

LESSON

WHAT'S THE POINT OF GOING TO CHURCH?

09

TODAY'S BIBLE BASE

Just for Teachers

Bold Bible Truth **GOD IS ALWAYS WITH US.**

(Hebrews 13:5)

“Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works. And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near.”

(Hebrews 10:24-25)

- **The church is like a human body where all parts are needed and important.**

1 Corinthians 12:12, 25-27

- **The faithful devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, to fellowship, to sharing meals, and to prayer.**

Acts 2:42

Create a Bold Classroom Environment

Each week you'll read aloud the BE BOLD Values, and today you'll demonstrate to your kids how it looks when you're “in it together.” You'll share, and they'll share. You'll listen, and they'll listen.

Pray for Your Preteens

Some of your preteens might prefer to do almost anything but attend church. Pause now and pray that they take to heart the point of today's lesson. Then jot down the three things you love most about attending church—and share those three things with your kids.



Your preteens hunger for community and belonging but may not see church as a place to experience it. As you create a safe space to share, discover, and explore, you're creating community—a place to know and be known. That's why in this lesson and other BE BOLD lessons there's so much opportunity for discussion and bonding. You're drawing your preteens closer to one another, to you, and to Jesus.



THIS LESSON AT A GLANCE

| Section | What Preteens Do | Supplies | Easy Prep |
|---|--|---|---|
| Begin Boldly (about 10 minutes) | Enjoy a snack, review BE BOLD Values, report on Mystery Missions, and add questions to the whiteboard/poster board. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• BE BOLD Values poster• Legos building blocks• snacks• markers• whiteboard or poster board | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• During this time you'll write "Going to church" on whiteboard or poster board. |
| Game (about 15 minutes) | Play Church Charades—twice. | | |
| Question of the Week (about 20 minutes) | Dig into Scripture to discover that preteens don't just <i>go</i> to church—they <i>are</i> the church. Create church membership nametags. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bibles• Bold Action Student Books• rolls of painter's tape• scissors• pens | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tear out page 35 from Bold Action Student Books. |
| Bold Action (about 10 minutes) | Create a prayer request wall. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• rolls of painter's tape• pens• sticky notes | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• On a dozen sticky notes, write the names of leaders in your country, local government, and church—one name per sticky note. |
| Bold Blessing (about 5 minutes) | Receive a prayer blessing and a Mystery Mission. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mystery Mission Cards• Mystery Mission Stickers | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fold a Mystery Mission Card for each preteen, and use 3 Mystery Mission Stickers to seal each card. |



BEGIN BOLDLY (ABOUT 10 MINUTES)

Arrival Activity

Greet preteens warmly as they arrive. Place healthy snacks on a table.

Have Legos building blocks available and challenge kids to build a church using only a dozen blocks. As kids build, ask them to describe what parts of your church are most important to them and why.

As you're ready to move on, remove the Legos from sight.

Welcome Kids

Ask a willing reader to read aloud the BE BOLD Values from the BE BOLD Values poster:

You're accepted just as you are.

We respect each other's thoughts and struggles.

We're all in this together.

God is here, ready to be your friend because you matter!

Say: **One reason I love being here are those values. They make it safe for me to share what I think and feel. They help us treat one another like Jesus treats us.**

Of course, the other reason I love being here is *you*—so let's hear from you now as you report on some Mystery Mission action!

Mystery Mission Reports

Share a brief story of how *you* followed through with a bold mission, and then ask kids to partner up and share with one another.

Allow time for kids to talk, but if some kids haven't actually done a Mystery Mission, have them plan how they can do the one that you've done.

Question Collection

Say: **Thanks for sharing those stories.**

I love hearing how Jesus joins you when you step out and try new things that bless others and share his love.

Today let's talk about this:

Write "Going to church" on the whiteboard.

Say: **What questions do you have about going to church? Maybe you've wondered why we do some of the stuff we do at church. Or what the church does with the money people give. Or where you fit in the church.**

One of *my* questions is...

Briefly write a question about going to church on the whiteboard.

Say: **Your turn. What are *your* questions about going to church? Tell me and I'll write them, or come up and write your question yourself.**

Gather kids' questions on the board. Be sure to have enough markers so preteens can write their own questions.

Say: **Thanks for sharing your questions. I'm glad we're all in this together!**

We'll talk about church and where we fit in it more, so if your question doesn't get answered today, that's okay. We may answer it later or, if you want, see me after class. I may not have an answer, but we can set up a time to talk.

Share Your Story

Say: **In fact, let's talk now!**



PRETEEN POINTER

Preteens want to belong and to be seen, so acknowledge each child as he or she enters your room. Greet regular kids each by name, and if new kids attend, speak to them. Introduce yourself and ask the preteen what he or she likes to be called. Then briefly introduce the child to the rest of your group. Ask outgoing regulars to partner with guests so new kids always have a partner and someone to show them the ropes.



PRETEEN POINTER

Because not every preteen comes each week, let kids talk about their *last* Mystery Mission—no matter when they did it. Giving them a chance to share about their successful missions helps them see that, when they step out in faith, Jesus joins them on their adventure.



PRETEEN POINTER

When possible, as you move through the lesson, refer to kids' written questions. It honors your kids, super-sizes the relevance of your lesson, and helps you give your preteens what they need.



PRETEEN POINTER

Not many preteens this week? It's okay to have all your kids in one group; you'll still make the point!

Turn to a partner and talk about this:

- ❓ **Tell about a time you didn't feel like going to church and why. Or maybe you've never felt that way. As for me...**

Very briefly share about a time you didn't feel like going to church—and why.

Say: **Now you talk with your partner about your story.**

After kids talk for a few minutes, ask preteens to respond as a whole group to this question:

- ❓ **What's the point of church? Why does going to church matter?**

Allow several kids to respond. Be as affirming as you can of their responses.



GAME (ABOUT 15 MINUTES)

Church Charades

Form kids into small groups of four or five, and give them this assignment: Work together to create a church using only their bodies.

Say: **You did it with Legos; let's see what you can do with just your bodies. You'll have two minutes to figure out how you'll portray a church. It can be a church you've seen or one that you're making up.**

Two rules:

You can use *only* your bodies—no pulling in props. And second, everyone in your group has to be involved.

Ready? Let's see what you can do!

Allow kids time to work, and then have them demonstrate for you and the other groups what they've created. Affirm and applaud all efforts.

Say: **Stick with your groups and let's play another round. But this time act out things Christians do when they're not in a church building.**

For instance, maybe you've seen a bunch of people you know are Christians shopping for groceries. Or cheering at a ballgame. Or running a half-marathon. Or walking dogs.

Same rules—you can use only your bodies, and everyone has to be involved. Go!

Once again give groups time to plan, and then have groups take turns acting as other kids try to guess what's being portrayed.

After groups finish, as a whole group talk about the following:

- ❓ **You played two rounds. In which round did you feel you best portrayed the church...and why?**

Allow several responses from kids, then continue.

Say: **I appreciate you all jumping in and giving this a try. We were all in this together, and that made it fun!**

As for me, I'd say you best portrayed the church when you were a bunch of people. I say that because the church isn't a building. It's people.

When you follow Jesus, you don't just *go* to church—you *are* the church. Sometimes we all get together in a building, but most of the time we're out and about being the church in our homes, schools, and neighborhoods.

We're the church when we're together and when we're alone because **GOD IS ALWAYS WITH US.**

Let's dig into what it means to be the church now.



QUESTION OF THE WEEK (ABOUT 20 MINUTES)

Distribute page 35 from the Bold Action Student Books to each preteen. Set out rolls of painter's tape, scissors, and pens.

Say: **We're going to see what the Bible has to say about three things:**

First, who's the church? Who gets to be in and who doesn't?

Second, what's the church supposed to do?

And third, what's the point of people in the church getting together? Since **GOD IS ALWAYS WITH US, why bother coming to a church service?**

To dig into this you'll first need to do a bit of cutting.

Have kids each cut out a Church Membership Card.

Say: **It's one thing to have a membership card. It's another to actually *be* a member. Let's see what the Bible has to say about who gets to be in the church.**

Ask a willing reader to read aloud the two "Are you in...or out?" passages.

Say: **Before you can join many groups, you have to be invited. The invitation to join the body of Christ—the church—comes from Jesus. Looking at these passages, how would you answer this:**

❓ Who is Jesus inviting to be forgiven for their sins and to join him?

Allow several responses.

Say: **Thanks for sharing.**

If Jesus died so everyone could be saved from sin and come to him, it seems he's inviting...everyone. Not everyone has said yes to his offer, but the invitation stands.

Another quick question:

❓ Who's *not* invited to come to Jesus? Anything you see about having to be a certain age, for instance?

Allow several responses.

Say: **When you've said yes to Jesus, or if you're saying yes now, jot your name and today's date on your membership card. You're in.**



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PRETEEN POINTER

Your congregation may have stipulations concerning membership in your local church body. If so, explain them here—but be sure to communicate that Jesus is ever and always inviting, loving, and delighted when preteens say yes to his offer of friendship. Preteens don't have to wait!



PRETEEN POINTER

When kids call out “fellowship,” probe a bit—ask what that word means. Do that with all the responses; you’re making sure kids understand what those words mean in the context of their own lives.

At Jesus’ invitation, you’re in.

I love that Jesus invites everyone to come to him. There are people who’ve said yes, who’ve said not yet, and some who haven’t yet heard the invitation. All are invited!

- ❓ **So, how would you answer our first question? Who’s the church? Who gets to be in?**

Accept several responses from preteens.

- Say: **Thanks for your thoughts. I’m glad God made room in the church for anyone who’s a friend of Jesus. That makes room for a lot of interesting people!**

Let’s look at our second question: As the church, what are we supposed to do?

Good news: The Bible answers that question, too!

Have a willing preteen read the “So...What Do We Do?” passage aloud.

- ❓ **What does that say about what we’re to do, church?**

Allow several responses.

- Say: **On your membership card there’s a line where you can fill in what you do. On that line please write “Prayer Person.” I’ll explain why in a few minutes.**

Allow time for preteens to write.

- Say: **That’s not *all* the church did back when those words were written. Church people also gave to the poor, helped one another, and shared their faith. They stayed busy following Jesus, and we can stay busy doing the same thing.**

A quick question for all of us:

- ❓ **How are we doing right now what the passage we just read says the early church did?**

Allow several responses.

- Say: **They had meals together; we’ve just shared some food together. Like them, we’ve been talking and fellowshiping. They heard teaching; we’ve been reading what the apostles wrote in the Bible.**

We’re doing what they did—right now!

So, let’s tackle that last question: What’s the point of people in the church getting together?

Have a willing preteen read the “All Together Now” passage aloud.

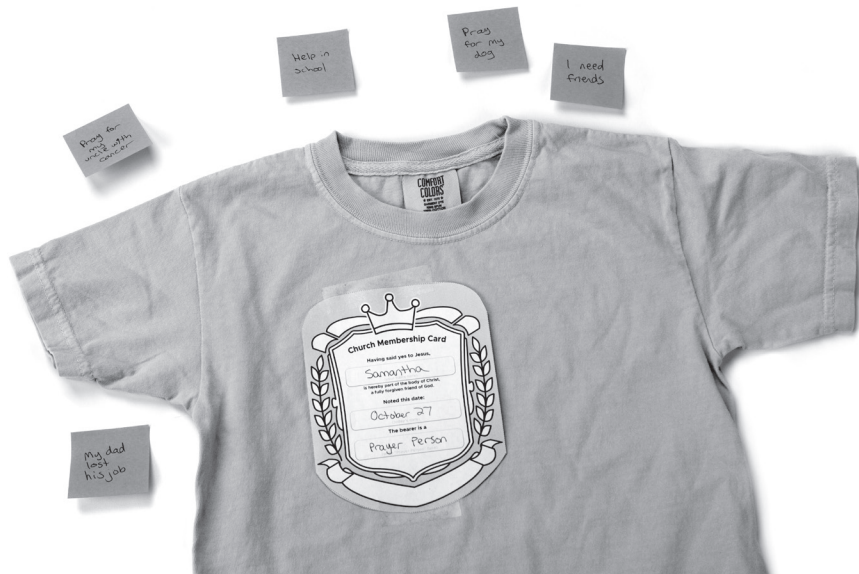
- ❓ **What does this passage say about what we can do when we’re together?**

Allow several responses.

- Say: **Since we’re all together now, let me encourage you to do some good work as you encourage others. Since it says “Prayer Person” on your membership card, let’s do some praying.**

First, though, time to put on those membership cards! They’re big and bold because we can be, too. We belong!

Have kids use small strips of painter's tape to affix their membership cards to the front of their shirts. Do the same yourself.



PRETEEN POINTER

Preteens—especially guests—may not want to share personal prayer requests openly. Encourage kids, if they don't want to write a specific request, to instead write their name and draw a symbol or a picture of what they're requesting.

TAKE IT OUTSIDE

Ask your class if they'd like to create a person-shaped outline on a bulletin board or in the entrance area of your church building. Do what you've done in your class, but invite the entire congregation to participate. If your preteens are up for it, go with them to get the okay. Them asking the question will build ownership and send the message that they can have an impact in your congregation.

BOLD ACTION (ABOUT 10 MINUTES)

Preteens will work together to create a person-shaped painter's tape outline on the wall of your room. They'll then write prayer requests on sticky notes to place in the outline. Place the sticky notes you've written containing leaders' names and several personal prayer requests in the outline yourself. Leave an extra block of sticky notes and several pens by the outline kids create.

Once all sticky notes have been posted, you'll ask kids to remove one or two sticky notes, pray for what's on them, and return the sticky notes to the outline.

After kids complete their prayer wall, say:

Thank you for being the church. Thank you for praying for me and each other.

What will you take away from our time together today?

Allow several responses.

Say: **Thanks for sharing. I want to make sure you know that you don't just go to church; if you've said yes to Jesus, you *are* the church. And that's true right now, not just when you get older. GOD IS ALWAYS WITH YOU.**

You can make a difference in our local congregation right now.

As you pray for others...as you love others...as you follow Jesus...you're making a difference.



BOLD BLESSING (ABOUT 5 MINUTES)

Pray

Ask your preteens to go back to the prayer wall. Point out that there's a block of sticky notes and a couple of pens near the outline. Explain that preteens can add a prayer request any time and that kids can pray for one of the requests at any time.

Say: **We've prayed for our friends. Let's pray a bit more. Please take a sticky note that you didn't write and silently pray for the person who wrote it. I'll start and end our prayer time.**

Pray: **God, thank you for our friends. Thank you that we're the church and can come to you with our prayers. Hear us as we silently pray for the people whose sticky notes we hold.**

Pause for 30 seconds, and then conclude your prayer.

Thank you for hearing us, God. Thank you for loving us.

In Jesus' name, amen.

Send-Off Cheer

Have kids stand in a circle with their hands in the center, like a sports team. Tell them that when you finish the Bold Blessing, they'll raise their hands and shout "Let's be bold!"

Say this Bold Blessing: **Know this about yourselves: You are loved by God. You can say yes to Jesus. And you're making a difference not someday, not when you're grown up, but *right now*.**

You can be bold because you're not alone. We have one another, and GOD IS ALWAYS WITH US.

Say it with me: *Let's be bold!*

Mystery Mission

Say: **You have a Mystery Mission this week!**

I'll now give you a sealed card that contains a top-secret mission. Don't open it until tomorrow morning.

We'll talk about what happened the next time we get together.

Distribute a Mystery Mission Card to each preteen. Take your own card home and complete the challenge, too!

