

A Day in the Courts of the Lord

Levels I and II

Teacher's Notes

Lesson 1 "What is Church?" Acts 4:32-35; 5:1-11

Theme: Church: A gathering of believers

PREPARATION

Suggested helps in preparing for Lesson 1 "What is Church?"

Read Acts 4:32-35; 5:1-11

- Read and know the **INTRODUCTION**.
- Gather the **MATERIALS** for the **INTRODUCTION** and **APPLICATION**.
- Familiarize yourself with the **BACKGROUND** information.
- Study the story so you can tell it to the children without reading it.
- Read the passages in the **KEY THOUGHTS TO PRESENT** and study the key thoughts.
- Read and know the **APPLICATION**.

MATERIALS:

- 2 to 4 pictures of different churches (for the **INTRODUCTION**)
- money, play money, or piggy bank filled with money (for the **APPLICATION**)

INTRODUCTION

- Raise your hand if you have been to a church?
- What is church? (Answers will vary; from a building to a place to worship)
- Many people when they hear the word church think of a church building like these.

Show pictures of the different churches to the class.

-Today in our Bible lesson we are going to find out what the Bible says Church is.

-We are going to find out that it is not the outside building, but what is inside.

-Who is inside of a church? (people)

-What do these people believe? (They believe that Jesus died for their sins)

-So we can say "Church is a gathering of believers"

Explain that a gathering is people getting together in a group

-Say it with me

Repeat the definition with the class "Church is a gathering of believers"

-Did you know though, that there may be some people in the church building that don't believe?

-These people are called hypocrites. A funny sounding word that means those people are pretending to believe in Jesus.

-These people are not part of the Church- remember the Church is a gathering of believers.

-Do we know who these people are by looking at them? (no)

-Why not? (because we can't see into their hearts to know if they believe in Jesus or not)

-Who only knows? (God)

-In our story today we will hear of two people who were members of a church a long time ago. Listen and hear if they were believers in Jesus or hypocrites; people pretending to believe.

BACKGROUND

Simply and briefly tell students the following background information about the lesson:

- This story happens in the early days of the Christian Church. That is not long after Jesus ascended into Heaven and after Pentecost. Pentecost is when the Holy Spirit came to the disciples.
- These disciples told many people about Jesus and how He died on the cross for their sins.

- Many people believed in Jesus and showed their love for Jesus in many ways.
- Some ways of showing their love for Jesus was sharing their things, their money, and their property with one another and with the church.

KEY THOUGHTS TO PRESENT IN THE STORY

- Annanias and Sapphira did not honor God in their hearts, instead they lied in God's name. - - -Matthew 15:8
- Annanias and Sapphira were infected with the love of money and greed. - - - I Timothy 6:6-10
- The Holy Spirit revealed the hearts of these two people to Peter. - - - Acts 5:3
- Each and every sin is serious and deserves punishment and death. - - - Ezekiel 18:4 & Romans 6:23
- Forgiveness is received as a gift through repentance and faith in Jesus. All this is done through the work of the Holy Spirit. - - - Acts 2:38 & Acts 3:19
- Annanias and Sapphira were members of the congregation but because of their unbelief they were not members of the Holy Christian Church. - - - Matthew 18:20
- Only God knows who the believers are, for only He can see into the heart. - - - I Samuel 16:7

Tell Story

Church is a gathering of believers. We are part of this Church when we believe Jesus died for our sins.

APPLICATION

Show the money, play money, or piggy bank filled with money to class

-What is this? (money)

-Is giving money to the Lord in church wrong? (no)

-What did Annanias and Sapphira do that was wrong? (they lied to God and to Peter about giving all of their money to the Lord)

-Did they believe in Jesus? (no)

-Were Annanias and Sapphira hypocrites? (yes)

-How did Peter know this? (The Holy Spirit told Peter)

-What is Church? (A gathering of believers)

-We sometimes call this Church, the Holy Christian Church. This Church is made up of all the believers in Jesus who have ever lived. This Church is invisible. We can't see this Church because we can't see into people's hearts and don't know who all these people are.

-So were Annanias and Sapphira members of the Holy Christian Church? (no)

-Why not? (because they didn't believe in Jesus)

-How do we become members of the Holy Christian Church? (when we believe that Jesus is our Savior who died to take away our sins)

Close with a prayer thanking God for our faith in Jesus and for making us members of the Holy Christian Church. We also thank Him for giving us a church building where we can come together to worship Him.

A Day in the Courts of the Lord

Levels I and II

Teacher's Notes

Lesson 2 "Why do we go to Church?" Psalm 84

Theme: God gives us great blessings – we return worship

PREPARATION

Suggested helps in preparing for Lesson 2 "Why do we go to church?"

Read Psalm 84

- Read and know the **INTRODUCTION**.
- Gather the **MATERIALS** for the **INTRODUCTION** and **APPLICATION**.
- Familiarize yourself with the **BACKGROUND** information.
- Study the story so you can tell it to the children without reading it.
- Read the passages in the **KEY THOUGHTS TO PRESENT** and study the key thoughts.
- Read and know the **APPLICATION**.

MATERIALS:

- Pictures of the 2-4 churches from Lesson 1
- A picture of the Tabernacle
- A hymnal, a Worship Supplement, and a Bible

INTRODUCTION

- Where are some places you would be really happy or excited to go to? (Answers vary)
- Why would you be happy or excited to go to these places? (Answers vary)

-We have a place to be happy and excited to go to each week. Do you know what that place is? (church)

-Why do you think we go to church? (Answers will vary, but it will give you an idea of what the children think church is for)

-Do you remember from last lesson what Church is? (A gathering of believers)

-These believers come together in the church building. We can also call this building the house of God.

-Our churches look something like these.

Show the class the pictures of the different churches again.

-But a very long time ago the churches looked very different, in fact, they weren't even buildings. These people worshiped God in a tent called the Tabernacle.

Show students a picture of the tabernacle.

-In church we sing songs from a book like this or like this.

Show the students a hymnal and a worship supplement.

-A long time ago people sang songs too and some of them are written down in the Bible.

Show them the book of Psalms in the Bible and show them Psalm 84.

-Today in our lesson we are going to hear a Psalm (a song) that was written a very long time ago answering the question "Why do we go to church?"

-Listen closely so you can hear some reasons for going to church and reasons why we can be happy and excited to go to church.

BACKGROUND

Simply and briefly tell students the following background information about the lesson:

- The book of Psalms is a book of Old Testament songs.
- This Psalm 84 was written by the sons of Korah.
- It was written around 1000 BC- during the time of King David.
- During that time people worshiped in a tabernacle (a tent) because the temple wasn't built yet.

KEY THOUGHTS TO PRESENT IN THE STORY

Psalm 84:1 - - - Church is a lovely and pleasant place to be for a believer and they want to be there.

Psalm 84:2; Psalm 122:1 - - - Believers are so excited to be worshipping the Lord that they celebrate being in church with shouts of joy.

Psalm 84:4 - - - Church is a place where we can praise our God and find strength in Him. The Word of God strengthens our faith.

Psalm 84:8-9 - - - We lift our prayers to God in church and He protects us.

Psalm 84:10 - - - The best place to be is in God's House. We wouldn't want to be anywhere else.

Psalm 84:11-12 - - -The Lord gives those who trust in Him many spiritual and earthly blessings.

Tell Story

As believers in Jesus, we want to go to church to praise and worship God and receive His many blessings.

APPLICATION

-Where is the best place to be? (In God's House)

-Should a believer want to go to church? (Yes)

-Why can we be happy and excited to go to church? (It is God's house, we can praise God, hear His Word and we receive His blessings there)

-What do people do in church? (praise and worship God, pray to Him, hear His Word, and give Him offerings of thanks and love)

-What are some of the reasons we go to church? (Answers will vary, but stress these blessings if the students don't come up with them)

1. We learn more about Jesus and how He died to take away our sins.
2. Our faith is strengthened through hearing the Word of God.

3. To say we are sorry for our sins and to be assured God forgives our sins.

4. We can comfort and encourage the other believers in church and they can comfort and encourage us.

5. We can praise and worship God in our words and songs.

6. We can give God thanks for everything He has done for us.

7. We can pray to God.

8. We can give God our gifts of money.

-Are we always happy to go to church? (No) Why not? (because we are still sinful and the Devil and our sinful nature tempts us to want to do other things or to be other places)

When this happens what can we remember? (All the blessings that we receive in church, to pray for a happy heart and mind that wants to go to church, and to ask for forgiveness and know that God also forgives this sin too)

-We are going to play a Thumbs Up/Thumbs Down game to review what we just learned. If each sentence I say is true put your thumbs up, if each sentence is not true put your thumbs down.

1. Church is a gathering of believers.

2. Believers should be sad to go to church.

3. We learn about Jesus in church.

4. We praise, worship, and thank God in church.

5. Church is where we learn how to make cakes.

6. God is happy when we sleep in on Sundays and don't go to church.

7. Our faith is strengthened by hearing God's word.

Close with a prayer asking God for a happy heart that wants to go to church to learn more about Jesus and the Bible. Ask the Lord to forgive us for times we did not want to go to church. We also thank God for all the wonderful blessings we receive in church.

A Day in the Courts of the Lord

Levels I and II

Teacher's Notes

Lesson 3 "What Happens in Church?" John 4:5-26

Theme: We worship God in Spirit and Truth

PREPARATION

Suggested helps in preparing for Lesson 3 "What happens in church?"

Read John 4:5-26

- Read and know the **INTRODUCTION**.
- Gather the **MATERIALS** for the **INTRODUCTION** and **APPLICATION**.
- Familiarize yourself with the **BACKGROUND** information.
- Study the story so you can tell it to the children without reading it.
- Read the passages in the **KEY THOUGHTS TO PRESENT** and study the key thoughts.
- Read and know the **APPLICATION**.

MATERIALS:

-Glass of water (for the **INTRODUCTION**)

-Map of Israel showing Samaria (for the **BACKGROUND**)

-Note cards or paper with the information on the table in application (for the **APPLICATION**)

INTRODUCTION

-What do you drink when you are really thirsty? (Water)

Show the class the glass of water

-If you drank this water would you be thirsty again? (Yes)

-Where could you get more water? (Faucet)

-It is easy for us to get water today, but a long time ago it was much harder.

-Do you know how they had to get water? (From a well)

-They had to carry buckets to the well, go down the well and scoop up the water into their buckets and carry the buckets home.

-In our story today Jesus met a woman at a well and He told her He had some Living Water for her.

-Listen to hear who this Water is, where we can hear and learn about this Water, and we will find out the answer to this question "What happens in church?".

-Before we listen to the story, let's see if you remember the answer to these questions:

-What is church? (A gathering of believers)

-Why do we go to church? (It is God's house, we praise God, we receive His blessings in church etc)

BACKGROUND

Simply and briefly tell students the following background information about the lesson:

- This story takes place in Samaria a province between Judea and Galilee.
- Show students where Samaria is on the map.
- Jesus had to pass through Samaria to get to Galilee.
- The Jews did not like the Samaritans.
- The Samaritans did not worship with the Jews in the temple.
- Jesus loves all people and talks with this Samaritan woman. He wants to bring her to faith in Him.

KEY THOUGHTS TO PRESENT IN THE STORY

John 4:6 - - - Jesus was human and became tired after His long journey.

John 4:7 - - - He asks a Samaritan woman for a drink of water.

John 4:10-14 - - - Jesus told her He has living water that will never make her thirsty again and that would make her live forever. Jesus is that living water. We receive this water when we hear and learn about Jesus in the Bible.

John 4:19 - - - The woman knows Jesus is a prophet and wants to learn more about Him. She asks Jesus, "Where is the right place to worship."

John 4:23-24 - - - Jesus said the place is not important, but what is important is that believers worship from their heart and believe in the True God and in the Bible.

Matthew 15:7-8 - - - Jesus called the Pharisees and teachers of the law hypocrites because they did not worship Him in spirit and in truth. "These people honor Me with their lips, but their hearts are far from Me."

Tell Story

We worship God when we believe in Him and all His teaching in the Bible, and when we love Him from the heart.

APPLICATION

-What did Jesus ask the woman to get for Him? (A drink)

-What did He tell her He had for her? (Living Water)

-Who was this Living Water? (Jesus)

-How do we get this Living Water? (In the Bible)

-When we worship God in church how should we worship Him? (In Spirit and in Truth- From the heart, believe in the true God and in the Bible)

-What are some of the things that happen in church? (Answers vary but go over these things if the students do not get them)

1. We hear Bible stories and hear about Jesus.

2. We tell God we are sorry for our sins.

3. He tells us we are forgiven and that He loves us and saved us through Jesus.

4. We thank and praise God in song and prayer.

-All of these things are part of what is called our liturgy (order of our worship service) and they each have special names.

-I am going to hold some cards with the names of some of the things we do in church. See if you know what each of them means. On the back you will see a picture and explanation of each word.

(Note to teacher: Make up note cards or paper with the word on the front and a picture- if you can find one- or explanation of the word on the back)

<i>Front</i>	<i>Back</i>
<i>Hymn</i>	<i>We sing songs to God</i>
<i>Scripture Readings</i>	<i>God speaks to us from the Bible</i>
<i>Confession</i>	<i>We tell God we are sorry for our sins</i>
<i>Absolution</i>	<i>Pastor announces God's forgiveness to us</i>
<i>Creed</i>	<i>We tell God we believe what is in the Bible</i>
<i>Sermon</i>	<i>Pastor explains the Bible to us</i>
<i>Offering</i>	<i>We give our gifts to God</i>
<i>Prayers</i>	<i>We thank and ask God for certain things</i>
<i>Blessing</i>	<i>Pastor gives us a blessing from the Lord</i>

-While we are in church how should we act? (We should listen and participate)

-Let's play the Thumbs Up/Thumbs down thumb game again. This time put your thumb up if this is how we should act in church and put your thumb down if it is not good behavior in church.

1. You sit quietly and listen.

2. You run around in church.

3. You fold your hands and pray.

4. You hope church gets over quickly.

5. You cry and scream or are loud in church.

6. You put a gift of money in the offering plate.

Close with a prayer asking the Lord to help us worship Him from the heart and to help us concentrate and have good behavior while we worship Him. We also ask Him to forgive us when we don't do that. Thank Him for strengthening our faith by hearing His Word in church.

A Day in the Courts of the LORD

Levels I and II

Teacher's Notes

Lesson 4 "What Can We Do for Church?" Matthew 25:14-30

Theme: We use God's gifts to us for the Savior

PREPARATION

Suggested helps in preparing for Lesson 4 "What Can We Do for Church?"

- Read Matthew 25:14-30.
- Read and know the **INTRODUCTION**.
- Gather the materials for the **INTRODUCTION** and **APPLICATION**.
- Familiarize yourself with the **BACKGROUND** information.
- Study the lesson so you can tell it to the children without reading it.
- Read the passages in the **KEY THOUGHTS TO PRESENT** and study the key thoughts.
- Read and know the **APPLICATION**.

MATERIALS: Pictures of gifts, talents and activities, such as someone:

- | | | |
|-----------|------------------|-------------------------|
| - Singing | - Running | - Playing an instrument |
| - Praying | - Counting money | - Building something |
| - Reading | - Washing dishes | - Speaking to people |

Put the pictures inside a gift bag or small box which is wrapped as a present. (Be sure to have one picture for each child in your class.)

A wooden cross or a picture of a cross (for the application).

Begin by showing the gift bag or wrapped present.

-**What do I have here?** (A present.)

-**When do you usually get presents?** (Birthday, Christmas, answers may vary.)

-**Raise your hand if you like to get presents.**

-**Who do you get presents from?** (Answers vary, try to let a few children answer.)

- **This present is for all of us here today and it is from God! We're going to find out what is inside this present after we learn our Bible lesson for today.**

(Put the present in a safe place out of the children's sight while you tell the story.)

This week we have been learning about Church. We have learned that Church is a group of believers in Jesus who come together to praise and worship their Savior and to hear His Word. Today we will learn what we can do for Church because of what God has done for us!

BACKGROUND

Simply and briefly tell students the following background information about the lesson.

- This story happened just a few days before Jesus died on the cross.
- Jesus told this parable, or story, to His disciples to teach them more about Himself in a way that they could understand.
- Jesus wants us to learn from this story also.

TELL THE STORY from Matthew 25:14-30

KEY THOUGHTS TO PRESENT IN THE LESSON

- James 1:17; Explanation to the First Article of the Apostles' Creed - The master in this story gave money to his servants, but God gives us more than just money. He gives us all our blessings, including our talents and abilities.
- Colossians 3:17 – We will want to use all our talents and abilities to serve our Savior and our fellow believers.
- Luke 17:10 – We do NOT give of our gifts and talents to earn our way to heaven; that is a free gift from God.
- John 15:5 - Our work for Jesus is the fruit of our faith in Him.
- 1 Corinthians 12:12-31 – God has given different gifts to different people. All believers should work together, each using his or her gift for the Savior.

**We use God's gifts to us for the
Savior.**

APPLICATION

-Let's open this present from God and see what He has given us.

(Open the gift and let each child take out a picture.)

- (Ask one child to hold up their picture.) **What gift did you get?** (Answers vary.)

-How can you use your gift for your Savior Jesus? (Answers vary.)

(Repeat these questions for each child's picture. Lead the children to see the many ways we can work for our Savior and our fellow believers.)

- **Here is the greatest gift that God gave to all of us and to all people.** (Hold up the picture of the cross.) **Can you tell me about this gift?** (Jesus died on the cross to take away our sins.)

- **Yes, Jesus our Savior lived a perfect life and died on the cross to take away all of our sins.**

- **Why did we need our sins taken away?** (We cannot be perfect and we deserve death in hell.)

- **Now that our sins are forgiven by Jesus, where will we live after we die?** (We will live in heaven with God forever.)
- **Where can we learn more about Jesus and what He did for us?** (In the Bible, in Sunday School class, during home devotions, in a Christian day school, at church.)
- **Now that we know and believe in Jesus what should we do with this gift?** (Share it with everyone we meet by telling them about Jesus and His love for them.)
- **God has given us all these wonderful gifts so that we can share them with our fellow believers and so we can teach all people about Jesus. What great blessings we can thank our God for!**

Close with a prayer thanking God for all the gifts and talents He has given to us and to all believers in Jesus. Ask for God's help in using our gifts and talents to serve Him in His Church. End the prayer by thanking Him for sending His Son Jesus to die for us and take away all our sins so that we can go to heaven.

A Day in the Courts of the LORD

Levels I and II

Teacher's Notes

Lesson 5 "How Do We Pick a Church?" Haggai 2:1-9

Theme: The true Glory of the Church--Jesus

PREPARATION

Suggested helps in preparing for Lesson 5 "How Do We Pick a Church?"

- Read Haggai 2:1-9.
- Read and know the **INTRODUCTION**.
- Gather the materials for the **INTRODUCTION** and **APPLICATION**.
- Familiarize yourself with the **BACKGROUND** information.
- Study the lesson so you can tell it to the children without reading it.
- Read the passages in the **KEY THOUGHTS TO PRESENT** and study the key thoughts.
- Read and know the **APPLICATION**.

MATERIALS: A small white envelope with a \$1 bill inside of it.

A medium-sized colorful gift bag with "trash" inside of it (for example, an apple core or empty candy wrappers.)

Color pictures of a variety of churches, cathedrals, chapels, etc. (Use the internet, encyclopedia, local library. Be sure to display some very beautiful and ornate churches as well as some small or plain church buildings.)

A Bible

Begin by holding up the envelope and the gift bag.

- **What are these things?** (An envelope and a gift bag.)
 - **What are they used for?** (To carry things, to hide things.)
 - **Can you tell what is inside of them by looking at the outside?** (No.)
 - **Which one do you like better?** (Let a few children answer.)
 - **Now let's see what is inside.**
- Open the envelope and hold up the dollar bill. Open the gift bag and "dump out" the trash.*
- **Which one do you like better now that you know what is inside?** (The envelope.)

Show the pictures of the different churches.

-What do these pictures show? (Churches.)

-What do you notice about these churches? (Some are big, some have beautiful stained-glass windows, some are small, some are made of stone or brick, etc. Answers will vary.)

- How do we know which church to choose? Can we pick the best church out of all these different churches just by looking at the outside of the church? (No, we should not choose a church based on its looks.)

-This week we have been learning about Church. We have learned that Church is a group of believers in Jesus who come together to praise and worship their Savior and to hear His Word. We have also learned that we have all been given gifts that we can use to help our church and to teach others about Jesus. So, what should we look for when choosing a church? Today's Bible lesson will help us answer that question.

BACKGROUND

Simply and briefly tell students the following background information about the lesson.

- This story happened hundreds of years before Jesus was born.
- The Israelites had been living in Judah and worshipping in their beautiful temple until they were taken away from their homes and made to live in a far away land for 70 years.
- The city of Jerusalem and the beautiful temple were destroyed.
- Now the Israelites had returned to Judah and were going to rebuild the temple. But many of the people were too sad about how plain and small the new temple would be compared to the old temple that they did not want to finish building it.
- God sent a prophet, or teacher, named Haggai to them to encourage them and remind them that the most important part of their church was not the building, but it is JESUS!

TELL THE STORY from Haggai 2:1-9

KEY THOUGHTS TO PRESENT IN THE LESSON

- Hebrews 12:26-29 - The earthly temple and our physical church building are created things which can be shaken and even destroyed. But Jesus will never be shaken or destroyed, and neither will the kingdom of heaven which He gives to His believers!
- Isaiah 9:6-7; Ezekiel 43:1-5 - Jesus was and is the True Glory of the Temple.
- Related passages: John 8:31-32; Acts 17:10-11; Romans 16:16-18; 1 Corinthians 1:10; Matthew 28:20; Matthew 18:20; 2 John 9-11

**Jesus is the True Glory of the
Church. We find Him wherever
His Word is taught in truth and
purity.**

APPLICATION

- Let's look again at the pictures of the churches we saw at the beginning of our lesson. Are they all the same on the outside? (No.)
- Can we tell from the pictures which church would be a good church for us to go to? (No, we cannot tell what they teach just by looking at the building.)
- How did God help the Israelite people know that the new temple would be the right church for them, even though it was not as big and beautiful as the old temple? (He promised to be with them in the temple, He would teach them His Word in the temple, and Jesus would come to them in that temple and teach them about what He would do to save them.)
- Should we choose a church because it is big, or beautiful, or maybe because it is small and the people are very nice there? (No, none of these things is the most important thing.)
- What kind of church should we choose to worship in? (We should look for a church that teaches us about Jesus and His saving work by teaching all that the Bible says.)

Hold up the Bible.

Wherever the Bible is taught correctly, Jesus is there. The church building may be small or large, beautiful or plain, there might not even be a church building to worship in, but Jesus promises to be with His believers wherever His Word is taught correctly. We can thank God every day for helping us find a true-teaching church where we can learn about Jesus.

- Do you remember what the best gift is that God has given all people? (Jesus, the Savior, who died on the cross to take away our sins.)
- That gift is what makes any church a beautiful church. We will want to bring others to our church so they too can learn about their Savior Jesus, praise and worship Him with us in church, and join us to live with Him forever in heaven!

Close with a prayer thanking God for all the true-teaching churches in which He helps His believing children. Praise God for the gift of the Bible which shows us our Savior Jesus and strengthens our faith in Him. Pray for all pastors and teachers of God's Word that they keep teaching the Bible correctly so more people can learn about their Savior and join us in heaven.