



# The early Church



**MEETING AIM**

To see the way the early Church lived and worshipped together.



**BIBLE PASSAGE**

Acts 2:42-47; 4:32-37



**BACKGROUND**

After the day of Pentecost, there were suddenly a whole lot of new followers of Jesus, and this number continued to rise. The believers began to organise themselves to carry out the mission Jesus had left them. Members of this group were radical in their love for one another and for those that society would have considered to be at the bottom of the heap. They expressed their love in sacrificial ways, and saw more and more people come to faith in Jesus.

**+ CIRCLE TIME**



As you begin the session, invite the children to sit together in a circle and pass around a simple object. When a child has the object, they can share their response to the question. Sometimes it's helpful to have a sand timer so you have time for each person to share if they want to. If a child doesn't want to say anything they can just pass the object on. Ask the children to think of times this week when they shared something or someone shared with them.

**+ WORD PLAY**



**You will need:** card; marker pen; scissors

Before the session, write the letters of the following words either on separate cards, or the whole word on one piece of card and cut it up like a jigsaw. Show the children the letters or pieces and challenge them to work out what the words are. Use these words: TEACHING, MEETING, EATING, PRAYING, MIRACLES, SHARING, GROWING.

**+ BIBLE STORY**



**You will need:** words from Word play

Tell the children this story:

After Pentecost, there were lots more Jesus followers and the disciples started the first churches. They looked a bit different from the churches we go to. A lot of what they did happened in their own homes. They didn't have a worship band or organist, hymn books, or a projector to put the song words on. They didn't have Sunday school, a youth club or any of the things we take for granted as part of church. In Acts 2, it tells us what they did do, and you've made the words that will tell us.

*As you talk about each thing, get the children to show the relevant word. When you have said a little bit about each thing, ask the group to come up with an action for that activity. Add the actions one by one, so that at the end everyone can tell you the key activities of the early church.*

**Teaching:** The first followers of Jesus knew it was important that they were taught by the people who had been with Jesus when he was on earth, so they listened carefully to what they were taught.

**Meeting:** The first followers of Jesus were friends. They hung out together and encouraged each other in this new adventure they were beginning.

**Eating:** This was really important to the first churches. When they sat down together to eat, it meant they could spend time together. It also meant that everyone got fed. There would have been rich and poor Jesus followers.

**Praying:** This is just talking to God and it was very important to Jesus' first followers to do that. Prayer is a conversation. God was also talking to them!

**Miracles:** The Bible says that loads of unbelievable stuff happened through the first followers of Jesus. They had been filled with the Holy Spirit and that meant God worked through them to do incredible things.

**Sharing:** The Bible tells us the believers had everything in common. That meant they put all their stuff in the middle and shared it out between everyone. Remember some of them were rich and some were poor, just as we are today. Sharing everything showed the world that Jesus' followers really loved each other.

**Growing:** At the end of this bit that describes the first church, the Bible says more and more people came to join in, every single day.

*Recap all your actions at the end of the story.*

**+ CHATTING TOGETHER**



Ask the children these questions, encouraging everyone to take turns to contribute:

- What are your favourite bits about church?
- Do we still do all the things the first church did as part of the way we do church?
- Why do you think it was so important to God that his people shared all their stuff?
- Is it easy to share our things?
- Why do you think the early Church grew so quickly?

**+ CREATIVE RESPONSE**



**You will need:** a large paper heart; smaller hearts in the same colour; pens; Blu-Tack.

In Acts 4:32, it says all the believers were one in heart and mind. Ask everyone to draw themselves and write their name on one of the small paper hearts. Talk about the fact that we are all precious to God and have different thoughts and ideas. Say that the early church members were one in heart and mind. They were all individuals, but when they came together they decided to agree and work together. They also shared all their stuff. We can be one in heart and mind with each other today. If each person wants to be one in heart and mind with the rest of the group, they can stick their heart onto the larger heart.

**+ PRAYER**



The early Church shared with one another. They shared their money and stuff, but they also shared their gifts and abilities. Ask each person to think what they could share with the group. Perhaps they'd like to make cakes for everyone one week, or maybe they want to help other people or make others smile, or use their musical gifts to help everyone sing together. Demonstrate a simple prayer: "Father God, I want to share my ... with everyone. Please help me." Invite the children to pray similar prayers.

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