

# SABBATH SCHOOL

## Preteen Sabbath Instruction Program — Teacher's Outline

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Level 5 • Unit 2 • Week 4

### GOD IS BUILDING HIS CHURCH

#### OBJECTIVE:

To teach the students the true meaning of the word *church* as it is used in the Bible and the history of how God is going about building His Church.

#### ATTENTION GETTER:

Prepare: Paste some pictures of church buildings (from small rural types to cathedral types) and also several pictures of people meeting for services (listening and taking notes or singing) on a poster board. Also have a dictionary and a concordance or a Bible dictionary that has the biblical definition, (preferably *Holman's Bible Dictionary*) handy. Make a copy of the Bible lesson, "GOD IS BUILDING HIS CHURCH," (page 4) for each child.

Do: Hold up pictures of church buildings.

Ask: Can anyone tell me which pictures depict God's Church? [Don't give the answer just yet.]

Ask: What is the definition of the word *church* as it is used in the Bible? [Select one child to read the definition from the dictionary and another to read the definition from the concordance or Bible dictionary.]

Ask: Which definition do you think is correct? [If no one answers correctly, explain.]

Say: The word *church*, when spoken of as God's Church means the Body of Christ, called-out ones, a sacred assembly or congregation. Down through the centuries, as more and more people turned away from God's knowledge, its true meaning became lost. Gradually the word *church* came to be used to describe the building instead of the people. But let's find out what the word *church* means as it's used in the Bible. We'll also find out how God has been building His Church from the creation to the present day.

## **BIBLE LESSON:**

- Ask: When you build something, what is the first thing you do? For instance, if you were building a house, on what would you put the walls and roof? [If no one has the correct answer, explain.] You need to prepare a foundation before you begin to build.
- Say: There are other things besides physical structures that we build. We can build character, friendships and trust. Today we will talk about what God is building?
- Do: Hand out copies of the Bible lesson, "GOD IS BUILDING HIS CHURCH" and let each child read a part of the lesson.

## **LESSON APPLICATION:**

- Do: Make sure each child has a Bible to look up the Bible verses. The purpose of this exercise is to provide experience in using and reading from the Bible.
- Ask: Why is there a Church?
- Say: God has a very great and important work, and He has "called out" certain people and given them the awesome privilege of being part of that work. These people must be faithful and obedient.
- Ask: Does anyone know what that great and important work of the Church is?
- Say: Turn to Matthew 28:19-20. [Select a child to read the verse.]
- Matthew 28:19-20: "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."
- Ask: Why does God have us attend services? What is the purpose of sermonettes, sermons and Bible study?
- Say: We attend services so that we can be taught God's way of living.
- Say: Turn to Acts 11:26. [Select another child to read the verse.]
- Acts 11:26: "So it was that for a whole year they [Barnabas and Saul] assembled with the church and taught a great many of people. And the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch."
- Ask: Does anyone know what the word *disciples* means? [If no one responds, let one child read the definition from the dictionary.]

Ask: What textbook do we use to study about God?

Say:: Yes, the Bible, of course.

Say: Now, let's turn to John 15:15. [Select a child to read the verse.]

John 15:15: "No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I heard from My Father I have made known to you."

Ask: Can anyone tell me why Jesus is making known to His people everything that He learned from His Father?

Say: Jesus is teaching His people each Sabbath in order to prepare them for the work He has called them to do.

Say: Turn to 2 Timothy 3:16-17. [Select a child to read the verse.]

2 Timothy 3:16-17: "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work."

Say: You cannot have God's truth in your mind unless you first put it there. Studying is the means by which you put God's truth in your mind.

Ask: What is the purpose of the Church?

Say: Let's see what the Bible says the purpose of the Church is. Turn to 2 Corinthians 5:20. [Select a child to read the verse.]

2 Corinthians 5:18-20: "Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, that is that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation. Now then, we [God's church] are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God."

Say: So what is the purpose of the Church? God has given His Church the special job of proclaiming salvation—the deliverance from the power and penalty of sin—to all the nations. He has commissioned His Church to preach how that reconciliation—reconciliation means to make good again—will occur and to baptize those who believe that message. Ever since Adam and Eve disobeyed God by eating the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, mankind has been alienated—has turned away—from God. God's ultimate purpose is to reconcile all of mankind to Himself.

## GOD IS BUILDING HIS CHURCH

God began laying the foundation for His Church by teaching Adam and Eve His spiritual laws—the Ten Commandments. These spiritual laws were in effect long before God created Adam. Down through the centuries He taught others His laws, but only a few chose to live according to God's way. Because most people did not obey God's spiritual laws, they cut themselves off from their only source of happiness and goodness. Later, there came a time when the only man willing to obey God was Noah. Noah continually preached to the people that unless they turned from their evil ways they would be destroyed. Knowing that righteous Noah would continue to teach His spiritual laws, God saved him and his family from the destruction of the Flood.

After the great Flood, God said to Noah, "Now that the wicked are gone you can build homes and raise children in a peaceful world." Noah continued laying the foundation of God's Church. For the next 350 years, he taught God's ways to the new generations that were born after the Flood.

Nearly 400 years after the Flood, God went on to the next phase in the building of His Church. He now began working with Abraham. Abraham showed great faith in God by his obedience to all of God's instructions. When God told him to leave Ur and move his family to Canaan, Abraham packed up his possessions and went with his family to Canaan. When God told him to sacrifice his son Isaac, Abraham obeyed, even though Isaac was his and Sarah's only son and much loved. Because of his faith and obedience, God blessed Abraham with the promise that through his seed all of the nations would be blessed and in time God kept His promise. Abraham became known as the "father of the faithful."

Many years passed, and the Israelites, Abraham's descendants who had become enslaved by the Egyptians, lost the true knowledge of God. God, had mercy on them and raised up a man named Moses to lead them out of bondage. Using the 10 plagues, God struck down the false gods the Egyptians worshiped. This removed all doubt in the minds of the Israelites as to who was the true God. He also used their exodus from Egypt to teach them about His Holy Days, which day was the Sabbath and the Ten Commandments. Because the Israelites had lost much of God's truth, He had to reestablish that foundation. In the 40 years that the Israelites were in the wilderness God continued, through Moses, to reveal more of His truth.

Through the judges and the prophets, God kept His laws, statutes and judgments from being completely lost and forgotten by His people again. By the time God was ready to start building His Church, He had a very solid foundation.

After His resurrection, Jesus appeared to the apostles for 40 days teaching them about the Kingdom of God. When the day of Pentecost came, the apostles had gathered together in one place in the city of Jerusalem. It was on this long-awaited day, when the apostles received the Holy Spirit, that Christ began to build His Church.

Almost 2000 years have passed since that day and God is still building His Church on that solid foundation He patiently laid so long ago. God is working with His Church today just like He did at its beginning. His Church has not changed. Those in His Church have kept the faith, are obedient to His Word and bear the same fruit that the early Christians did.

**Music:**

Teacher's choice from the United Church of God hymnal.

**MEMORY VERSE:**

Matthew 16:18 "...and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it."

# *family activity*

## **THE POINT:**

The lesson for this week is titled "God Is Building His Church." It is designed to give your child a better understanding of the word *church* and how God is going about building His Church. When the Bible speaks of God's Church, it always speaks of people—never a building. These people are described as a chosen generation, a special people, a holy nation, the spiritual children of God, God's congregation, etc. God's Church is composed of people from many races and nations.

## **FAMILY TOGETHER TIME:**

To reinforce and make this concept more real, help your child make a collage of people to represent God's Church. Using magazines and newspapers, carefully cut out pictures of people of different ages, races and from different nations. Be sure to use pictures of children, because they are being prepared for the time when God will call them. Arrange the pictures in an artistic, decorative manner and then paste on one half of a poster board.

While helping your child with this project, discuss how God's ministers travel to many parts of the world to bring God's truth to the brethren. God's people are scattered throughout the world, sometimes living in very remote areas or places where travel is difficult and dangerous. You might use an atlas to locate where some of the Feast sights are located. The object of this exercise is to make God's Church very real to your child.

## **MEMORY VERSE:**

Matthew 16:18 "...and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it."