

What is church?

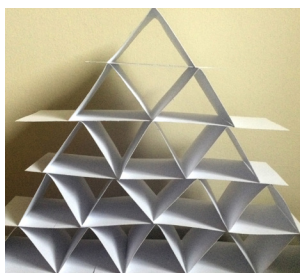
These craft ideas will help children explore the idea of church and what it is and can be. You can use them with November's Together sessions, as part of a general children's group or in a home situation. As you create together, encourage conversation about what a community of God's people looks like, and how we can be part of improving and reaching more people.



Together session one: **MAGNET GAME**

You will need: a magnet; paper clips; paper; scissors; shredded paper; shapes to draw around (eg cookie cutters)

In this passage from Mark, Jesus calls the disciples and they form a group around him. This craft is all about being drawn towards something, just as those first disciples were drawn to Jesus to make the first church. Give everyone five paper clips. Choose a cookie cutter, draw around it and cut out ten pieces of the same shape. Place one of the shape pieces face down and put a paper clip on top of it. Glue another piece over the top of the paper clip so that the paper clip is hidden inside the two shapes. Do this for all five paper clips. Mix the pieces into some shredded paper and then use your magnet to find and draw all of the shapes out of the mixture. Time each other: who can do it in the quickest time?



Together session two: **BUILDING CHALLENGE**

You will need: sheets of card; scissors; sticky tape

This passage talks about how each one of us as a member of the church is a vital part of keeping the church together and standing. We are being built together into a "spiritual house". Write the names of members of your family, group or church onto pieces of card and use those pieces of card, scissors and sticky tape to build a structure. There is no wrong way to do this as long as the structure stands firm. Each person's piece of card might be used in a totally different way, but each piece of paper is important to the structure as a whole. We are what makes the church and we need each other to keep standing.



Together session three: **GOOD NEWS PAPER PLANES**

You will need: sheets of A4 or A5 paper; felt-tip pens

Get everyone to make a paper plane, using any pattern they like. There will surely be some experts in your family or group! Somewhere on the plane, write something that you think is good news or something good that you know about God and then throw it towards someone else. When they receive the plane, they can read what you have written and write something they know or another piece of good news on another part of the plane before sending it on to someone else. This craft activity is a really good way of helping to open up a conversation about passing the good news of Jesus and of God's love on to others.



Together session four: **COMMUNITY CRUNCH**

You will need: 400g chocolate; things to mix into the chocolate (eg marshmallows, crushed-up biscuits, dried fruit, Rice Krispies, cornflakes, nuts, coconut), greaseproof paper; 20cm square tin

Melt the chocolate in the microwave or in a bowl over a pan of simmering water. Get everyone to choose something to add to the mixture and let them stir in a tablespoon or more of it (depending on how many people there are). When the chocolate additions ratio is just about right in the group's opinion, pour the mixture into your tin, lined with greaseproof paper. Let the mixture set and then cut it onto pieces to share. Use this craft to open up conversation about everyone making a contribution to the church community and sharing together in what those contributions make. You might also link the sweetness of the rocky road to the joy that the early Church had when they came together to worship!