

# Word One Bible Study

## What's Up with the Church?

by David Reimann

Text: Ezekiel 17:22-24 for the Third Sunday after Pentecost, Lectionary Series B

### OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

1. Understand and appreciate the church as a living, growing, God-created place which serves people with the Good News.
2. Understand the purpose and mission of the church.
3. Take an active role in their church.

### MATERIALS NEEDED

Bibles  
Luther's Small Catechism  
Newsprint  
Markers  
Post-it Notes  
Paper cups  
Potting soil  
Seedling from nursery or greenhouse

### GROUP GUIDELINES

Divide into small groups of 6-8 people. The person whose birthday is closest to June 14 will lead the group. The leader should encourage participation from all the members of the group, and move the discussion process along.

### COMMUNITY BUILDING

1. Which is your favorite room in your church building? If you could decorate it any way that you wanted, what would you do?
2. Who is the person you admire most in your church? What qualities does that person have that you would like to have in your own life?

### LOOKING AT GOD'S WORD

1. Provide a cup, potting soil and a tree seedling to each person. Add a little water. Watch it grow! (Not!) You'll be waiting for a long time to see anything happen. What makes a plant grow? How is the Church like a plant?
2. Read Ezekiel 17:22-24. Who is speaking? Who is the shoot? What/where is the mountain? Who are the branches? (Read John 15:5 for help in answering the questions.) The promised Messiah would come and establish His kingdom—the Church—where His love and forgiveness are proclaimed and shared.
3. Read the Second Petition from Luther's Small Catechism. God's kingdom comes to people through people who are led by the Holy Spirit to live out and share the news that we are saved by the undeserved love and mercy of God through faith in Jesus Christ. When we pray "Thy Kingdom come," we're asking that the gospel be shared with everyone so that they are assured of salvation. This is what the kingdom, the Church, is to be about.
4. Read the following and answer what each tells about the mission and work of the Church:
  - a. John 8:31 and Colossians 3:16-17
  - b. Matthew 28:19-20 and Acts 1:8
  - c. Matthew 25:31-46

On newsprint list as many "ministries" that your church carries out (Sunday School, VBS, altar guild, parent's day out, ushering, website, etc.). Write the words "Spiritual Growth" on one piece of newsprint, "Outreach" on another, and "Christian Love, Care & Concern" on a third. Write down the "ministry" items under the three categories. (You may have some items which are placed on all three sheets of newsprint.) If you could add one new opportunity for ministry at your church, what would it be?

5. Very often, young people are not readily welcomed to serve on church boards or committees. Write your name on five Post-It notes and place your name on the five ministries you might like to work on. In your small group, share the reasons why you placed your name where you did. Others in the group may offer affirmation or question the choices of the individual sharing. Choose one ministry (take the Post-It note off and write down what that ministry is) that you will actually become involved in and covenant with your group to follow through on this. Christ is the head of the Church, and we are the members who offer the cooling, protecting shade of the Gospel and share the fruit (Galatians 5:22-23) of this Good News with others.

### **REINFORCING WHAT HAS BEEN LEARNED**

1. The Church is...
2. The best thing that my church does is...
3. Christ made me different. I can make a difference by...

### **CLOSING**

As a group project, develop a plan with a landscape architect to create a place where your seedling can be planted on your church grounds. Read Psalm 1:1-3. Close with a prayer that focuses on the blessing the Church is to you, and how you can be a blessing to the Church.

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