group Discussion: What Is the Church?

Option 2 — Group Exercise: Google It

2. UNLOCK

A. The Church as Community

B. The Church Community as the “People of God”

C. The Church Community as the “Body of Christ”

D. The Church Community as the Communion of Saints

3. INTERSECT

A. Reviewing the Church as Community

B. Reflection on the Church as Community

4. ARRIVE

Option 1 — Share + Prayer

Option 2 — “Community” Project

Option 3 — Life Together

1

LAUNCH

Begin by choosing a Launch option that will connect with the group of students you are teaching.



Option 1 — Group Discussion: What Is the Church?

- A. *Divide the young adults into groups of about five (or remain together if a smaller group).*
- B. *Discuss these questions:*
 - 1. In your own words, how would you define “church”?
 - 2. What are some other ways people view the church?
 - 3. Why do you think there are so many different understandings of the church?
- C. *Gather the group and discuss the questions together.*
- D. As we could see in our discussion, there are many different understandings of the church. In order for us to have a healthy biblical understanding of the church, let us open our hearts and minds to the Scripture and rediscover the original meaning of the church.

Option 2 — Group Exercise: Google It

- A. *Divide the class into three or more smaller groups (or this can be an individual challenge if you are a smaller group).*
- B. *The challenge is for each team to do a Google search on the question, “What is the church?” Then each group will submit a concise statement of what they think the church is according to Google and share it with the entire class.*
- C. When we are seeking answers we often go to Google because it is a quick way for us to find an answer. The trouble with Google, though, is that there are a variety of answers to consider, and we never quite know which one is factual. In order for us to have a healthy understanding of the church, let us open our hearts and minds to the Scripture and rediscover the original meaning of the church as God intended.

2

UNLOCK

Next, using the outline provided, walk through the Bible with the students.



A. The Church as Community

1. When we go back to the beginning of the formation of the church in the Acts narrative, we discover some unique insights.
 - a. First-century believers were first known as members of “the Way” as we read in Acts 9:2.
 - b. In Antioch the “disciples were first called Christians” (Acts 11:26).
2. However, it wasn’t until later and as God’s plan of the church unfolded that the new community of believers became known as ecclesia, “a called-out assembly or body of people.”¹
 - a. As one author explains, “One might have expected these early disciples to draw on their Jewish heritage by calling their new community something like a Christian synagogue. But the inclusive character of the church probably influenced the choice of terms. Uncircumcised Gentiles were not welcome in the synagogue. *Ecclesia* represented a more acceptable description; in the Hellenistic world, it was used to describe a political gathering, an official meeting of an assembly of citizens (as in Acts 19:29).”²
 - b. At the same time, after reading I Corinthians 12:13 and Acts 1:8, we discover that the church is more than just a human community or organization: “It is a people of God who are created by the Spirit to live as a missionary community.”³
3. Further, the biblical explanation of the church does not focus on individual Christians, but on the forming of a new community that has been created by the Holy Spirit. Many New Testament images further underscore this:
 - a. Holy Temple (I Corinthians 3:16)
 - b. Household of God, citizens with the saints (Ephesians 2:19)
 - c. Living stones built into a spiritual house (I Peter 2:5)

Have you ever thought of church as community? Why or why not? How does the concept of community explained in Scripture differ from our culture, which emphasizes individualism? How do you think this should effect our thinking about the church?

B. The Church Community as the “People of God”

1. The New Testament also describes the church community as the “people of God,” making a direct connection to the story of the Old Testament.
 - a. The church is the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies about the people of Israel (I Peter 2:9).

¹ David K. Bernard and J. L. Hall, *Doctrines of the Bible*, (Hazelwood, MO: Word Aflame Press, 2011) 211.

² Craig Van Gelder, *The Essence of the Church: A Community Created by the Spirit*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2000) 105.

³ *Ibid.*, 25.



- b. The word used to describe the assembly of the Israelites in the wilderness is *ecclesia* (Acts 7:38; Hebrews 2:12).⁴
2. So no longer are we defined by our human racial, ethnic, national, or political divisions; instead the identity of the church is united together as the “people of God.”
 - a. The church is now made up of all people, both Jews and Gentiles (Romans 9:25-26).
 - b. We are a diverse people united by the blood of Jesus Christ, and the church is to live in the world as a newly created international people of God from “every nation” (Revelation 7:9-10, 14).

How does this scriptural truth challenge views of the church as a place or building? Knowing we are people of God from every nation, how does that inspire your view of the church?

C. The Church Community as the “Body of Christ”

1. Perhaps the most popular image of the church community is as the body of the resurrected Christ. Paul used this metaphor in I Corinthians, Romans, Colossians, and Ephesians.
2. Jesus Christ is the head of the body (Ephesians 1:22-23). We are all submitted to His word and His will, for “Jesus Christ is the source of the church’s life and the One who causes the church to grow” (Acts 2:47; Colossians 2:19).⁵
 - a. The church remembers the death of Jesus Christ through the sacrament of communion. Again, our diversity is united as one body, one community of sacrificial love and fellowship (I Corinthians 10:16-17).
 - b. The resurrection of Christ is confirmed by the work of the Spirit in our lives, for we are “the body of Christ on earth under Christ’s headship through the ongoing work of the Spirit who gifts, guides, and graces the church”⁶ (Romans 12:4-5). The passage in Romans underscores our independence on one another, thus further emphasizing the community aspect of the church.
 - c. As one author explains, “The relationship between believers is based on their mutual faith (Acts 2:42, I John 3:23). This relationship is evidenced by and strengthened through love, which is the ‘more excellent way’ (John 13:35; I Corinthians 12:31). The fruit of love is unity, respect, and appreciation among the members of Christ’s body. (See Ephesians 1:1-16).”⁷

How does this concept of the church community as the body of Christ influence your understanding of the church?

D. The Church Community as the Communion of Saints

1. The term *communion* is a translation of *koinonia*, which refers to what we share in common. It is probably better translated as “fellowship.”⁸

⁴ Hall and Bernard, *Doctrines of the Bible*, 211.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid., 218.

⁸ Van Gelder, *The Essence of the Church*, 112.



2. The church as a communion, or fellowship, of saints is that we now experience God and each other in reconciled relationships based on what we share in common in Christ.
 - a. *Read II Corinthians 5:17-19.*
 - b. This is seen in the passages on fellowship (I John 1:3, 6; I Corinthians 10:6; II Corinthians 13:14; Philippians 1:5, I Corinthians 1:9).
3. Through the infilling of the Spirit, God has created a fellowship of saints, a church community that demonstrates to the world “the truthfulness of the gospel of grace, forgiveness, and reconciliation.”⁹

What kind of message do you think a church community of “grace, forgiveness, and reconciliation” sends to the world? How does this influence your view of the church?

9 Ibid.

3

INTERSECT

Then provide practical applications for students to apply the truth in their everyday lives.



A. Reviewing the Church as Community

1. The church is community, but not just any community. We have been united together by the blood of Jesus Christ and the infilling of His Spirit to become the gracious people of God.
2. The divisive walls of humanity have been broken down so that we can preach the gospel of reconciliation to the world. I love my church!

B. Reflection on the Church as Community

1. *Instructions*
 - a. *Paper and a writing utensil will be needed for this exercise.*
 - b. *Instruct the group to answer the questions individually.*
2. A Community
 - a. The Bible emphasizes the community over the individual. Consider the following questions and how this understanding shapes your personal view of the church.
 - b. How does your focus on self get in the way of community?
 - c. What else may keep you from experiencing biblical community?
 - d. What can you do to be more involved in your church community?
3. A People
 - a. The Bible describes the church as the “people of God” free of human divisions.
 - b. Are there any human divisions that still make it difficult for you to accept others?
 - c. How can you work to break down those divisions between you and your brothers and sisters?
 - d. What are ways that you can be better united with your church community?
4. A Body
 - a. The Bible gives a vivid illustration of the church community as an interdependent body.
 - b. Are you submitting to the Lordship of Jesus Christ, the head of the body? Explain.
 - c. Do you depend on your church community or do you try to handle life on your own?
 - d. How can you show love and “be there” for your brothers and sisters?
5. A Fellowship
 - a. The Bible explains that the church community is a fellowship of reconciliation.
 - b. Is there anything that you need to reconcile with God or with a brother or sister?
 - c. Is there anyone that you believe cannot be reconciled with God? Explain.

4

ARRIVE

To end, conclude the message by choosing one or more of the Arrive options.



Option 1 — Share + Prayer

- A. *Have the young adults get into groups of two or three.*
- B. *Share reflections from the Intersect section with their small group.*
- C. *Afterward, allow those who would like to, to share their reflections with the entire group.*
- D. *At the end, have the young adults pray for one another. Challenge the young adults to pray for Jesus Christ to give them a new biblical revelation of what it means to be the church and to strengthen their bond with the community of Christ.*

Option 2 — “Community” Project

This will be a recurring option throughout the course of this series. Young adults will be encouraged to coordinate a project to impact their local church with what they have learned. They will also be responsible for holding one another accountable to the challenges they present.

- A. *Have the young adults break into at least three smaller groups. (If your group is small enough remain together.)*
- B. *Have each group develop a “Community” Project that will apply what they have learned, so that they can impact their local church (at the discretion and approval of the pastor). Examples could include:*
 1. *Create and coordinate an event that helps build community in the church.*
 2. *Organize a care-group ministry for single parents, the elderly, or a segment of the church that may have been overlooked.*
 3. *Create an outreach effort to draw people into the church community.*
- C. *Have each group share their project idea with the entire group.*
- D. *Then have the entire group choose the most favorable project that the entire class will all commit to do together. Over the course of the next several weeks, they will continually be challenged to fulfill what God is leading the entire young adult ministry to do.*

Option 3 — Life Together

- A. *After the lesson, discussion, and prayer, invite the entire group out to the leader’s home or a church member’s home to eat and spend time together as the community of Christ. (If a home is not available, choose a favorite local coffee-house or restaurant.)*
- B. *Have the young adults contact anyone who was absent and invite them as well.*
- C. *While spending time together, talk about how the young adult ministry could become more like the church community that Christ envisions.*

I

LOVE

My

CHURCH

WEEK 2 — INVITATION TO COMMUNITY



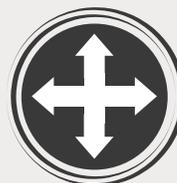
SERIES BIG IDEA

This Link247 series is designed to rekindle young adults' love for the church by rediscovering a Christ-centered vision for life together in Christian community.



BIBLICAL PASSAGE

Colossians 4:3-6; Ephesians 5:1-2, 25; Acts 20:28



BOTTOM LINE

Rediscover the biblical model for inviting people into the church community.

LESSON OUTLINE



1. LAUNCH

Option 1 — Group Discussion: “Stop Trying to Make Church Cool”

Option 2 — Video: Why Young Christians Are Leaving Church

Option 3 — Group Discussion: “Wells Not Fences”

2. UNLOCK

A. Outside of Community

B. Cost of Community

C. Apostolic Invitation to Community

3. INTERSECT

A. Reviewing the Method for Community Invitation

B. Reflection on the Church as Community

4. ARRIVE

Option 1 — Share + Prayer

Option 2 — “Community” Project

Option 3 — Personal Invitation

1

LAUNCH

Begin by choosing a Launch option that will connect with the group of students you are teaching.



Option 1 — Group Discussion: “Stop Trying to Make Church Cool”

- A. Summarize the Washington Post article for the class, “Want Millennials Back in the Pews? Stop Trying to Make Church ‘Cool.’”¹
- B. A millennial quoted in the article said, “I want to be asked to participate in the life of an ancient-future community.” Besides the grace of Jesus Christ, people, especially young adults, are drawn to church by the hope of community.

After hearing about the article, what are your thoughts? Are some churches trying too hard to be “cool” in order to keep young adults? Explain. Is community most important for Hyphen Young Adults? Why or why not? Would you define the church as a community? Why or why not? What are some other ways people view the church? Why do you think there are so many different understandings of the church?

- C. As we could see in our discussion, there are many different understandings of the church. In order for us to have a healthy biblical understanding of the church, let us open our hearts and minds to the Scripture and rediscover the original meaning of the church.

Option 2 — Video: Why Young Christians Are Leaving Church

- A. View Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IxNUxlWOgZE>
- B. Have a group discussion.

Why do you think young adults are leaving the church? If you were to invite someone back to your church community, how would you go about inviting someone who had left the church? How would you invite someone who had never been a part of church?

- C. Today, let’s reevaluate how outsiders view the church, and how we can invite people to become a part of the community of Christ.

Option 3 — Group Discussion: “Wells Not Fences”²

- A. Share Illustration: “In some farming communities, the farmers might build fences around their properties to keep their livestock in and the livestock of neighboring farms out. This is a bounded set. But in rural communities where farms or ranches cover an enormous geographic area, fencing the property is out of the question. In our home of Australia, ranches (called stations) are so vast that fences are superfluous. Under these conditions a farmer has to sink a bore and create a well, a precious water supply in the Outback. It is assumed that

1 Washington Post: https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/jesus-doesnt-tweet/2015/04/30/fb07ef1a-ed01-11e4-8666-a1d756d0218e_story.html

2 Jim Belcher, *Deep Church: A Third Way beyond Emerging and Traditional*, (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Press, 2009) 85-87.



livestock, though they will stray, will never roam too far from the well, lest they die. That is a centered set. As long as there is a supply of clean water, the livestock will remain close by.”³

How do you think this illustration could relate to inviting people to our church communities? Are there ways that churches may unintentionally (or intentionally) exclude people from the community of Christ? At the same time, what responsibilities do outsiders have if they desire to belong to a church community?

- B. An unhealthy church community operates with an “us versus them” mentality, making it difficult for new people to join in the community of Christ. However, healthy church communities focus on Jesus Christ and promote the gospel and keep Jesus at the center of it all. Christ-centered churches believe that the gospel is so refreshing that people will not stray far from Him. Today, let’s look closer at how we can invite others to become a part of the community of Christ.

³ Michael Frost and Alan Hirsch, *The Shaping of Things to Come: Innovation and Mission for the Twenty-First-Century Church*, (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2003) 47.

2

UNLOCK

Next, using the outline provided, walk through the Bible with the students.



A. Outside of Community

1. Read Colossians 4:3-6.
2. Skeptical Outsiders
 - a. In a consumer culture, outsiders have become savvy to the sales techniques of advertising marketers vying for their attention.
 - b. People tend to be skeptical and quickly pick up on methods that have secret underlying motivations and seem superficial. In fact, most of us would express a disdain for methods that attempt to “trick” people into making a commitment.
3. Cheap Message
 - a. So, when Christians attempt to make the gospel message more palatable for a pleasure-oriented society by misrepresenting the sacrificial commitment of the gospel, outsiders are actually turned off by the disingenuous presentation. Or, as one author put it, “many outsiders actually miss the chance to experience true life in Christ because we cheapen the message of Jesus.”¹
 - b. Christians may be sincere in their desire for outsiders to come to know Christ and to convert to Christianity, but the perceptions of outsiders is that many Christians revert to worn-out sales-gimmicks rather than an authentic appeal to community. Outsiders question the motives of Christians and it defuses their interest in Christianity.
 - c. This is not a new phenomenon. Dietrich Bonhoeffer criticized the same approach in his day: “Cheap grace means grace sold on the market like cheapjacks’ wares. The sacraments, the forgiveness of sin, and the consolations of religion are thrown away at cut prices. . . . In such a Church the world finds a cheap covering for its sins; no contrition is required, still less any real desire to be delivered from sin. . . . Cheap grace is grace without discipleship, grace without the cross, grace without Jesus Christ.”²
4. Casual Christians
 - a. When the gospel is presented as merely an exciting choice to convert with no context of commitment, people do not respond to the sacrifice of Christ with life dedication.
 - b. Conversion becomes nothing more than a thrilling life-experience, like skydiving, and “too many of the conversions become either ‘aborted’ believers or casual Christians.”³
5. Wise with Outsiders
 - a. If we are to truly influence people outside of the community of Christ, we must “be wise in the way you act toward outsiders” (Colossians 4:5). We cannot resort to the means of the

¹ David Kinnaman and Gabe Lyons, *UnChristian: What a New Generation Really Thinks about Christianity...and Why It Matters*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2012) 69, 79.

² Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship* (New York: Touchstone, 1959), 43-45.

³ Kinnaman and Lyons, *UnChristian*, 79.



world to reach the world. Our community cost Jesus Christ too much for us to cheapen it.

What are some ways you have seen people cheapen the message of Christ? Do you believe a cheap message is part of the reason for “casual Christians”? Explain.

B. Cost of Community

1. Read *Ephesians 5:1-2, 25*.

2. Read *Acts 20:28*.

3. Costly Message

a. The essence of the gospel is the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. He purchased our salvation with the blood shed on Calvary.

(1) Read *I Corinthians 15:1, 3-4*.

(2) Through Jesus Christ, as Timothy Keller beautifully illustrates, “God becomes human and offers his own lifeblood in order to honor moral justice and merciful love so that someday he can destroy all evil without destroying us.”⁴

b. Initiation into the community of Christ occurs when we experience the beautiful surrender of applying the gospel message of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ to our lives. We apply the gospel by obeying the New Testament message of repentance, baptism in Jesus’ name, and receiving the Holy Ghost. (See *Acts 2:38, 10:44-48; 19:1-4*.)

c. We are born anew, and just as a new born child is welcomed to the family, we are welcomed into the family of God.

4. Committed Christians

a. Casual Christianity is a far cry from the covenant that Jesus Christ desires with humanity. “A Christian is, literally,” as one author explains, “‘Christ’s one,’ someone who is not just vaguely influenced by Christian teaching, but who has switched his or her most fundamental allegiance to Jesus. Christians understand the all-or-nothing choice that is forced upon us by the magnitude of Jesus’ claims.”⁵

b. Jesus repeatedly called people to forsake everything, take up the cross, and follow Him during His earthly ministry. The call is no different today.

(1) “What we see with Jesus,” one author notes, “is that thousands of people were invited into the community of Jesus. But once they joined the community, Jesus challenged them to not just be part of the community but to commit themselves to him [John 6:26-29, 43, 53, 66].”⁶

(2) We embrace a new life in the family by giving our lives wholly to a life of holiness consecrated to our God and Savior Jesus Christ, sharing the responsibilities and experiencing the rich blessings of the family.

How does the love of Jesus Christ for the church and the price He paid for community influence our view of the church community? How do you think this understanding should influence the way we invite outsiders into the community?

4 Ibid., 192.

5 Timothy Keller, *The Reason for God: Belief in an Age of Skepticism* (New York: Dutton, 2008), 228.

6 Belcher, *Deep Church*, 100.



C. Apostolic Invitation to Community

1. The Book of Acts, as David A. deSilva explains, “locates the Christian movement squarely within the unfolding drama of God’s chosen people...[So] we look to Acts for telling a Gentile church how it fits in with the people of God’s own choosing.”⁷
2. Consider Acts 2.
 - a. Peter was the primary spokesman for the early church and held the distinct privilege of preaching the first sermon of the New Testament church in Acts chapter two.
 - b. “Acts 2 is critical,” David S. Norris underscores, “for it is here that the Spirit is first poured out; it is the marker and sets the standard for what it means to be initiated into the New Covenant.”⁸
 - c. This first message set the standard by which people are invited into the new community.
3. The first sermon at Pentecost articulates the invitation.
 - a. Peter’s sermon connects the outpouring of the Spirit to the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Peter referenced a prophetic Psalm of David and explained that the resurrection of Jesus and the outpouring of the Spirit both testified that Jesus was the Lord and Messiah.
 - b. When the onlookers asked what that meant for them and what they should do in response to such a message, Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off – for all whom the Lord our God will call” (Acts 2:38-39).
 - c. Peter’s message on the day of Pentecost was not an anomaly but in fact became, as F.F. Bruce explains, the pattern of apostolic preaching in the early church: “The early apostolic preaching regularly comprises four elements (not always in the same orders): (1) the announcement that the age of fulfillment has arrived; (2) an account of the ministry, death, and triumph of Jesus; (3) citation of Old Testament scriptures whose fulfillment in these events proves Jesus to be the one to whom they pointed forward; (4) a call to repentance.”⁹
4. The precedent was set for invitation into community.
 - a. The first sermon of the New Testament church not only revealed the undergirding theology of the early church but also set the precedent for how people would be invited into community with Christ.
 - b. There is a call for repentance, life-change, and change of direction, and there is the confirmation of the work of God in Water and Spirit baptism.
 - c. In Acts 3, Peter would use the same pattern to address the crowd at Solomon’s Colonnade after the miraculous healing of the lame man and in Acts 10 with Cornelius’s household.
5. Paul followed precedent.
 - a. Paul continued with this precedent when he was given the opportunity to preach a word of encouragement to the audience of Jewish and Gentile God-fearers in Antioch in Acts chapter fifteen.

⁷ deSilva, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, 348.

⁸ David S. Norris, *I Am: A Oneness Pentecostal Theology* (Hazelwood, MO: Word Aflame Press, 2009), 206.

⁹ F.F. Bruce, *The Book of the Acts* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 63.



- b. Then Paul followed the same pattern in his message in Athens, providing us with a sample of his preaching to outsiders. Up until this point, we have looked at the presentation of the gospel to Jewish and God-fearing believers.
- (1) He was invited by Epicurean and Stoic philosophers to present his teaching to the Athenians and resident foreigners.¹⁰ So, Paul had to speak in terms that his audience would understand.
 - (2) It is important to note, however, that Paul not only followed the apostolic pattern but also set a precedent for us to follow when presenting the gospel to people with little or no concept of covenant relationship with God.
 - (3) Paul began with a statement of a living and true God made apparent in the works of creation. Paul then drew his conclusion; since humanity is the creation of God, idolatry or devoted commitment to any other but the Creator is forbidden. Paul appealed to the fundamental aspects of community: repentance and a dedicated relationship with God.
6. An apostolic invitation to community starts with a common understanding with the audience, proclaiming the death and resurrection of Christ, and giving a call to repentance so that those who believe can enter into the community of Christ through faith and the grace of God.

How do we invite someone into the church community? Does it compliment what the apostles did? How do you think the apostles would invite people into the church community today? How do you think we should invite people into the community today?

10 Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 330.

3

INTERSECT

Then provide practical applications for students to apply the truth in their everyday lives.



A. Reviewing the Method for Community Invitation

1. Unfortunately, the gospel is often cheapened in a misguided effort to reach more people. However, the offer of new life came at a great cost: the blood of Jesus Christ.
2. Entering into the community of Christ should be presented as the most significant decision of a person's life.

B. Reflection on the Church as Community

1. *Instructions*
 - a. *Paper and a writing utensil will be needed for this exercise.*
 - b. *Instruct the group to answer the questions individually.*
2. Outside of Community
 - a. If we are to truly influence people outside of the community of Christ, we must “be wise in the way you act toward outsiders” (Colossians 4:5).
 - b. Have you met any “skeptical outsiders”? How do you typically interact with them?
 - c. Do you feel the temptation to cheapen the message of the gospel? Why or why not?
 - d. How do you normally act toward outsiders? Is it wise? Do you hold any prejudices that would make it difficult for an outsider to become a part of your church community? How could you improve?
3. Cost of Community
 - a. Jesus repeatedly called people to forsake everything, take up the cross, and follow Him during His earthly ministry. The call is no different today. “What we see with Jesus is that thousands of people were invited into the community of Jesus. But once they joined the community, Jesus challenged them to not just be part of the community but to commit themselves to him.”¹
 - b. Take a moment to reflect on the sacrifice of Christ and His love for the church. How does this love and sacrifice influence your view of your church community? Do you love the church? Explain.
 - c. How will this love and sacrifice make you a more committed Christian?
4. Invitation to Community
 - a. An apostolic invitation to community starts with a common understanding with the audience, proclaiming the death and resurrection of Christ, and giving a call to repentance so that those who believe can enter into the community of Christ through faith and the grace of God.

¹ Belcher, *Deep Church*, 100.



- b. What is one thing you learned from apostles in this lesson that will change the way you invite outsiders into community?
- c. How would you personally invite someone into the community of Christ?

4

ARRIVE

To end, conclude the message by choosing one or more of the Arrive options.



Option 1 — Share + Prayer

- A. Have the young adults get into groups of two or three.
- B. Share reflections from the Intersect section with their small group.
- C. Afterward, allow volunteers to share their reflections with the entire group.
- D. At the end, have the young adults pray for one another to live out the lesson.

Option 2 — “Community” Project

This will be a recurring option throughout the course of this series. Young adults will be encouraged to coordinate a project to impact their local church with what they have learned.

- A. In week one, the group chose a “Community” project. Take time to develop it more this week.
 - 1. What is the purpose of the project?
 - 2. When and where will it take place?
 - 3. How will it be accomplished? How will the teachings from this series influence the project?
 - 4. Who needs to be involved and who needs to be informed?

Option 3 — Personal Invitation

- A. Have everyone get a partner.
- B. Each partner will take turns sharing the gospel with their partner. The catch is that their partner can be any sort of outsider they choose to be (Atheist, Mormon, Muslim, etc.) in order to challenge them.
- C. After five to ten minutes, have the partners reverse roles and repeat the exercise.
- D. Discussion: How did your partner make it difficult on you? What worked best for you when sharing the gospel with your partner? What did you learn from this exercise?
- E. Wrap Up: Leader, share how you engage with an outsider and what has worked for you.

I
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 My
 CHURCH

WEEK 3 — COMMUNITY OF SAINTS



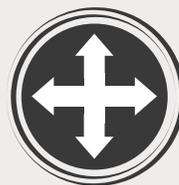
SERIES BIG IDEA

This Link247 series is designed to rekindle young adults' love for the church by rediscovering a Christ-centered vision for life together in Christian community.



BIBLICAL PASSAGE

*Genesis 3:1-20, 1 John 2:15-16;
Matthew 4:1-11*



BOTTOM LINE

Discover how life as saints in the community of Christ is different from life as sinners in the world.

LESSON OUTLINE



1. LAUNCH

Option 1 — Discussion: Brothers and Sisters

Option 2 — Video: Consequences of Sin

Option 3 — Group Activity: What Does the Bible Say about Sin?

2. UNLOCK

A. Sin Starts with a Question

B. Sin Ends in Death

C. Sin Is Ignorance

D. Sin Destroys Community

E. Sanctified by Truth

F. Old Covenant Community

G. New Covenant Community

3. INTERSECT

A. Reviewing Our Understanding of Sinners and Saints

B. Reflection on Our Identity as Saints

4. ARRIVE

Option 1 — Share + Prayer

Option 2 — “Community” Project

Option 3 — Life Together Again

1

LAUNCH

Begin by choosing a Launch option that will connect with the group of students you are teaching.



Option 1 — Discussion: Brothers and Sisters

- A. In an article in *Relevant Magazine* by Presoton Sprinkle entitled “Four Ways the Modern Church Looks Nothing Like the Early Church” (January 15, 2015), the point is made that we now tend to view other Christians differently. A value of early Christians was to view the church as family, “as brothers and sisters and mothers and fathers to everyone who was part of the Christian community.”

As Pentecostals, we often refer to one another as “brother and sister,” but how should viewing church community members as brothers and sisters change the way we interact with one another? In a healthy family, family members protect one another and avoid actions that hurt the family. What hurtful actions could we avoid to make our church community healthy? What healthy actions could we take to create a healthy church community?

- B. In week one we learned that the church community is a “communion of saints.” The term communion refers to what we share in common and is better translated as “fellowship” or community.¹ As a community of saints we now experience God and each other in reconciled relationships based on what we share in common in Christ, but now let’s take some more time to think about what it means to live as a community of saints and how our actions, good and bad, can affect the community of Christ.

Option 2 — Video: Consequences of Sin

- A. View Video based on Genesis 3:1-24. (Stop the video at at 4:53.): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QBlvSxYO8NQ>

To what extent do we think sin only affects ourselves, and how do we fail to see its impact on those around us? Like Adam and Eve, or Cain, to what extent do people struggle with blaming others for their sin, hiding from God when they sin, or failing to take ownership of their sin? How have you been the recipient of God’s grace, and how does this impact how you view or treat others?

- B. In week one we learned that the church community is a “communion of saints.” The term communion refers to what we share in common and is better translated as “fellowship” or community.² As a community of saints we now experience God and each other in reconciled relationships based on what we share in common in Christ, but now let’s take some more time to think about what it means to live as a community of saints and how our actions, good and bad, can affect the community of Christ.

¹ Craig Van Gelder, *The Essence of the Church: A Community Created by the Spirit*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2000) 112.
² Ibid.



Option 3 — Group Activity: What Does the Bible Say about Sin?

- A. *Divide the group into smaller groups of four.*
- B. *Ask them to read Romans 7:15-25 together and then discuss the following questions.*

1. How did Paul describe the influence of sin on his life?
2. What do you think he would have said to someone who claimed, “I do my best to try and live a good life?”
3. Can you imagine what it would feel like to be someone’s slave? How do you think your life would be different? Why do you think Paul used this idea to describe sin?
4. To what extent do we think sin only affects ourselves, and how do we fail to see its impact on those around us?
5. How have you been the recipient of God’s grace, and how does this impact how you view or treat others?

- C. *After five to ten minutes, ask each small group to share their thoughts and write the key points on a whiteboard. You may need to give additional references to help each group consider and complete their explanation of sin. (Suggested references: Romans 3:23; 5:8-9; 5:12, 18-19; 6:23; 10:8-10.)*
- D. In week one we learned that the church community is a “communion of saints.” The term communion refers to what we share in common and is better translated as “fellowship” or community.³ As a community of saints we now experience God and each other in reconciled relationships based on what we share in common in Christ, but now let’s take some more time to think about what it means to live as a community of saints and how our actions, good and bad, can affect the community of Christ.

3 Ibid.

2

UNLOCK

Next, using the outline provided, walk through the Bible with the students.



A. Sin Starts with a Question

1. Read Genesis 3:1-7. (If you used “Option 2” in the Launch, review the passage.)

What tactic did the serpent use to persuade Adam and Eve to sin?
How is that tactic used on saints today?

- a. The serpent questioned God’s word, and that is the same tactic that is used today to undermine our faith.
- b. If we are going to ask, “Did God say that?” we had better be prepared to seek out the truth about what God has indeed said in His Word. Otherwise, we will be deceived.
- c. Read I John 2:15-16.

What similarities do you see between John’s writing and Adam and Eve’s temptation in the passage in Genesis? Why do you think John emphasized love?

- d. The serpent initially tempted Eve with the very same things that we are tempted with today: lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and the pride of life.
 - e. Ultimately, it is our love for God that will deter us from a love for the world. The essence of our desire is based upon our commitment to our covenant relationship with our Father and the body of Christ.
2. Read Matthew 4:1-11.
 - a. How does Jesus teach us to respond to the questions of the enemy?
 - b. Jesus responds directly with the correctly applied truth of God, and that is our offensive strategy in the face of deception today.

B. Sin Ends in Death

1. Read John 10:10.
2. Read Romans 6:23.

What contrast do you notice in these readings?
Why do you think people still pursue sin, knowing it ends in death?

- a. The enemy and sin lead to destruction, but God is life. People pursue sin because they do not experience immediate consequences for their actions, but over time the ravages of sin become evident to all.
- b. More often than not, however, people continue in sin because they are deceived, blinded by the enemy, living in ignorance.



C. Sin Is Ignorance

1. Read I Peter 1:13-16.
2. Read I Thessalonians 4:3-8.
 - a. Sin is ignorance. When we fall into the temptations of this world, we are returning to the deception that once blinded us. Sinners do not know God. As believers, however, we do know God and His glorious grace. He has empowered us to live a holy life by His Spirit.

D. Sin Destroys Community

1. Read Genesis 3:8-20. (If you used “Option 2” in the opening, review the passage.)

How does Adam and Eve’s fall affect humanity today? Sin is often viewed as only between an individual and God or an individual and his moral convictions, but how do you think the story of Adam and Even reveals the effects of sin on others? To what extent do we fail to see its impact on those around us?

2. Sin has consequences that go beyond ourselves. Sin affects the community, and it is only by the grace of Jesus Christ that we can overcome it together.
3. Perhaps this is why James instructed us to, “confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed” (James 5:16).

E. Sanctified by Truth

1. Read John 17:17.
 - a. As a community of saints, we live in the light of the gospel, not in the deception of the enemy. As Paul wrote to the Corinthians, “We are not unaware of his schemes” (II Corinthians 2:11).
 - b. Nor do we live in the ignorance of our sinful past because the truth of God’s word continually transforms us (Romans 12:2).
2. As a community of saints, we no longer live according to the desires of our ignorant sinful nature because we are not ignorant; we recognize the destroying effects of sin on ourselves and our brothers and sisters in Christ. This does not mean that we are perfect, but it does mean that we are aware of the realities of sin. As one author aptly noted, “Even sanctified people sin, but the difference is that in the life of sanctified person, sin becomes your permanent enemy, not your secret lover!”¹ Let’s talk more about what it means to be a saint.

F. Old Covenant Community

1. Read Leviticus 11:44.
2. *Saint* meant holy one, set apart, “to be *like* [God], living according to the revealed character of God.”²
3. As one author points out, “God demanded that [the Israelites] should share his ‘otherness.’ They must ‘consecrate’ themselves to him - make themselves holy, separate from other nations.”³

1 Ibid.

2 M. Hooker and F. Young *Holiness and Mission: Learning from the Early Church about Mission in the City* (London: SCM Pres, 2010) Loc 139.

3 Ibid.



4. What is unique about this call though, is the call to be saints was not to individuals - it was a call to the whole nation of Israel. As John Wesley aptly noted, “biblical holiness is essentially social holiness: it concerns the whole community.”⁴

G. New Covenant Community

1. *Read I Peter 1:15-16.*
2. We are saints in Christ.
 - a. A common misunderstanding of a saint is defining her as a person who is recognized as having an exceptional degree of holiness that is not attainable by the average believer. Biblically, though, “saint” is simply another term for believer, Christian, or Christ’s holy sanctified one.
 - b. God’s demand to His people had been that they should “Be holy as I am holy,” and now this command is addressed to Christians. For the Christian, the command to “be holy as I am holy” is a command to be like Christ.
 - c. As we learned in week two, when we are invited into community we respond to the gospel, we are baptized into Christ, sharing in His death and resurrection. We die to our old way of life and are raised to a new one—a life that is lived “in Christ.”
3. We are called to be saints.
 - a. “Saints” became the apostle Paul’s favorite name for Christians throughout his letters to the church. (See Romans 1:7; 8:27; 12:13; 15:25, 26, 31; 16:2, 15; plus many other places in Paul’s letters).⁵
4. We are now truly members of God’s people, and that is why Paul addressed us as saints, or “holy ones,” the term once used of Israel.
5. As one author notes, “The language he uses reminds of that fundamental relationship between Christ and believers, and of the call to be holy, in a way that our modern use of the term ‘Christians’ does not.”⁶
 - a. *Read I Corinthians 1:2.*
 - b. *Read I Corinthians 6:9-11.*
 - c. We no longer live as sinners. We live in our new identity as saints of God.
6. We are a community of saints.
 - a. Referring to the church community as “saints” (emphasizing the “s”) also reminds us of the call for the whole community to live in holiness.
 - b. *Read Philippians 2:1-5, 12-13.*
 - c. To work out our salvation meant to live out the gospel in our lives—not just as individuals, but as community. We are to be “one in spirit and of one mind.” Together, we are living holy lives acceptable and pleasing to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

4 Ibid.

5 Hooker and Young, 349.

6 Ibid.

3

INTERSECT

Then provide practical applications for students to apply the truth in their everyday lives.



A. Reviewing Our Understanding of Sinners and Saints

1. "I love my church" takes on a whole new meaning when we realize that a true love for the church is abstaining from sin that would hurt my community.
2. We no longer live as sinners, but we have a new identity as saints in Christ.
3. Together, we have been called to holiness, called to be a community of saints.

B. Reflection on Our Identity as Saints

1. *Instructions*
 - a. *Paper and a writing utensil will be needed for this exercise.*
 - b. *Instruct the group to answer the questions individually.*
2. Sin starts with a question.
 - a. *What questions about God and your faith have you been faced with recently?*
 - b. *What does Scripture say about those questions?*
 - c. *Resolve to seek out the truth.*
3. Sin ends in death.
 - a. *Consider the temptation that you face on an ongoing basis. Take a moment to think through what would happen if you succumbed to that temptation. This may be a painful exercise, but considering the ramifications of sinful actions will enable us to respond wisely initially.*
 - b. *What would this do to you or how would it hurt you? What would you lose?*
 - c. *Who or what would be destroyed in the end?*
4. Sin is ignorant.
 - a. *Once again, consider the temptation that you face on an ongoing basis.*
 - b. *What is the truth about that sin? How does it reveal that a person does not know God?*
 - c. *In light of that temptation, what is God's plan and desire for you?*
5. Sin destroys community.
 - a. *Have you ever thought of how sins can affect others?*
 - b. *How does this motivate you to live a holy life?*
 - c. *Do you have a trusted spiritual mentor you can confess your sins to and pray with as James instructed? If not, how can you cultivate a trusting relationship like that? How do you think it would help strengthen you in seeking God to overcome sin in your life?*
6. We are sanctified by truth.



- a. *How well do you know the Word of God? How often do you read it?*
 - b. *What are some ways that you will commit to growing in “the grace and knowledge” of Christ through His Word?*
7. We are called to New Covenant community.
- a. *Is your life distinct from the world around you? Why or why not?*
 - b. *Do you consider yourself a saint? How would thinking of yourself as a saint change the way you live?*
 - c. *How do you think you and your local church community can be holy together?*
 - d. *How will you have the “mind of Christ” in your church community? What will that look like in your life?*

4

ARRIVE

To end, conclude the message by choosing one or more of the Arrive options.



Option 1 — Share + Prayer

- A. *Have the young adults get into groups of two or three.*
- B. *Share reflections from the Intersect section with their small group.*
- C. *Afterward, ask volunteers to share their reflections with the entire group.*
- D. *At the end, have the young adults pray for one another to live out the lesson.*

Option 2 — “Community” Project

This will be a recurring option throughout the course of this series. Young adults will be encouraged to coordinate a project to impact their local church with what they have learned.

- A. *Take time to develop your “Community” project more this week.*
- B. *What other steps do we need to take in order to make our project a reality?*
- C. *Will the teachings from this lesson influence the project? If so, how?*

Option 2 — Life Together Again

- A. *After the lesson, discussion, and prayer, invite the entire group out to the leader’s home or a church member’s home to eat and spend time together as the community of Christ. (If a home is not available, choose a favorite local coffee-house or restaurant.)*
- B. *Have the young adults contact anyone who was absent and invite them as well.*
- C. *While spending time together, talk about how the young adult ministry could become more like the church community that Christ envisions.*

I

LOVE

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WEEK 4 — MISSIONARY COMMUNITY



SERIES BIG IDEA

This Link247 series is designed to rekindle young adults' love for the church by rediscovering a Christ-centered vision for life together in Christian community.



BIBLICAL PASSAGE

Genesis 3:8, 21-24; Exodus 25:8-9



BOTTOM LINE

Explore how the community of Christ is a missionary community like our missionary God.

LESSON OUTLINE



1. LAUNCH

Option 1 — Discussion: Experiencing God

Option 2 — Video: AYC

Option 3 — Video: *unChristian*

2. UNLOCK

A. God's Grace in the Garden of Eden

B. Fellowship with God via the Ark of the Covenant

C. Jesus Christ Comes for Us

D. The Church Community

E. Restoring Fellowship

F. Living as a Missionary Community

3. INTERSECT

A. Reviewing Our Understanding of Our Missionary God and Role as a Missionary Community

B. Reflection on Our Role

4. ARRIVE

Option 1 — Share + Prayer

Option 2 — “Community” Project

Option 3 — Apostolic Youth Corp

1

LAUNCH

Begin by choosing a Launch option that will connect with the group of students you are teaching.



Option 1 — Discussion: Experiencing God

- A. *Before the discussion share the first time you remember feeling the presence of God and what that experience was like.*
- B. Do you remember the first time you felt the presence of God? Was it during a quiet moment of reflection at home, admiring the beauty of His creation, your first church service, or a different moment altogether? What was that experience like? Do you think we can create opportunities for people to experience God like we have? Explain.
- C. We serve a God who is close to us all. Paul noted that, “in him we live and move and have our being” (Acts 17:28). He is not far removed; He came close. He is a missionary God.¹ In this session we want to explore how we can emulate our missionary God living as a missionary community in the world.

Option 2 — Video: AYC

- A. *View current Apostolic Youth Corps promotional video: http://download.pentecostalyouth.org/AYC%20Website/AYC2016/AYC_2016_Video.mp4.*
- B. Have you ever been on a missions trip like AYC? What was it like? What did you learn from that trip? What can these shorter missions trips teach us about living as missionaries every day?
- C. We serve a God who is close to us all. Paul noted that, “in him we live and move and have our being” (Acts 17:28). He is not far removed; He came close. He is a missionary God. In this session we want to explore how we can emulate our missionary God living as a missionary community in the world.

Option 3 – Video: *unChristian*

- A. *View Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9LgPoVplVT8>*
- B. *How do you think these stereotypes have developed? What could our church community do to try to overcome these stereotypes of Christians?*
- C. During the time of Christ, many people had misconceptions about God. That’s why Jesus would offer corrective teaching by saying, “You have heard it said, but I tell you...” One notable truth is that God is not far removed from us. He came close and dwelt among us as a missionary God. In this session we want to explore how we can emulate our missionary God living as a missionary community in the world.

¹ For more on the concept of “missionary God,” see Timothy C. Tennent’s *Awakening Holiness: A Call to the 21st Century Church*, (Seedbed, 2010) 25-30.

2

UNLOCK

Next, using the outline provided, walk through the Bible with the students.

**A. God's Grace in the Garden of Eden**

1. Humanity was intimately created in the image of God, and He breathed life into us.
2. *Read Genesis 3:8a.*
3. There was divine fellowship with the presence of God as God desired, but the shame of sin caused Adam and Eve to hide from God's presence.
4. *Read Genesis 3:23-24.*
 - a. God's grace was on display as He banished Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden. As Dr. Henry Cloud noted in his work *Changes that Heal*, this banishment was actually the grace of God, for if Adam and Eve would have remained in the Garden and ate of the tree of life, they would have been eternally separated from fellowship with God's presence. So God began a plan for restoration.
 - b. But the consequence of their sin was the loss of fellowship with a holy God, and humanity was exiled from the presence of God. For choosing to sin is choosing the absence of the presence of God.
5. God's unfolding story is to restore fellowship with humanity. He reached out to Abraham and made a covenant with him and his descendants (Isaac, Israel, and the Israelites). After freeing the Israelites from the bondage of Egypt, He would establish a temporary place for His abiding presence once again.

B. Fellowship with God via the Ark of the Covenant

1. *Read Exodus 25:8-9.*
2. The Tabernacle would be the place where fellowship with God's presence would be temporarily restored with humanity.
3. However, God would begin teaching humanity how to properly restore this fellowship:
 - a. The Gate would reveal there was only one way into the presence of God.
 - b. The Brazen Altar would reveal that a sacrifice must be made.
 - c. The Bronze Laver would emphasize that a washing and cleansing must take place.
 - d. The Golden Lamp Stand, Table of Showbread, and Altar of Incense would guide people in proper means of worship.
 - e. Finally, the Holy of Holies could be accessed in order to fellowship with the presence of God, but the abiding presence of God was still protected by guardian angels, much like the angels that guarded the garden gate.
4. The Ark of the Covenant remained God's dwelling place until the fullness of time had come, and He tabernacled among us.



C. Jesus Christ Comes for Us

1. *Read John 1:1, 14.*
2. Now the Holy Presence of God made His dwelling or “tabernacled” among us.
3. *Read Matthew 27:50-51.*
4. *Read Hebrews 10:19-22.*
 - a. The curtain that separated the Holy of Holies was torn in two from top to bottom. According to one source, in the Jerusalem temple, a replica of the wilderness tabernacle, “had a curtain that was about 60 feet in height, 30 feet in width and four inches thick.”¹
 - b. Now through the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ (Emmanuel “God with us”) we have the opportunity for restored fellowship with the presence of God.
5. Our God is a missionary God. When sin had broken fellowship with His holy presence, He graciously made a Way for us to be restored or reconciled with Him through the cross. God’s command to “be holy as I am holy” is a command to be like God, to represent who and what He is to the world.

How should the understanding that we serve a missionary God influence our church community?
How do you think a church community can emulate our missionary God?

D. The Church Community

1. *Read Acts 2:4, 17.*
2. *Read I Corinthians 3:16.*
3. *Read Matthew 18:20.*
4. Together, the church community is now the dwelling place of God’s presence: the community where we have restored fellowship with our Creator. The Holy of Holies is now wherever God’s people are gathered in His name.
5. Our responsibility is to arrange opportunities for people to be restored in fellowship with their Creator.

E. Restoring Fellowship

1. *Read II Corinthians 5:17-19.*
 - a. As we learned in week one, we now experience God and each other in reconciled relationships based on what we share in common in the cross of Christ.
 - b. Through the infilling of the Spirit, God has created a fellowship of saints, a church community that demonstrates to the world “the truthfulness of the gospel of grace, forgiveness, and reconciliation.”²
2. *Read John 14:6.*
3. *Read Matthew 16:18.*

¹ <http://the-tabernacle-place.com/articles/what-is-the-tabernacle/tabernacle-holy-of-holies>
² Van Gelder, *The Essence of the Church*, 112.



4. *Read Acts 2:38-39.*
5. “The Church,” as one author aptly noted, “is what God is building in the world. Jesus Christ is the foundation, and he is building His Church. Some of you have been hurt by the church or discouraged about your experience with the church, but the Church is what God is building in the world. Allow Him to restore your vision for the church because there is no true access to his holy presence without your brothers and sisters [without the community of Christ].”³
 - a. The Gate is Jesus Christ.
 - b. The Brazen Altar is repentance where we sacrifice our will to the will of God.
 - c. The Bronze Laver is baptism where we are washed for the remission of our sins, and someone else in the community must fulfill this for us.
 - d. The Golden Lamp Stand, Table of Showbread, and Altar of Incense are how we honor the presence of God through the reading of the Word, our prayer, and our worship, and we learn this in the community of Christ.
 - e. The Holy of Holies, the presence of God, is now freely received as the gift of Holy Spirit.

F. Living as a Missionary Community

1. *Read Isaiah 42:6.*
2. *Read Isaiah 49:6.*
 - a. God’s desire was for the people of Israel to be a witness of God’s love to the Gentiles.
 - b. Isaiah proclaimed that God’s grace did not stop with Israel but extended to the whole human race. They were to be God’s representatives on earth. Where Israel failed the church is to shine today.
3. *Read John 17:15-21.*
 - a. The prayer of Christ for His community still resonates with us thousands of years later.
 - b. His desire is not for us to be taken out of the world in spite of the persecution we may experience. His desire is that we remain in the world as a holy “sanctified” community so that people may believe in Him.

3

INTERSECT

Then provide practical applications for students to apply the truth in their everyday lives.



A. Reviewing Our Understanding of Our Missionary God and Role as a Missionary Community

1. The essence of why the church community exists is to live in blessed fellowship with our Creator and our brothers and sisters in Christ and invite others to live this blessed life with us.
2. I love my church enough to see this beautiful purpose fulfilled.
3. Do you?

B. Reflection on Our Role

1. *Instructions*
 - a. *Paper and a writing utensil will be needed for this exercise.*
 - b. *Instruct the group to answer the questions individually.*
2. Garden of Eden
 - a. Have you ever considered God's banishment from the garden as an act of His grace?
 - b. Considering this truth, are there past painful experiences that you now recognize as grace?
3. Ark of the Covenant
 - a. How does the strict process of accessing the presence of God compare to our access today?
 - b. How does knowing that we can "approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need" influence your relationship with God? (See Hebrews 4:16.)
4. Jesus Christ
 - a. We believe that Jesus Christ is God manifested in human form.
 - b. How does knowing your God is a missionary God influence your understanding of Him?
5. Church Community
 - a. Have you ever considered that your church community is a modern tabernacle, or dwelling place, of the presence of God?
 - b. How does this change your view of your church community?
6. Restoring Fellowship
 - a. How does knowing that "there is no true access to his holy presence without your brothers and sisters" influence your view of the church community?



- b. How does this view contrast to the individualistic nature of church today?
- 7. Missionary Community
 - a. How can your church community be the light of salvation in your world?
 - b. What persecution do you expect to experience?
 - c. Are you willing to endure it for the sake of reaching people who are sincere?

4

ARRIVE

To end, conclude the message by choosing one or more of the Arrive options.



Option 1 — Share + Prayer

- A. *Have the young adults get into groups of two or three.*
- B. *Share reflections from the Intersect section with their small group.*
- C. *Afterward, allow volunteers to share their reflections with the entire group.*
- D. *At the end, have young adults pray for one another to live out the lesson.*

Option 2 — “Community” Project

This will be a recurring option throughout the course of this series. Young adults will be encouraged to coordinate a project to impact their local church with what they have learned.

- A. *Take time to finalize plans for your “Community” project this week.*
- B. *What final steps do we need to take?*
- C. *Will the teachings from this lesson influence the project? If so, how?*

Option 3 — Apostolic Youth Corp

- A. *Visit: <http://apostolicyouthcorps.com>.*
- B. *Check out the website, and together dream about what it would be like to go on an AYC trip.*
- C. *The, talk about what it would take to make attending an AYC trip a real possibility.*