

DEAR FAMILY,

What do you think of when you hear the word *church*? What is the church? Who is the church? What is essential for the church to exist? Is the church something society made up? Is the church important? Is the church relevant to daily life?

Adam and Eve are the first people mentioned in the Bible. We think about them as the first people, as the ones who sinned. But have you ever thought about Adam and Eve as the first members of the church? They were. Adam and Eve were the first people to believe in God, to gather together to hear from Him, to hear about their sins, and to hear about forgiveness. That's church. If Adam and Eve are the first people and the first people in the church, that means that God has always had a church. God always calls people to belong to Him, to rejoice in His love and forgiveness.

Where do you meet other people who believe in Jesus? The church is the gathering of people who believe these important things about Jesus, about life, and about living forever. We come to church each and every Sunday to receive what we need: God's grace and forgiveness in His Word and Sacrament.

God's church is built on Jesus' death and resurrection. And His church is made up of those people who believe in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the living God, who died and rose for the forgiveness of sins. The church is the Body of Christ. And that Body is brought together by faith. We are going to spend a few lessons talking about the church and those whom God has given to us as church workers. Blessings as you continue this conversation in your homes!



FAMILY ACTIVITIES

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

In the lesson, your child considered questions about the importance of the church. Read Matthew 16:16–19 and discuss these questions together:

- Is Peter correct about Jesus?
- What does the church confess about Jesus?
- If the church is built on Jesus, how solid is that foundation?

THINKING AHEAD

Your youth may want to consider church work when thinking about what he or she will do when grown up. Your youth is likely thinking about higher education and career options. It's a good time to think about a Concordia university and church work as important options in the future. Talk together about these ideas. Research church-work vocations and look at the LCMS Concordia universities.

COMMON CONFESSION

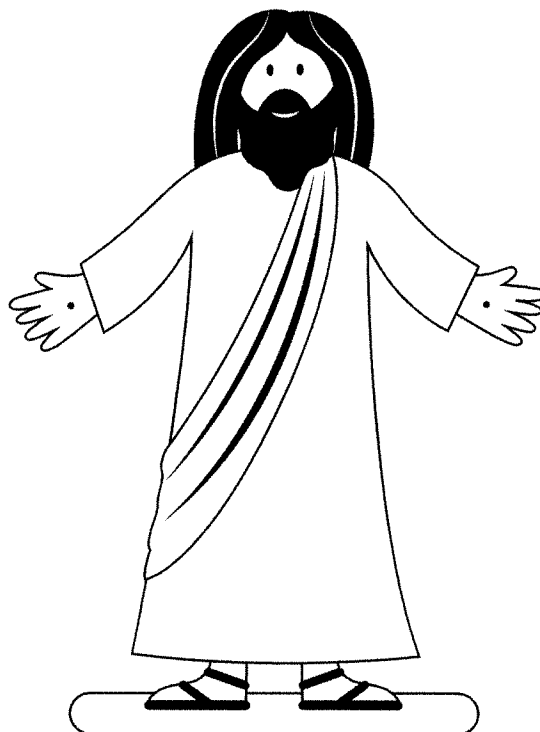
When do you say out loud what you believe about the church? To say out loud what you believe is called "confessing." We confess our faith in the words of the Apostles' Creed. And the Third Article of the Creed talks about the Holy Spirit and the church.

As a family, confess together the Third Article of the Creed. If you don't have it memorized, work on learning it by heart together.

Matthew 16:16–19

What Is the Church?

- Does it matter to you that you are part of the church?
- Do you plan to go to church when you grow up?
- If you have kids, will you raise them to go to church?



Built on the Rock

The word *church* can be translated as “the ones who have been called” or “the ones who have been gathered.” Read **Colossians 1:13–14**. In your own words, on the lines below, write down what it means to be called or gathered by God.

“Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which He obtained with His own blood.” (Acts 20:28)

A Great Multitude

Read **Revelation 7:9–17**. This describes the church in heaven.

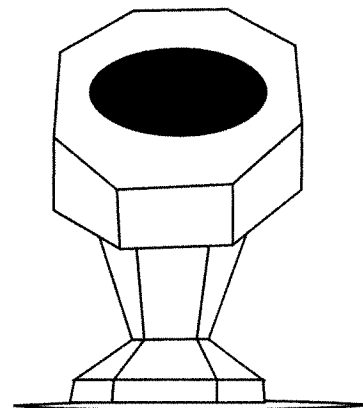
- Where is their focus?
- What is the content of their praise?
- How does this eternal promise give the church hope now?

“Salvation belongs
to our God who sits
on the throne, and
to the Lamb!”
(Revelation 7:10)

Purchased and Cleansed

Read **1 John 1:7–9** and **1 Corinthians 6:20**.

- What does the blood of Jesus do?
- Why do we confess our sins?
- What is the eternal effect of forgiveness?
- What price did Jesus pay for sinners?



Take It Home

- If you haven't begun a habit of daily Bible reading, start one. Read one chapter of the Bible every night before bed. Start with the Gospel of John or Romans.
- As you read through the Bible, you will encounter things you don't fully understand. Ask your pastor about these passages. He will be happy to talk to you about God's Word.
- If your family doesn't have devotions together, ask if you can begin at dinnertime or another time when you are all together. You can read through the Gospel of John or Romans one chapter at a time and pray the Lord's Prayer together. You can sing a hymn from the hymnal or confess the Apostles' Creed.
- Pray before you go to bed. The Lord's Prayer or Luther's Evening Prayer (in the Small Catechism) are good prayers to use.