

Lesson 7

The Holy Spirit Gathers and Unites the Church

Bible Lesson: Matthew 16:13-19

Memory Verse: So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone. *Ephesians 2:19-20*

Enrichment Memory Verse: "I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven." *Matthew 16:18-19a*

Catechism Memory Work: I believe in the Holy Spirit;...

What does this mean?

I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ my Lord or come to Him; But the Holy Spirit has called me through the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, and sanctified and preserved me in the true faith; in like manner as He calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian church on earth,...

TEACHER PREPARATION

Prepare to Teach:

✠ *To be added later*

Prepare Materials:

Along with the regular materials needed for class, you will need the following items for this lesson:

♦ *to be added later*

Prayer Preparation

1. Pray that God's Holy Spirit will teach you through His Word and keep you in close touch with Him and His will.
2. Pray for each of your students during this week. Pray that each one may be sensitive to the calling and leading of the Holy Spirit through the Word.
3. Remember each student's individual spiritual need as you have seen it. Pray specifically that each student's need may be met.
4. Pray that the Holy Spirit may have control of the class period, and that Satan's work may be frustrated.

BIBLE BACKGROUND

A. Bible Study

Have you ever invited a bunch of people to a party and then went about eagerly and diligently preparing so that it might be a fun event for everyone? Imagine the day of the party comes and you are expecting people to begin arriving. But no one pulls in your driveway or walks up to your door. Suppose you waited and began to wonder if you had accidentally written a different time or place on the invitation. You might think that some were just late but then more time passed and still no one came. It would be heartbreaking.

The good news of the Christian Church is that the Holy Spirit keeps calling, enlightening, and gathering His people. His invitation through the Word of God is heard and the church is gathered. People are being brought into something much greater than any party we could ever throw. They are being called out of darkness and the kingdom of this world into the Kingdom of Jesus Christ. Sometimes in our specific locations we might not see the growth we expect yet Christ is building His Church.

He has been doing so for generations through His means: The Word and Sacraments. Preachers have been preaching and teachers have been teaching. Faithful parents have prayed for their children and raised them up in the faith. Neighbors have cared for neighbors and spoken to them about the reason for the hope that they have (1 Peter 3:15). The faith entrusted to the saints is being passed down; the baton has not been dropped because through all these things the Holy Spirit is building and gathering His people.

The Christian Church is made up of those who have been brought to the “party.” They come, sometime in large groups like at Pentecost (Acts 2) or sometimes as a group gathered for worship. Other times they are gathered one by one as a child is baptized or a friend shares the Good News with another. When the means of grace (Word and Sacraments) are used the Holy Spirit enlightens us. That is, the Holy Spirit, leads us out of darkness into the light. The light of the truth. The Word shows us our common need because of our sinful nature and the Savior who paid the price for us all. The light of the world is Jesus, the Holy Spirit brings us to see this.

Unity is a precious gift given by the Holy Spirit. It is the work of God of bringing together people not based on the outward things by which people have brought division but by a common Savior who has redeemed us. Isaiah 54:7 says, **“For a brief moment I forsook you, But with great compassion I will gather you.”** His great love for us is shown in drawing us together around His Word, around His promises. So that after being broken by the Law’s work we can be gathered into the Christian Church around the covenant of peace (Isaiah 54:10) which ultimately was put into effect by Christ’s death on the Cross.

B. Creed Study

In Acts 2:42-47 we see how the early believers came together for fellowship and encouragement. In Acts 2:41 God's Word says that 3000 souls came to know Christ in a personal way. They each needed to be grounded, to grow and to reach out with their new found discovery of Christ's forgiveness.

In Acts 2:42 we see the focus of the early believers:

1. They committed themselves steadfastly to the "Apostle's doctrine." In other words they took the Scriptures and read, studied and searched them.
2. They committed themselves to "fellowship." These early Christians knew that they needed each other for support and encouragement.
3. They committed themselves to the "breaking of bread." They ate their meals together - they spent time together.
4. They committed themselves to "prayer." What a key part of the fellowship of all believers - to pray with and for one another.

These early Christians actually sought to help each other and to share whatever possessions they had with each other; this shows their oneness of Spirit.

The Lord God enabled these early Christians to grow in grace and holiness. In Acts 4:31-35 we see an example of how the Lord cleansed the people. God wanted them to be set apart, sanctified, for His glory and honor.

BEGINNING YOUR CLASS HOUR

Welcome

Enlist the help of early-arriving students in preparing the class space, at the same time visiting with each student to learn what his/her concerns and needs are. If you have cards with memory verses written on them (references on reverse side) invite students to work with others in reviewing memory verses.

Open with Prayer

Briefly discuss with the class what the Holy Spirit does for us, including His work through the means of grace. Ask for sentence prayers of thanks for each of these, one at a time.

Recite Memory Work

Listen to students recite their memory work:

From the Bible: John 17:17

And

From the Catechism: I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ my Lord or come to Him; But the Holy Spirit has called me through the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, and sanctified and preserved me in the true faith; in like manner as He calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian church on earth,...

Review

Conduct a quick oral review of last week's lesson.

More questions to be added later.

Introduce Wall Words

congregation—
ekklesia—
kingdom of heaven—
administered—

Introduce the Lesson

To be added later.

Teach the Lesson

To be added later.

APPLYING THE BIBLE LESSON

Memory Work

BIBLE VERSE— Ephesians 2:19-20

So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone.

CATECHISM—READ

I believe in the Holy Spirit...

What does this mean?

I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ my Lord or come to Him; But the Holy Spirit has called me through the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, and sanctified and preserved me in the true faith; in like

manner as He calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian church on earth...

Activity Pages

Activity 1 -

Student will draw a picture of the inside of their sanctuary

Activity 2 - Do You Know Greek?

ANSWERS

1. Congregation
2. Ekklesia
3. Church
4. Faith
5. Believers
6. Corner stone

CLOSING THE LESSON

Closing Prayer

Thank You, Lord, for sending your Holy Spirit to call us and give us living faith. We want to be "living stones" in Your Church. Make us Christ-like and help us to be your witnesses. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

Assignment

1. Challenge your students to complete any unfinished activities and work on the memory passage.
2. Ask the students to bring finished pages to be checked and acknowledged along with the memory work.