

IMPLEMENTING GOD'S WORD...

YEAR FIVE | SPRING QUARTER
CHRISTIAN APOLOGETICS 3

SSY05SP

SUNDAY SCHOOL CURRICULUM
FOR HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH





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CHRISTIAN APOLOGETICS 3

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LESSON SEQUENCE

SPRING QUARTER

The **Lesson Sequence** gives the teacher an overview of the entire quarter. The central goal of the **Implementing God's Word...** curriculum is to equip youth to put the truths of Scripture together in their minds and to work in their hearts, by the help of the Holy Spirit.

The Church

LESSON ONE	What is the Church?
LESSON TWO	Visible or Invisible?
LESSON THREE	Why Denominations?
LESSON FOUR	Why Church Membership?
LESSON FIVE	Apostles and Prophets Today?
LESSON SIX	Marks of a True Church?

Christian Worship and Practice

LESSON SEVEN	Why Worship on Sunday?
LESSON EIGHT	Permissible on the Lord's Day?
LESSON NINE	How do we Worship God?
LESSON TEN	Women Pastors and Elders?
LESSON ELEVEN	What are Sacraments?
LESSON TWELVE	Differ on Baptism?
LESSON THIRTEEN	Differ on The Lord's Supper?



DEDICATED TO THE YOUTH MINISTRY OF
PEAR ORCHARD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (PCA)

LESSON ONE --- WHAT IS THE CHURCH?

OVERVIEW

The first half of this quarter's lessons will be devoted to defending the truth about the Church of Jesus Christ. Therefore, a good starting point is defining "the Church." What is it? Or maybe the better question is: Who is Church?

The term "church" is a translation of the Greek word "ekklesia" which means "gathering" or "assembly." So the Church is not a building or an activity—it is the assembling of worshipers of God. To use New Testament language, it is the family of God, and the Body of Christ!

Since the word "church" first appears in the Gospel of Matthew, it is tempting to believe the Church came about in the New Testament. But ever since Adam and Eve, God has been gathering together true worshipers. Israel was described as a "congregation" or assembly of God's people. So the Church has Old Testament beginnings, yet comes to full flower in the New Testament. It's built on the prophets and the apostles, filled with the Holy Spirit, and headed by the Lord Jesus Christ.

There is no human head to the body of Christ. Jesus is the head of the Church, since He is the Savior of the Church. Within the one Church of Jesus Christ, there are many local expressions, or local churches. These churches are not to be factions, but unified under the one Head. And, the Church is here on earth to proclaim Christ, the wisdom of God to a watching world!

TEACHING ENCOURAGEMENT

Even our teenagers can think of church as a place we go on Sunday. So it's helpful to pound home the truth that WE are the Church. We don't go to church or "do" church, we are the gathered people of God (the Church) in this world. If they really grasp this truth, then they can't talk about how the church doesn't do this or doesn't do that. The church is not the leaders or other people—it is all of us! As they learn to defend the truth of the Church with other people, hopefully they will grow in their understanding too. The church is the beautiful body of Christ, where all parts are necessary so it can fully function in this world!

SUGGESTED SCHEDULE

WELCOME

Proverbs 12:14-16
2–3 mins.

DRILL TIME

The Bible
3–5 mins.

MIND-IN-TRAINING

The obstacle of
indifference
6–8 mins.

BIBLE IMPLEMENTATION

What is the
Church?
30 mins.

MIND-IN-ACTION

Head of the
Church
3–5 mins.

THE **WELCOME** SERVES AS BOTH AN OPPORTUNITY TO GREET YOUR STUDENTS AS WELL AS AN EFFORT TO HELP THEM GET FOCUSED.

EACH WEEK, YOU WILL BEGIN WITH A PASSAGE FROM PROVERBS THAT WILL "CALL" THEM TO STUDY AND GROW IN WISDOM!

DRILL TIME GIVES YOUR YOUTH THE OPPORTUNITY TO RECALL AND REHEARSE WHAT THEY HAVE BEEN TAUGHT IN THE PAST. THESE WILL BE QUESTIONS FROM A PREVIOUS LESSON OR FROM THE SCRIPTURES.



WELCOME

Greet the students. Welcome visitors. Open with prayer.

Listen to God's Word. Read Proverbs 12:14-16.

¹⁴ From the fruit of his mouth a man is satisfied with good, and the work of a man's hand comes back to him. ¹⁵ The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, but a wise man listens to advice. ¹⁶ The vexation of a fool is known at once, but the prudent ignores an insult.

Say: *Do you listen to advice? Are you desiring to grow in wisdom? Let's be wise as we seek God's truth today!*



DRILL TIME

First, we will move on to DRILL TIME—our weekly opportunity to review what we have learned in the past. Are you ready?

Today's questions: *What two words do we use to describe how the Bible was inspired by God? What does the word CANON mean? How many books are in the CANON? Are modern Bibles just corrupt copies of copies of originals? What motivates people to look for contradictions or mistakes in the Bible? Does the Bible condemn homosexuality?*

Call on students to answer.

Answers:

1. Verbal: Every word spoken by God. Plenary: Every word has full authority.
2. Straight. A rule for testing straightness.
3. Sixty-six books.
4. No, modern Bibles are translations from the original languages.
5. They seek to deny that the Bible is the Word of God.
6. Yes.

God's Word is inerrant and fully authoritative!



MIND-IN-TRAINING

Say: *Each week, we will train our minds to think the way God wants us to think. We need to think Biblically in order to defend the truth before a watching world.*

*Over the next several lessons, we will think about some of the obstacles to apologetics—attitudes that keep Christians from defending the faith. Can you think of an attitude that makes a Christian resist doing the work of apologetics? **Allow answers.***

*A first major obstacle is INDIFFERENCE. What does it mean to be INDIFFERENT? **Allow answers.** Many Christians today just don't seem to care that Jesus and Christianity is regularly mocked and ridiculed in our culture. They might be slightly offended, but not enough to actually go out and defend the faith.*

*So, what are some reasons Christians become INDIFFERENT to what the world says about Christianity? **Allow answers.** This sort of passivity keeps our mouths shut when we should speak up about who Jesus is and what He has done.*

Instead of being INDIFFERENT, we should follow the apostle Paul's example who was "greatly distressed" when he witnessed the idolatry in Athens. Paul became an incredible Apologist partly because he was so upset about what people believed and how they lived. He was never INDIFFERENT to the culture around him!

So, in order to become an active Apologist, you must have a ZEAL for the Word of God AND for the state of the world around you. If you are INDIFFERENT to the plight of others, you will never be motivated to tell them the truth of Christ. And, if you are INDIFFERENT towards the Bible, you will not be prepared to talk to people who oppose it.

INDIFFERENCE has no place in the Christian life. God calls us to be passionate about Jesus, about living for Him, and for the lost souls of this world.

THE **MIND-IN-TRAINING** SECTION IS DESIGNED TO HELP YOUR STUDENTS TO LEARN TO THINK.

THIS ELEMENT TEACHES A BIBLICAL VIEW OF THE MIND AS WELL AS USEFUL TOOLS TO ENGAGE YOUNG MINDS.



BIBLE IMPLEMENTATION

THE BIBLE IMPLEMENTATION

TIME IS THE HEART AND SOUL OF THE WEEK'S LESSON. IT TAKES THE STUDENT ALL THROUGH GOD'S WORD, TRAINING THEM TO BE CHRISTIAN APOLOGISTS.

ALL SCRIPTURE TEXT INCLUDED IN THE CURRICULUM IS FROM THE ENGLISH STANDARD VERSION (ESV).

Introduction: *Today, we will start a new section of apologetic questions—ones having to do with the CHURCH. So, we begin with the most basic question of all:*

What is the Church?

Discussion: *That's an easy one, isn't it? So what's your answer? What is the CHURCH? Allow answers.* We often use the word CHURCH to talk about a building or an activity. "Let's go to CHURCH this Sunday." "It's so good to be able to do CHURCH with you today." But is the church really a "thing" or a building or just something we "do?" No! Here, then is the better question:

WHO is the Church?

Discussion: *Now, we are going to leave some of this answer for our next lesson, where we consider the distinction between the INVISIBLE church and the VISIBLE church. So, WHO is the CHURCH? Allow answers.* Yes, Christians make up the CHURCH. But there's a bit more to it than that. Is the CHURCH just defined as ALL Christians? What about children of Christians—are they part of the church? What about the local church? Again, we will leave some of those questions until next time. Let's begin, then, with definitions:

Definition #1: What does the word CHURCH mean?

Answer: *The Greek word EKKLESIA is typically translated as CHURCH in the New Testament. EKKLESIA means "gathering" or an "assembly" of people. That's why the CHURCH is not a building, but really a group of worshipers. For Christians, then, the CHURCH is the assembly of followers of Christ, who gather to worship God alone.*

Definition #2: When did the CHURCH begin?

Answer: *Since we first see the word EKKLESIA in the New Testament, we may be tempted to think that the CHURCH began then. After all, we read these words of Jesus in Matthew 16:18.*

¹⁸ And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.



And then, we read in the Book of Acts how Jesus built His church on the work of the APOSTLES (like Peter) and the power of the Holy Spirit. We call this the beginning of the New Testament CHURCH. But, what about the Old Testament? Consider this verse from the Book of Genesis:

Read Genesis 28:3.

³ God Almighty bless you and make you fruitful and multiply you, that you may become a company of peoples.

These are words spoken to Jacob, later named Israel. The phrase “company of peoples” is the Hebrew word QAHAL, which is also translated as CHURCH! Jacob and his twelve sons were to become a CHURCH, a community of worshipers as they settled into the Promised Land! So, is this when the CHURCH began?

What about Adam and Eve? They were created by God to be a worshiping community, right? Then in Genesis 12, Abraham was promised to become a great nation and a blessing to all nations. This “nation” of worshipers was the Old Testament CHURCH!

So, the CHURCH didn’t just begin in the New Testament or in the Book of Acts. From the beginning of Creation, it has been God’s purpose to gather to Himself a community of worshipers. His people Israel were sinful and rebellious, yet they were His covenant people. When Jesus took on flesh and came to earth, He embodied ISRAEL and gave birth to the New Testament expression of the CHURCH. That leads us to our next definition.

Definition #3: Who is the head of the CHURCH?

Answer: Did I just give it away? Who is the head of the CHURCH? Jesus! Let’s read these verses together:

Read Ephesians 1:20–23.

²⁰ that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, ²¹ far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. ²² And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, ²³ which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

THIS SIDEBAR FOUND ON ALL PAGES IS FOR THE TEACHER TO WRITE NOTES AS HE OR SHE PREPARES THE LESSON.



*So, Christ as KING rules over all things, which makes Him HEAD over His BODY, the CHURCH. What does it mean that Christ is HEAD of the CHURCH? **Allow answers.** For one thing, it means that He has ALL authority over it, right?*

Let's look at another passage in Ephesians:

Read Ephesians 5:23-24.

²³ For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. ²⁴ Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands.

That's pretty clear, isn't it? Why is Christ the head of the CHURCH? [Because it is His body. Because He saved it!] These verses also help us define the Church. It is the people whom Christ has saved. It is the body that submits to Him.

Which brings us to verses in Colossians 1.

Read Colossians 1:18-24.

¹⁸ And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. ¹⁹ For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, ²⁰ and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross. ²¹ And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, ²² he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him, ²³ if indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, became a minister. ²⁴ Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church,

There is a lot of rich theology in this letter to the Colossian CHURCH. Did you hear how Christ is the HEAD of the church? And, that all those whom Christ died for are reconciled to Himself and become part of the Body of Christ!

So, we can accurately say that the CHURCH is the Body of Christ, made up of all true worshipers of God throughout all human history.



But we must also answer this question:

Is there just one CHURCH or many CHURCHES?

Read Romans 16:16.

¹⁶ Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the churches of Christ greet you.

Read I Corinthians 7:17.

¹⁷ Only let each person lead the life that the Lord has assigned to him, and to which God has called him. This is my rule in all the churches.

Read I Thessalonians 2:14.

¹⁴ For you, brothers, became imitators of the churches of God in Christ Jesus that are in Judea. For you suffered the same things from your own countrymen as they did from the Jews,

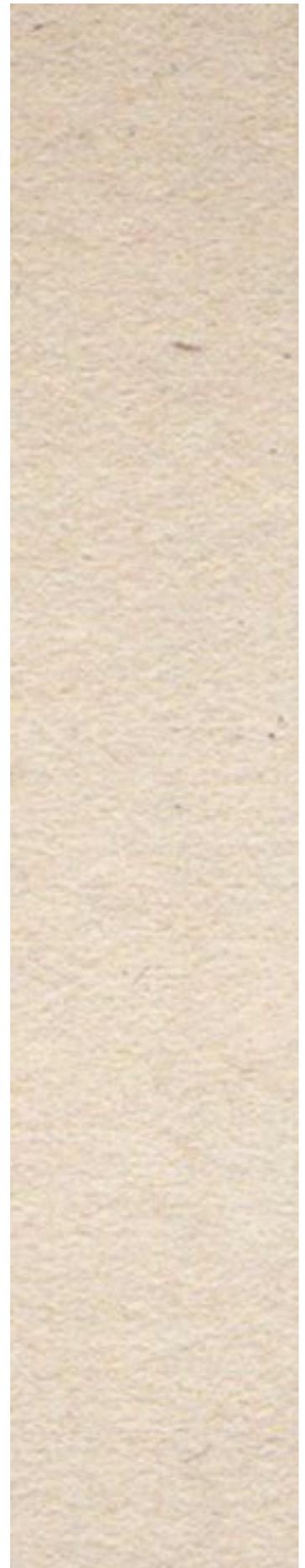
So, what do these verses tell us? The one CHURCH of Jesus Christ is manifested in many, many, many LOCAL CHURCHES. We will go into this distinction more in detail when we talk about the various denominations in Christianity; and, again when we discuss the distinction between the invisible and visible church.

But, just because there are many CHURCHES, we must still be careful of what Paul describes in I Corinthians 11.

Read I Corinthians 11:18-22.

¹⁸ For, in the first place, when you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you. And I believe it in part, ¹⁹ for there must be factions among you in order that those who are genuine among you may be recognized. ²⁰ When you come together, it is not the Lord's supper that you eat. ²¹ For in eating, each one goes ahead with his own meal. One goes hungry, another gets drunk. ²² What! Do you not have houses to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and humiliate those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I commend you in this? No, I will not.

What problem is Paul describing? Divisions in the CHURCH! We will also talk more about this in the future. These divisions make it difficult to defend the truth of the ONE CHURCH of Jesus Christ!





Let's end with one last verse. **Read Ephesians 3:10.**

¹⁰ so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places.

Conclusion: *Wow! Jesus has a BIG purpose for His CHURCH doesn't He? What is the CHURCH? It is a community of worshipers of King Jesus which is used to show off the manifold WISDOM of God! It isn't just some social organization. It isn't just a group of people deciding to gather for religious purposes. It is the ORGANIC Body of Christ, submitting to the LORDSHIP of Christ, which DISPLAYS Christ to the watching world!*



MIND-IN-ACTION

Each week, we end our time together with a MIND-IN-ACTION section.

So, here is my challenge to you as we close today:

Is Jesus your HEAD?

If you are a member of the Body of Christ, then Christ is your head! So, why do professing Christians act like some human being is the head? Or worse, we can all think we are our own heads! But Jesus is truly the head of the CHURCH. It is His body, not our organization. Act like Jesus is your head and submit to His Lordship in all of life.

The second part of my challenge is this:

Promote the community of the CHURCH.

We are tempted to find community in a lot of other places than with other Christians. Or worse, we can avoid community and try to go it alone in this world. God has designed the CHURCH to be a gathering, an assembly, a community! It is not just a group of individuals or families. It is meant to be a body that is working together. We are the body of Christ! So promote the unity and community of the church!

Close in prayer.

THE **MIND-IN-ACTION** SECTION IS DESIGNED TO MOVE YOUR STUDENTS TO ACTION. AS THEIR MINDS GROW IN KNOWLEDGE, THEY ARE CHALLENGED TO GROW IN WISDOM. THEY WILL NEVER TRULY LEARN IF THEY DON'T PUT WHAT THEY HAVE STUDIED INTO PASSIONATE ACTION!