

# 15



## GOD'S FAMILY GATHERING

### The Church Service

YEAR 2 – KINGDOM LIFE

UNIT 5: KINGDOM FAMILY

## 1 | Teacher's Notes

**Scripture** Matthew 18:20; Revelation 4, 5, 7; Liturgical elements from the Anglican Tradition which is deeply rooted in Scripture.

**Objectives** To explain that

- Today's story is about Kingdom Family.
- The Church is the Family of God. God is our Father, and we are his children. In our church service each Sunday we participate in the story of God's family gathering.
- In our church service, we join **with** the heavenly worship.
- The purpose of our church service, our Family Gathering, is to be with God and God's family, to worship God together with the angels and all God's family in Heaven and on earth, and to be cleansed and fed with spiritual food so we can be strengthened to go out and serve God in the world.

**Memory Verse** Jesus said: "For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them."  
(Matthew 18:20 - NIV)

**ACNA Catechism Connections** Today's story of God's Family Gathering is connected to the following Catechism questions:

Q92 What is the Church? The Church is the whole community of faithful Christians in heaven and on earth, called and formed by God into one people. The Church on earth gathers to worship God in Word and Sacrament, to serve God and neighbor, and to proclaim the Gospel to the ends of the earth.

Q93 How does Holy Scripture teach you to view the Church? Holy Scripture teaches me to view the Church as God's family, as the Body and bride of Christ, and as the temple where God in Christ dwells by his Spirit.

Q100 Who are the saints? The saints are all those in heaven and on earth who place their faith in Jesus Christ, who are set apart, holy to God in Christ, and transformed by his grace.

Q102 What is the "communion of the saints"? The communion of the saints is the fellowship of all those, in heaven and on earth, who are united in Christ as one Body, through one Spirit, in Holy Baptism.

Q103 How do you participate in the communion of the saints? I live as a member of the communion of saints through faith in Jesus Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit by gathering to worship God with my fellow Christians, by praying for and encouraging one another, and by coming to one another's aid in times of trouble, sickness, or grief.

Q104 How are the Church on earth and the Church in heaven joined in worship? Through union with Christ, as celebrated in the sacrament of Holy Communion, the Church on earth participates with the Church in heaven in the eternal worship of God.

Q167 Why does Jesus teach us to pray "our" Father? Jesus teaches us always to understand ourselves not only as individuals but as members of God's family of believers, and to pray accordingly.

Q208 How can the Church help you to resist temptation? In the fellowship of Christ's Body, I can find companionship when I am lonely or vulnerable, support to resist ungodly influence, wisdom to guard me from folly, exhortation to grow in holiness, and discipline to correct me when I fall into error.

Q216 What are angels? Angels are rational, spiritual beings created by God. God's holy angels joyfully serve him in heavenly worship, and God appoints them to act as messengers, bringing words of guidance and assurance to the faithful, and assisting and protecting them.

Q228 How should you "hear" the Bible? I should hear the Bible through regular participation in the Church's worship, in which I join in reciting Scripture, hear it read and prayed, and listen to its truth proclaimed.

Q244 What is liturgy? Liturgy is an established pattern or form for the worship of God by God's people. The liturgy leads us in the remembrance of God's mighty acts and unites us in grateful response.

Q245 Why do Anglicans worship with a structured liturgy? Anglicans worship with a structured liturgy because it embodies biblical patterns of worship, fosters reverence and love for God, deepens faith in Jesus Christ, and is in continuity with the practices of Israel and the Early Church.

Q246 Does structured liturgy inhibit sincere and vibrant worship? No. A structured liturgy provides sincere worshipers biblical language and forms that train our hearts for worship. Liturgy enables us to worship God joyfully and with one voice.

Q365 How does the Church assist in your sanctification? The Church's joyful worship, faithful teaching, grace-filled sacraments, Gospel-shaped calendar, compassionate ministry, loving discipline, and caring fellowship all assist my growth in Christ and are channels of God's abundant care for my soul.

**Suggested  
Materials,  
Props, and  
Costumes**

**Big story props:**

- Large Bible
- Kingdom Life storyboard (see photo)

**Lesson Props:** (see Props Document for instructions on how to make these)

- The Prayer of Confession
- The Doxology (or another worship song)
- Posters for the 6 stations (found in props document)
- Storyboard complete with peg people from last lesson
- Storyboard symbols: 2 pictures of angels

**Memory Verse:** Jesus said: "For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them." (Matthew 18:20 - NIV)

(Found on the last page of this lesson plan) Print out and place in large Bible.

## 2 | Lesson Outline:

<b>Welcome</b>	As the children arrive ensure each one is personally welcomed and everyone knows each other's name.
<b>Greeting &amp; Collect for Purity</b>	Light the candles Say the Greeting and Collect for Purity ( <i>see Resource Section</i> )
<b>Prayer of Confession</b>	Say the Prayer of Confession ( <i>see Resource Section</i> ) Extinguish the candles
<b>Music</b>	Big Family of God - Nick and Becky Drake (with actions: worshipforeveryone.com) Come and Go with Me to my Father's House The Doxology <b><i>Please check internet for lyrics and music.</i></b>
<b>Review of foundations</b>	Choose from the following as appropriate: The Lord's Prayer, The Apostles Creed, The Ten Commandments or The Greatest Commandment. <b><i>For more information on how to teach these, see Resource Section</i></b>
<b>Reading</b>	Memory verse (Printed out and placed in large Bible – invite older child to read)
<b>Story Board Review</b>	Ask review questions relating to props from previous lessons on story board. <b><i>Story board review is found in Section 4</i></b>
<b>Props/Costumes</b>	Take a few moments to arrange the narrator and actors. (Props should already be set up prior to the start of the class.) <b>Big story props:</b> Large Bible, Kingdom Life storyboard
<b>Bible Story</b>	<b><i>Proceed with story and questions found in Section 4.</i></b>
<b>Related activities</b>	<b><i>After the story, proceed with related activities found in Section 5.</i></b>
<b>Preparation for Communion &amp; leaving class</b>	Gather the children together for the Preparation for Communion prayer before exiting the classroom. <b><i>See Resource Section.</i></b>

### 3 | Storyboard Progression



This is how the storyboard should look at the start of the lesson.



This is how the Knowing God section should look at the end of the lesson. After the lesson, leave the peg dolls, angels, and all the other symbols on the storyboard for next week.

## 4 | Story and Questions

**SETUP:** *Set up six teaching stations around the room, with one of the posters for each station. Have the Doxology, the memory verse, and the prayer of confession placed at the appropriate stations as outlined in the lesson. Set up a separate teaching station with the Kingdom Life storyboard, complete with peg people (see photo). Start the lesson by the storyboard.*

**BIBLE:** *Hold up the Bible and say: 'Today's story is from the Bible, and it is about God's Kingdom Family, the Church.'*

### **STORYBOARD REVIEW:**

We have learned that the Body of Christ can mean: 1) the bread we receive in Holy Communion, and 2) the Church (*point to peg people*) who are all the people who follow Jesus. Together we are The Body of Christ and Jesus is our head. (*Point to Jesus.*) Each one of us has an important part to play in the Body of Christ, the Church.

### **STORY:**

**TEACHER:** Today we are going to have a look at 6 posters that talk about our church service. Each of these posters is going to show us something **important** and **wonderful** that happens when God's family, the Church, gathers together.

The Bible tells us that God is our Father and we, the Church, are his children. That makes us brothers and sisters in God's family. Just as we gather together in our homes with our family, we also gather together in our church with our church family.

**ACTION:** *Lead the children to the first station called "The Gathering" and look at the poster with them as you say:*

#### *1. THE GATHERING*

**TEACHER:** Let's look at the first poster. What do you see? (*Open doors, people in the pews, the altar set with bread and wine, candles that are lit.*) This part of our church service is called "The Gathering". It begins as the family of God **gathers** together in the church sanctuary, which is our Heavenly Father's house. We leave

the distractions and activities of the world behind us, and enter through the **doors** into our Father's house, which is a sacred and holy space. How do you think we should enter into this holy space? (*With respect, quietly, prayerfully etc.*)

Now look at the rest of the picture. We can see the **altar** in the sanctuary. The altar is often called the table of the Lord. It is where our spiritual food, the Eucharist, is placed. When we see the lit **candles**, we are reminded that Jesus is here with us and that he is the Light of the World.

**ACTION:** Move to station #2.

### *2. JOINING IN THE HEAVENLY WORSHIP:*

**TEACHER:** What do you see in this picture? (*Heavenly worship with angels, the church sanctuary with people worshipping, some people wearing white robes.*) This picture reminds us that the angels are in continual worship in Heaven. Angels are spiritual beings created by God. The Bible tells us that the angels sometimes are sent by God to help believers here on earth, or to deliver special messages from God to us. The Bible also tells us that the angels and the saints are worshipping and adoring God, and they are doing the perfect will of God in Heaven.

The people in the front, wearing white robes, remind us that we are joining **our** worship with the worship that is **always** going on in Heaven, where the saints and angels see Jesus face-to-face. As we worship and sing in our church service, we are joining in **with** the Heavenly worship. Isn't that wonderful? We worship God through the words we say and the songs we sing. Let's stand up and sing a worship song now.

**ACTION:** Sing "The Doxology" (or another song) with the children.

**TEACHER:** That song was very special! We have gathered together in worship, speaking to God through singing and prayers. And God speaks to us, particularly through the Bible. Let's move to the next poster.

**ACTION:** Move to station #3.

### *3. FEEDING ON GOD'S WORD*

**TEACHER:** What do you see in this picture? (*A Bible*) When we hear teaching from the Bible, we are hearing and feeding on the Word of God. This is our Kingdom

Food, that will strengthen us and help us to love Jesus and become more like him. Let's hear the Word of God now. Who would like to read our memory verse?

**ACTION:** Ask a child to read the memory verse from the Bible.

Then move to station #4.

#### *4. PREPARING OUR HEARTS*

**TEACHER:** What do you see in this picture? (*Children praying, the Prayer of Confession.*) Before we go to the table of the Lord for Holy Communion, we need to have our **hearts** cleansed from sin. When we pray the Prayer of Confession, our hearts are cleansed, and we are made ready to receive the Body and the Blood of Christ.

Let's pray the Prayer of Confession now.

**ACTION:** Pray the Prayer of Confession with the children.

Then go to Station #5.

#### *5. FEEDING ON THE EUCHARIST*

**TEACHER:** What is this picture about? (*The bread and the chalice of wine.*) After we have prayed the Prayer of Confession, we are ready to come to the table of the Lord and be fed in the Eucharist, or Holy Communion. Everything we have done in our church service (our gathering) so far, has prepared us for this very special moment.

In Holy Communion we remember Jesus and meet with him in a special way. We receive his life into us through the bread and the wine of the Eucharist, the body and blood of Christ.

Let's review what has happened so far: we have 1) gathered together, 2) worshipped with the angels and the saints, 3) fed on God's Word, 4) prepared our hearts through the Prayer of Confession and 5) been spiritually fed in Holy Communion. We have been refreshed and we are now ready to go back into the world to do the work that God has given us to do.

**ACTION:** Move to station #6.

### *6. THE DISMISSAL*

**TEACHER:** In this picture we see the people following behind a cross and walking toward the doors. We are now near the end of our church service, and we thank our Heavenly Father for feeding us with spiritual food. The priest dismisses us with the blessing, and the deacon says: "Go in peace to love and serve the Lord." Then we follow out behind the cross, leaving the sanctuary, out of our Father's house and into the world, ready to share the good news of Jesus with people who do not know him.

Together, these pictures tell the story of God's Family Gathering that we participate in every Sunday. The adults do all these things in the sanctuary, and we do some of them in the sanctuary and some of them here in Sunday school.

When we gather together to worship God, these wonderful things happen!

Which parts of God's Family Gathering surprised you the most? *(Children respond)*

**TEACHER:** Let's finish our lesson by adding more symbols to our storyboard.

**ACTION:** *Have the children sit by the storyboard.*

**TEACHER:** Let's put these pictures of angels on our storyboard to remind us that in our church service we join **with** the worship that is already going on in Heaven. *(Place angels on storyboard as shown.)*

The purpose of our church service, our Family Gathering, is to be with God and God's family *(point to Trinity and peg people)*, to worship God together with the angels and all God's family in Heaven and on earth *(point to angels)*, and to be cleansed and fed with spiritual food *(point to Bible and Communion symbols)* so we can be strengthened to go out and serve God in the world.

#### **Life Application Prayer:**

**TEACHER:** Heavenly Father, thank you that you have made us part of your family. Thank you that you invite us to your family gathering every Sunday, where we can worship you with the angels and all your family in Heaven and on earth. Thank you that you cleanse us and feed us there with spiritual food through Bible teaching and Holy Communion so we can be strengthened to go out into the world to serve you. Amen.

**SUGGESTED QUESTIONS:**

- **What does this story tell us about God?** (God is our Father. We, the family of God, are his children.)
- What is the story we are participating in every Sunday in our church service? (The story of God's family gathering.)
- What do we do first in this story? (We enter into God's house to gather together with God's family.)
- What do the lit candles represent? (The presence of Jesus, the Light of the World.)
- What do we often call the altar? (The table of the Lord)
- Why do the people by the altar wear white? (Because they represent the worship that is going on in Heaven, where the angels and the people see Jesus face-to-face.)
- Do we join with the worship that is already going on in Heaven? (Yes.)
- How do we speak to God in our service? (Through prayers and songs.)
- How does God speak to us in our service? (Particularly through Bible reading and teaching.)
- What do we need to do before we come the Lord's table to eat? (We need to clean our hearts through confession.)
- What is the spiritual food we eat in God's Kingdom? (God's Word (the Bible), and Holy Communion.)
- At the end of the service, what does the priest send us out to do? (Serve God and share the Good News of Jesus with the world.)

## 5 | Response Activities

### **Kingdom News handout and colouring supplement**

- Have the children complete the activities in the Kingdom News handout and colouring supplement.

### **Optional activities**

- Different learning stations, such as: a book table, modelling clay, colouring papers

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gather in my name,  
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(Matthew 18:20)