

Lesson 7: Members of Christ's church

Aims for each learner:

- Be committed to join the local group of believers.
- Learn three descriptions of Christ's church from 1 Peter 2.
- Memorize 1 Peter 2:9.
- Be able to find different passages in 1 Peter.

Cultural clues:

- Two special stones
- Healing a divided identity
- Ummah
- Weighing up the risk

Prepare: Lego or other building blocks, one large brick or base plate for a 'cornerstone'. See introduction.

Opening

Pray for the meeting. Review last week's practical task: Did you manage to spend dedicated time with God each day? Did it help you keep close to your heavenly Father? For those who didn't manage it, what were the obstacles? How could you overcome them this week?

Lesson 7 home study review:

Question 1: a) house; b) chosen; c) family

Question 2: Jesus Christ

Question 3: chosen people, royal priesthood, holy nation, God's special possession, declare the praises, called you out of darkness into his wonderful light (1 Peter 2:9).

Introduce today's topic: *Tip out some Lego or other building blocks of mixed colour or size.*

-  Can anyone live in this pile? No- the bricks need to be joined together to make a house! Put down a large brick or base plate and together start to build a house with different bricks. Today, we will learn about Christ's community - the church, or the community of believers.

Discussion

Introduction (Questions 1-2)

Question 1: Read the account of Majid, the speech bubble and question 1.

- What did you think of Majid? What did you write for question 1? *In some countries Christ's followers from Muslim background can meet freely; in other places it may be dangerous.*
- Read the teacher's speech bubble after question 2.

A spiritual house (Questions 3-10)

Question 3: Turn to 1 Peter 2:4-8 *Ask one person to read.*

-  In v.5 what are we, the living stones, being built into?
- Verses 6 and 7 describe a 'cornerstone'. What part does a cornerstone play in a building?
- Who do you think is the precious cornerstone described here? *Jesus Christ, who is chosen by God (v.6) and precious to his followers (v.7) but rejected by others (v.7) who will be judged by him (v.8).*

Check each learner can find the place. 'a spiritual house'.

It sits at a bottom corner and sets the direction for all the walls. Point to the base corner at the bottom of the lego building.

If appropriate for your group, contrast our Cornerstone with the black stone which is the centrepiece of Islam's prayer ritual.

Question 6: Read the last paragraph.

- What is the correct answer? b)
- In our town, what are the best places for Christ's followers to meet? *Discuss options.*

In some countries, there is no institutional church, in other countries there are plenty of places for believers to meet. Even so, a fellowship group of Christ's followers from Muslim background might choose to meet in a home, not a church building.

Question 7: Read the second paragraph, beginning with 'The Lord Jesus told his followers...'

- Here today, are we at least two or three people gathered in Jesus' name?
- So, is Jesus present with us in a special way? *We can't see him, but he is with us by his Spirit.*
- Have you sensed his presence when you meet with other believers to worship? (see Q.9)

A chosen people (Questions 11-18)

Read 1 Peter 2:9-10: Which phrase in verse 9 do you like the most, and why?

- How does verse 10 make you feel? *It means a lot to some believers of Muslim background because it assures them so strongly of their new identity in Christ and his community.*



Who are we? A game to practise the memory verse, **1 Peter 2:9**. Ask one person, 'who are we?' They answer 'a chosen people'. That person asks the next person 'who are we?' and the answer is 'a royal priesthood' and so on. Repeat it round the group, until everyone is confident with the phrases.

Question 14: Read the entire question.

- From what different nationalities or ethnic groups have you met Christ's followers?
- What do you find in common with them?
- In your situation, is it better to meet just with believers of your own ethnic group or in a mixed group?

Like these different coloured/sized bricks we are all different, but we are all needed to make a beautiful worldwide community of believers.

There are practical advantages of both, and different ways to combine both. Discuss these options.

Question 15: Read the first part of the question.

- According to this verse, to what has God called us?
- For what purpose has God chosen us?
- Therefore, what should we do?

Out of darkness, into light.

To 'declare his praises', see verse 9.

Tell other people about God's great deeds and his goodness.

Question 16: Look at this picture. These two brave ladies know that Christ called them to shine for him. What opportunity do you have to tell anyone about God's wonderful deeds?

A family (Questions 19-22)

Question 22: Read the question. Discuss the questions in bold.

- **Read the teacher's speech bubble.** How would you describe yourself and your faith to your Muslim family?
- Would you prefer to tell them 'I have become a Christian' or 'I am a follower of Jesus Messiah' or something else?
- What would these different terms mean to them and other Muslims?

If we obey God's Word we will accept one another as brothers and sisters in Christ. We don't lose our ethnic or social identity but our identity in Christ is even stronger.

In some contexts, the word 'Christian' is associated with alcohol, pork, sexual promiscuity and being anti-Muslim. In other contexts, there may be a more accurate understanding of 'Christian'. The Bible uses various terms to refer to believers. Our choice of labels is personal and depends on our situation.

Do you need Christ's church? (Questions 23-25)

Question 24: Read the entire question. What did you write here?

- What about Majid, do you think he can keep warm as Christ's follower without others?
- Look again at what you wrote in Q.1. After today, what advice would you give to Majid?

Question 25: Like the house we built, we need strong links to be a strong community of Christ.

- How can we continue building this community here?
- What opportunities do you have or can you make to meet with other followers of Christ?

Conclusion

Obeying today's teaching: What difference will today's lesson make in your life?

- **Read together the practical task.**
- Do you have at least one other believer to meet with this week? *If someone doesn't, they could meet with someone else from the group, or with you.*

Pray together:

Thank God for our brothers and sisters in Christ and ask him to help us trust one another.
Ask God that he would build us into a strong spiritual community.