

Help Spread the Gospel: *Why do I need to go to church?*

LESSON AT A GLANCE

Facilitator Notes:

- For Your Journey episodes can be found on the [NAC USA YouTube](#) channel and in the [NAC USA mobile app](#)
- Hard copies of the THRIVE Membership Expectations booklet should be available at your congregation. Online versions can be found at www.nac-usa.org → "Welcome" → "Thriving in your faith" and in the [NAC USA mobile app](#) under "Tools"

I wonder...

- Why does God want us to come together?
- What does the divine service offer?
- As a member of the New Apostolic Church, what does God expect from me?

I believe...

- Christians desire and need to worship God in fellowship with one another. (Catechism Q&A question 367, 613, 681)
- The divine service is an encounter between God and man. (Catechism Q&A question 367, 370, 613, 624, 626)
- I am expected to THRIVE. (Catechism Q&A question 628)

Materials:

- IGNITE Bible
- Catechism Q&A
- For Your Journey
 - [Episode 7 - Why go to church?](#)
- Pictures of St. Paul's Cathedral in London, Roussanou Monastery in Greece, and the New Apostolic Church in Tafelsig, South Africa (search Google Images)
- THRIVE Membership Expectations booklet

References:

- Catechism Q&A questions 367, 370, 613, 624, 626, 628, 681
- Bible: Matthew 16:18, Hebrews 10:24-25
- THRIVE Membership Expectations booklet

PRE DISCUSSION MESSAGE TO PARENTS AND STUDENT (TO BE SENT VIA EMAIL OR TEXT)

With the use of technology, you can virtually do anything from the palm of your hand including watching a divine service from your device. So, why do I need to go to church?

POST DISCUSSION MESSAGE TO PARENTS (TO BE SENT VIA EMAIL OR TEXT)

<p>Facilitator Notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please feel free to add local information and customize as necessary • Consider including a link to one of the For Your Journey episodes listed in the "References" section above for families to watch together and use as a conversation starter. 	<p>Dear Parents,</p> <p>This week the "I Wonder..." questions are why should I go to church, what does the congregational experience offer, and what does God expect from me? As a parent, you may experience a time when your son/daughter does not want to go to church. What do you do? Do you demand they go? Do you give in and let them stay home? In this lesson, the youth discussed the benefits of the congregational experience and the positive impact it can have on their faith. Ask your son/daughter what their favorite part of the divine service / the congregational experience is, and how they encounter God in that moment. As always, if you have questions about the topic, feel free to contact us.</p> <p>Your Youth Leaders</p>
<p>SUNDAY SERMON REFLECTIONS (up to 10 minutes)</p>	
<p>Facilitator Notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow 2-3 students to share their reflections. For larger groups, vary who shares from week to week. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ What Bible verse was used for the basis of last Sunday's sermon? ➤ What were some of the main takeaways? What did you learn? ➤ So far this week, how have you applied what you learned from the sermon last Sunday? ➤ Going forward, how will you apply what you learned from the sermon last Sunday?
<p>HOOK (up to 15 minutes)</p>	
<p>Facilitator Notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Allow 2-3 students to share their reflections. For larger groups, vary who shares from week to week. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ How are you and how are you feeling today? ➤ Who would like to share their point to ponder or call to action from last week? <p>Read the following statement and ask students to fill in the blank:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ In the field of _____ Christianity has been the single greatest influence, in the past two millennia. (Ortberg) ➤ Allow students to share their answers, and then reveal the real answer: Architecture <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Share a Google image of London's St. Paul Cathedral, the Roussano Monastery in Greece, the New Apostolic Church in Tafelsig, South Africa
<p>SET THE STAGE (1 minute)</p>	
<p>Facilitator Notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preview the "I wonder" questions with the students. 	<p>I wonder...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Why does God want us to come together? ➤ What does the congregational experience offer? ➤ As a member of the NAC, what does God expect from me? ➤

LESSON (up to 25 minutes)

Facilitator Notes:

- **Matthew 16:18:** "And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it."

Read Matthew 16:18. This is the first place in the Bible where the word "church" is used in the New Testament. The word church comes from the Greek word "ekklesia", which means "an assembly of believers and/or the whole body of the faithful believers, or congregation". Today, when we use the word "church", we may often think of the physical building, but Christ meant it as the community of believers.

Student Question #1 For what two purposes do you think Christ created the church?

- For believers to come together to praise and worship God
- For making salvation and eternal fellowship with God accessible to mankind (Catechism Q&A question 370)

Facilitator Notes:

- **Hebrews 10:24-25**
 And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, ***not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together***, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.

Student Question #2 Why do you think God wants us to praise and worship together?

- Everyone's experiences of faith and relationship with God is unique. When we share those experiences, we learn more about each other, and we learn more about our God from each other.
- When we praise and worship together, we are professing our belief in God and the Lord Jesus. This unifies us as a congregation.
- Reference Hebrews 10:24-25, with emphasis added

The church building became a place for the believers to gather to praise and worship God and to experience His word and sacrament. God is present in the divine service and the divine service liturgy allows us to experience an encounter with God.

Student Question #3:

Work with a partner and discuss how you can encounter God (feel/experience His presence) during this time in the divine service

- Give students 10-12 minutes to work together. Be sure to listen as they work. If they struggle responding, prompt them by saying "What is the purpose of this moment in the divine service?"

- Singing hymns of praise and worship (give each pair of students a hymnal)
- Hearing the message from the altar
- Praying individually, and as a congregation
- Participating in Holy Communion

Come back together and share answers. The following points should be mentioned:

- **Singing hymns of praise and worship:**
 - This is one way we can praise and worship God.
 - Singing reminds us of the gospel message, and how much God loves us and does for us.
 - Tells God through song that we believe in Him and His Son, and expresses our love to them.
 - Can express feelings that we have that we are not able to put into words.

- **Hearing the sermon message from the altar:**
 - God reveals His will and His way in order for us to transform our nature into the nature of Christ.
 - God reveals His plan of salvation.
 - Reminds us of the Gospel message of hope of an eternal life with the triune God.
 - Provides words of strength, comfort, and wisdom.
- **Praying individually, and/or as a congregation**
 - Individual prayer is a moment of intimate conversation with God.
 - Congregational prayer is a unified call or cry to God.
 - Congregational prayer can speak a prayer on our behalf, when we don't know what or how to pray. We can feel God's love through the prayers of those around us.
- **Participating in Holy Communion**
 - This is a moment when we stand before Christ and He reminds us "This I did for you."
 - As a congregation, we come with thankfulness and in remembrance of His sacrifice.
 - The Lord Jesus invites us to come despite our sinful nature, and eat and drink at His table. This provides us the strength to fight against our sinful nature.

Summarize by telling the students: Everyone's responses are a little different, but when we experience these moment together and share our encounters with God with each other, we learn so much more about our God, about our neighbor, and about our faith, than if we would do this all on our own.

As a member of the New Apostolic Church USA, you are expected to: THRIVE

THRIVE is an acronym that outlines the expectations for a New Apostolic Church member. It is also the foundation of the Youth Small Group discussion material. You've experienced the T semester, *Transform your nature using Jesus as your example*, and are in the middle of the H semester, *Help Spread the Gospel*.

Divide the group into 2 groups and give each group a printout of the THRIVE acronym, or give them a physical THRIVE Membership booklet, or help them find the content in the NAC USA mobile app.

Give them a few minutes to read through the acronym and the supporting bullets and Bible verses.

Bring the group back together, and ask them some combination of the questions on the following page:

	<p>THRIVE Membership Booklet follow up questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did they know there are expectations of members? • What expectations were they aware of, what expectations were new to them? • Which expectation(s) do they feel they are practicing and which do they need to work on? • Could you THRIVE without going to church?
WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME? (up to 10 minutes)	
<p>Facilitator Notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For Your Journey episodes can be found on the NAC USA YouTube channel <u>and</u> in the NAC USA mobile app 	<p>Wrap up the lesson with why going to church is necessary.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Watch For Your Journey <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Episode 7 - Why go to church? <p>Close with the "I Wonder...." questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Ask a student to read an "I Wonder...." question, and invite another student to answer with an "I Believe...." statement or an "I Believe....." statement in their own words. ➤ As you review each question and answer, stop and check in with the group to be sure there are no misunderstandings or misconceptions. ➤ Remind the students that on their Confirmation day, they will or have already promised and committed to surrendering themselves to God. <p>I wonder...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Why does God want us to come together? ➤ What does the divine service offer? ➤ As a member of the New Apostolic Church, what does God expect from me? <p>I believe...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Christians desire and need to worship God in fellowship with one another. (Catechism Q&A question 367, 613, 681) ➤ The divine service is an encounter between God and man. (Catechism Q&A question 367, 370, 613, 624, 626) ➤ I am expected to THRIVE. (Catechism Q&A question 628) <p>Point to Ponder....</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Think about the different moments in the divine service and choose one to pray about so you will recognize and feel God's presence more. <p>A Call to Action....</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Leave your cell phone in the car next Sunday, so you can completely engage in every moment of the divine service experience. Be prepared to share how this was different from previous Sundays.

THRIVE Membership Expectations – NAC USA

Transform your nature, using Jesus as your example, by...

- Exemplifying the fruit of the Spirit as Jesus did. Use them to measure your spiritual maturity. (Galatians 5:22-23)
- Forgiving as Jesus forgave, unconditionally and fully (Matthew 6:12, 18:21-22, Luke 17:3)
- Being engaged and present when celebrating Holy Communion to experience its transformational power. (1 Corinthians 11:24)

Help spread the Gospel by...

- Sharing how God's plan of salvation has impacted you. (2 Timothy 2:2, Ephesians 1:13)
- Being a disciple of Jesus Christ. (John 13:34-35)
- Living and leading like Jesus, in word and deed. (Colossians 3:17)

Respond to the call to serve by...

- Discovering and developing your spiritual gifts and engaging in the congregation by using those gifts. (Ephesians 4:11-16)
- Edifying the Body of Christ by acknowledging and appreciating the gifts of others. (1 Corinthians 12:4-27)
- Showing your love for Jesus through helping your family, congregation, community, and those in need. (Luke 10:30-37, Matthew 25:35-40, Mark 9:35)
- Directly serving Jesus Christ. (Romans 14:17-19)

Invest in your spiritual health by...

- Praying. Prayer cultivates a relationship with God and helps deepen your knowledge of Him and yourself. (Colossians 4:2)
- Reading and studying the Bible. The Holy Scripture is inspired by God's word and equips us for righteousness. (2 Timothy 3:16-17)
- Actively partaking in the divine service experience and celebrating the presence of the Triune God, allowing the encounter to transform your daily life. (Romans 10:17, 1 Corinthians 11:23-29)
- Continually pursuing knowledge of the Triune God through the Gospel so that your thinking is not static, but is constantly renewed. (Romans 12:2, John 17:3)
- Worshipping together. (Psalm 29:2, 1 Chronicles 29:10-15)

Value the Church by...

- Giving voluntary offerings to God in appreciation and thanksgiving for that which He has provided for you. (1 Chronicles 29:9, Luke 21:1-4)
- Tithing and expressing your desire to participate in the church of Christ which God has established. (2 Corinthians 9:7, Matthew 10:8)
- Engaging in intentional community by sharing your life and spiritual journey with others through fellowship. (Acts 2:42-47, 1 John 1:3, 1 Corinthians 12:25-27)
- Praying for others. (Philippians 2:3-4, Galatians 6:2)

Embrace the promise of Jesus Christ's return by...

- Being future-oriented and focusing on His promise. (Philippians 3:12-14)
- Preparing for it by applying the Gospel to every part of your life. (John 14:3)

Weekly Reflections

What Bible verse was used for the basis of last Sunday's sermon?

What were some of the main takeaways? What did you learn?

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Going forward, how will you apply what you learned from the sermon last Sunday?

Point to Ponder...

Call to Action...

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1. For what two purposes do you think Christ created the church?

2. Why do you think God wants us to praise and worship together?

3. How you can encounter God (feel/experience His presence) during these different moments in the divine service?

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- Hearing the sermon message from the altar
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Point to Ponder: Think about the different moments in the divine service and choose one to pray about so you will recognize and feel God's presence more.

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