

Breathe

Module: Basic Training

Lesson 4: Church

Objectives:

Students will be able to

- identify some common misconceptions about the church
- use that understanding to develop empathy for those who do not go to church
- define some biblical priorities for the church
- analyze how they are impacted by the church
- begin to formulate a plan to engage more intentionally in the life of their church

Materials Needed:

- Computer and/or projector
- YouTube videos
 - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tik9ZEL7iAA&feature=related>
 - If time is limited, use http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bh__g-ZZ6WA
(half as long)
- 8.5 x 11 paper (3 sheets per pair, could be paper that is good on one side)
or
2 sheets and 1 Church Venn Diagram (appendix A) printout per pair
- 1 extra piece of chart paper and/or whiteboard
- Coloured markers/pencils/crayons/pens (equal numbers of different-coloured markers)
- Markers (including two green markers)

- Optional: cue cards
- Bibles

Pre-lesson Preparation:

- Set up computer/projector and make sure that videos are downloaded and working properly. Be sure to preview videos for content that may be considered offensive based on your local context.
- A few weeks before your lesson (if possible) ask a mature Christian person (preferably from your own church) to share a personal story about how the church has helped them in their training to become more and more like Jesus. They might share about a time when they didn't feel that the church was very important to them but how God has taught them about the value of corporate worship, learning, serving, etc. If you are unable to find someone, then consider sharing your own story. Please arrange to have your guest come close to the end of your lesson time if they cannot be present for the whole lesson.

Minds On (20 minutes):

Watching and Discussing a Video

Video (9:28 or 5.25 minutes)

Start by telling the students that tonight they will be considering how people might have wrong ideas about church, to have empathy for those people, and to learn what the bible says about church. Ask the students if they know what empathy is. Take a few answers. Tell them that empathy is the ability to put your own self in someone else's place and to see what it would be like to experience life through their eyes. Tell the students in a moment you are going to ask them to watch a video showing someone in church who does not usually go. Ask your students to try to see church through Mr. Bean's eyes. How do they think it might feel to be that new person at church? Do you think that new person might see some things more accurately than you do? Show the video.

In Pairs: Taking a perspective

Tell the students, in a moment they are going to do an activity. They will take the perspective either of a person who goes to church normally, or one who does not. On a sheet of paper each person will write a list of things they saw in the video that a person of their perspective thinks are true. Ask the students to pair with a partner, and label each partner "A" or "B". Announce that the "A" partner will take the perspective of the person who normally goes to church, and the "B" partner will take the perspective of the person who does not normally go to church. Distribute 3 sheets of paper and 2 pencils to each group. Tell them to save one piece of paper for later.

Venn Diagram

For three minutes, they are to write down all the elements they remember from the video that they believe their assigned perspectives would list as true. (e.g. If they had church-goer, some accurate elements may be the hardwood pews or the boring sermons) After the three minutes are up, give the following instructions:

Prompt:

Now you will make a Venn diagram with your partner. Make two intersecting circles. The left circle is for the church-goer, the right is for the non church-goer. Leave the center intersection blank for the moment. Rewrite your list in the appropriate spot depending on your perspective. When you are both finished, look for items you both have in common, and have one partner write those common items in the intersection of the two circles.

Have students repeat the instructions. When ready, have them proceed.

Prompt:

We all have an idea of what we think church is like (so does Mr. Bean). Tonight, let's take a step back and see what God says a church should be like.

Action (30 minutes):

Leader's Note on Mind Mapping:

Mind mapping is a technique that helps to visualize and organize ideas. A mind map is a diagram made using words or pictures arranged around a key word or idea. It is like a brainstorm on paper. It is important to use the visuals and words to inspire novel thinking. Students should be encouraged to draw lines between ideas that they think are connected, or to write linking words between two concepts. Students should also be encouraged to speak out loud while they are mapping. This "out loud" thinking encourages dialogue and discourse, which is important for learning. If students have never made a mind-map before, it can be useful to model mind-mapping. For this unit, as a group you could make a mind-map of "Spiritual Training". Write the words in the middle of the page, perhaps draw a stick figure of a person lifting a barbell with a cross on it, and ask the student for words and images that would show "Spiritual Training". Help them to make links among ideas, using "chain-like" lines for strongly linked ideas, arrows if one thing follows from another, etc.

In Groups: Mind Maps

Invite students to work in groups to create their own mind maps about the church. Divide students into groups of 3-4 (one option is to have them group based the season they were born into i.e. spring, summer, fall, winter; feel free to combine groups or make additional groups based on your numbers). Give each group a large piece of chart paper, and ONE colour of markers for their group (e.g., 3-4 red). Instruct one member of each group to write the word “CHURCH” in large letters in the middle of the page (be sure to remind them to leave lots of room on the paper for other things to be added). Invite students to use their colour of marker to write words and/or draw pictures that come to their mind when they think of the word “church.” After students have had three minutes to add words and pictures to their pages, instruct them to rotate to the next table, taking their markers, but leaving their page behind for the group that will be taking their place. Give new groups another two minutes to be inspired by what see on their new page, adding their own words and pictures to the content already there using their colour of pen. If time allows, allow them to rotate through all the papers.

Working in Groups

Have students return to their original paper. Invite them to look up the following Bible passages: Hebrews 10:23-25; Acts 2:42-47. Using a red pen, have them circle elements (either written by them or another group) that match what is considered important in the given passages. If there are elements that were not listed, write them out.

Afterwards, have the large group gather with their mind maps. Highlight what are common findings between each mind map as well as what are some differences between what we associate with church and what those passages state.

Consolidate/Debrief (20 minutes):

Prompt:

For the last few weeks, we've been talking about training ourselves to become more like Jesus. An important part of our training is connecting with other Christians who are trying to become more like Jesus too! Some of us go to church because our parents tell us to or because it seems like a good thing to do. Some of us might even go to church to see our friends, meet a hot guy or girl, because we enjoy the food, or because the music and activities are entertaining. These passages seem to suggest that going to church is not about any of those things. Instead, it's about learning to be more like Christ and working together to show other people what he is like. Last week we talked about using Bible study as a part of our training to become more and more like Jesus. We said that becoming a great athlete takes hours and hours of training. In a similar way, becoming like Jesus requires training as well. Today, we're focusing on how involvement in a local church can be an important part of your spiritual training program to become more like Jesus.

Breathe In

Have students reflect by themselves for three minutes about what ways they have been impacted by the church (attending "youth group" can be considered as church too), and write down those thoughts. Students might consider whether what they wrote down is in line with what the two passages state.

Breathe Out

Give students a minute or two to consider how they might change their thinking or behaviour to better reflect what the Bible says the church is about, and to formulate a training plan for the coming week that will help them to use that change. They can submit this either on a cue card (as provided) or electronically (i.e. text, email, social media) to you, another student ministry volunteer, or a Christian mentor to create opportunities for following up during the week.

Close in Prayer

Close in a prayer that offers gratitude to God for giving us other Christians that we can meet with to pray, learn, and serve. Pray for students that the Holy Spirit will guide them as they attempt to implement a spiritual training program that will help them to become more like Jesus.