

MY CHURCH

GOAL: Allow families to have a memorable experience together at church as they learn how much they matter to the faith community.

Preparation:

- Set out on each table a copy of ‘Make a Paper Church’ (see *Extra Resources* on website). Make one or two samples so families can see what they are going to make.
- Prepare activities for families to participate in during their ‘Treasure Hunt around the Church’ and refreshments for afterwards.
- Make a copy of the My Church mini booklet (see *Extra Resources* on website).

Explain it:

As families arrive, instruct them to look at your paper church sample, follow the instructions at their table and work together to make a representation of a church. Encourage staff, board or elders to mingle with families as they work on their churches.

After families have worked for a while on their paper churches, encourage discussion with parents and their children with these questions:

Parents: “What do you remember about the church you grew up in?”

Kids: “What is your favourite thing about our church?”

“Who is someone you really like to see when you come to church?”

“What is the church?”

Optional: Finger play: “Here is the church, here is the steeple, open the doors and here’s all the people!”

Discuss: “How is the church a community of people? If the building you meet in was burned down or destroyed in an earthquake, would the church still exist?”

We’ll look at Scripture as our base. *[Get volunteers to read below.]*

Colossians 1:18,24 — The church is a body, not a business.

1 Peter 2:5 — The church is an organism not an organisation.

Galations 6:10 — The church is a family not an institution.

Look at the name you put on the front of your church. What words could be added?

“Meets here” is missing from the sign. The building is only the place you gather in. The people make up the church. Get parents to write “Meets Here” on the sign.

Ask: “Who is the most important person at church?” Allow some responses.

Read **Romans 12:5:**

Just as there are many parts to our bodies, so it is with Christ’s body. We are all parts of it, and it takes every one of us to make it complete, for we belong to each other, and each needs all the others. (TLB)

Name some people in your church that most of the children would know and explain what work they do for others in the church.

Ask the children whether they think they are an important part of your church. Tell them how everyone is important in the church community. Read **1 Corinthians 12:12, 14-21, 25-27**. Have pictures of an eye, ear, hand and foot and get volunteers to hold them up as you read.

Ask: “If the church building isn’t really the church, why do we care about it?”

Relate the church to a home for a church family. Talk about how it is a safe place where we gather as a family and that we should respect the church but also feel comfortable here. Ask them to think of ways they can help to take care of the building. Explain that everybody has a part in taking care of the building.

Inspire them: (5 min)

Share what you love about your church and how the people have made a difference in your life. Talk about the impact that children and their families have in your life. Express how grateful you are that each person in the room is a part of your children’s ministry and your church.

Model it: (20 min)

Explain to families that they will go together on an exploration like a treasure hunt round your church building. Remind them that the people they encounter on their exploration are people in their church family.

Have families form groups so they get to know other families from your church. After they get into groups, allow them a few minutes to introduce themselves to each other and share: *Where they live, how long they have been going to your church, an activity or hobby they love to do as a family.*

Use a map or provide clues to lead family groups to the different places you want them to visit around the church. Lead families to places they wouldn’t normally go to but might be intrigued by. Children will find the exploration exciting and it will help them feel at home in your building. You may wish to give each family a sheet on which the leaders they meet sign their names. The family group writes on the sheet what each leader does at church.

At each destination have church leaders stationed. Ask these leaders to be prepared to introduce themselves to the families and explain what they do as a part of the church family. They should also ask for the names of all the families that come to their destination. This event is a golden opportunity for your staff/elders/worship leaders to get to know your young families. (If the pastor is preaching during your Faith@Home session, they could have a video of themselves welcoming the families and explaining what they do, ready for families to play as they visit the pastor’s office area).

At each location the family can also receive something to make the exploration more exciting. i.e:

1. Learn an interesting fact about your church, such as the name of the first pastor, the year your church began, the number of people who attend, a little known fact about your pastor, etc.
2. Collect puzzle pieces that will ultimately create a picture of the church building. The picture could say, “Where my church family gathers!” To make the puzzle, take a photo of your church building to a local print shop.
3. Collect cards with a word or phrase from a Bible verse to put together e.g. Ephesians 4:11-13.
4. Families could also engage in a challenge at each location (look up a Bible verse and read it together, tell the leader one thing about themselves, make a shot in a hoop before leaving, etc.

Practice it: (5 min)

After the treasure hunt, gather your families to talk about the experience over morning tea. If they received puzzle pieces or verses, give them time to put them together.

Ask families to share what their favourite part of the exploration was. What kinds of things did they learn that they didn't know before? Did they see any part of the building for the first time?

See how much people remember with questions such as: "What was pastor's favourite food? Who remembers the Bible verse you looked up in (Mary's) office?" etc.

Take it home:

Give each family a My Church mini book to complete together at home during the week.

Pray a blessing over the families as they leave.