



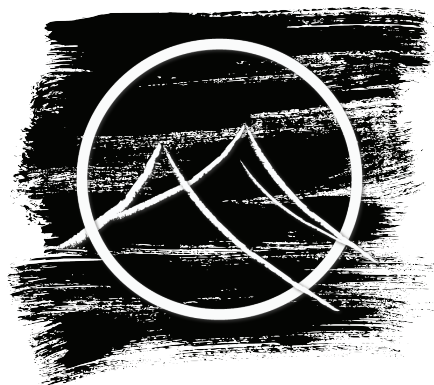
# Back to Church

## **SMALL GROUP STUDENT GUIDE**



Back  
to Church

A large, hand-drawn arrow pointing to the right, with the text "Back to Church" written in a cursive font across its shaft. The arrow is drawn with a thick, dark line, and the text is in a black, cursive script. The word "Back" is on the top line, "to" is on the middle line, and "Church" is on the bottom line. The arrow's shaft is a single continuous line that curves slightly upwards and then downwards to form the arrowhead.







# The Church is Believers

## Ice Breaker

Where did you go to church as a kid? Does the church still exist?

## Prayer

## Introduction

“Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her...”

**EPHESIANS 5:25**

## TAKEAWAY

The church is God’s plan for *faith in community.*

## Summary

## TAKEAWAY

The church exists as both the “Big C” Church and the “Little C” church.

## Let’s Talk About It

1. What is the church?
2. How has the “Little C” church impacted your life and the life of your family?
3. How does the church stay relevant in today’s environment?

## Purpose of the Local, “Small C” Church

Rick Warren, in *The Purpose Driven Church*, states that “these purposes are Worship, Fellowship, Discipleship, Ministry, and Mission”, and that they are derived from the Great Commandment (Matt. 22:37-40) and the Great Commission (Matt. 28:19-20).

### Definition of the Purposes:

**WORSHIP:** *Glorifying God through a variety of means. Worship is not limited to the Sunday morning Worship Center experience. It is not defined by musical style. Worship is a whole-life experience in which God is honored intentionally and purposefully by individuals and groups.*

**FELLOWSHIP:** *A connection to, and interaction with, the body of believers.*

**DISCIPLESHIP:** *Growing in the likeness and knowledge of one’s teacher. A disciple is a “learner” in New Testament terminology.*

**MINISTRY:** *Service to individuals and within the church.*

**MISSION:** *Ministry done (generally) outside the local church body with the intent of leading people to faith in Christ.*

Jesus replied: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”

## MATTHEW 22:37-40

## Let’s Talk About It

1. Which purposes of the church does this passage apply to?
2. How do you practice loving your neighbor?
3. Has your church equipped you to practice the Great Commandment?

Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

## MATTHEW 28:19-20

## Let’s Talk About It

1. Which purposes of the church does this passage apply to?
2. How do you put these verses into practice?

## Wrap Up





# The Church is Light/Visible

## Ice Breaker

Have you experienced spiritual darkness? What brought you back to the light?

## Prayer

## Introduction

### TAKEAWAY

The church is God's plan for *faith in community*.

### TAKEAWAY

Evil will prevail without the church.

There are many different ways that the Bible speaks about the struggle between good and evil.

For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.

**EPHESIANS 6:12-13**

Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.

**1 PETER 5:8**

The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

**JOHN 10:10**

"You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven."

**MATTHEW 5:14-16**

## Summary

From Sunday's message, we learned three truths about light:

1. Light is in battle with darkness.
2. Light points the way out of darkness.
3. Light changes the way we behave.

## Let's Talk About It

1. Are you battling with darkness? How can the church be the light for you?
2. When was the church a light for you?
3. Do people behave differently in the darkness?

## TAKEAWAY

The church must be light, that the world may see.

## Luke's "Light" Passage

"No one lights a lamp and hides it in a clay jar or puts it under a bed. Instead, they put it on a stand, so that those who come in can see the light."

**LUKE 8:16**

To all of us, Jesus simply says, "**You are the light of the world.**"

## Let's Talk About It

1. Describe a time when you were a light.
2. What do you think of the premise that the world is dark because we are not shining?
3. As the light of the world, are we being too quiet?

## Details about the Light

**The CAUSE** - *Jesus describes himself as the One who lights a lamp.*

**The COST** - *The purpose of light is to shine, but there is no shining without burning.*

**The CONCRETENESS** - *Letting our light shine is no abstract thing. It involves concrete behavior.*

**The CONSEQUENCE** - *God is glorified when our light shines.*

*Turn on the lights! It's time to shine, or else it'll be over soon. Are you ready to shine? The Church is not just any light, the Church (by God's grace) is the only light there is at all. As a member of Christ's Body, the Church, what are you doing to shine?*

## Let's Talk About It

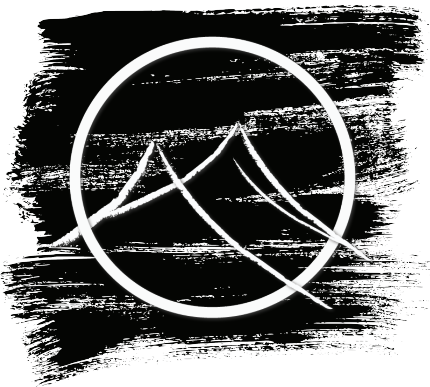
1. What do you do on a regular basis that allows Jesus to light your lamp?
2. Do you agree that there is a cost to being a light? What has it cost you?
3. What is one thing you can point to in your life that demonstrates that you are trying to be the light of Christ?
4. Describe a time that God was glorified by you being the light.

## Wrap Up

**YOU ARE THE**

**Light**

**OF THE WORLD**





# The Church is United

## Ice Breaker

When is the last time you were united with a group of people to support a particular cause?

## Prayer

## Introduction

Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.

In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus.

**PHILIPPIANS 2:1-5**

## Summary

### UNDERSTANDING UNITY

1. **The Power of Unity is NOT Discovered by Uniformity**
  - a. Unity in Christ and His church is **NOT** conformity, but diversity.
  - b. Unity in Christ and His church is **NOT** sameness, but variety. That's proven by the fact that God gives us all different spiritual gifts.
2. **The Power of Unity IS Discovered in Love**
  - a. *Love for Jesus.*
  - b. *Love for one another.*

"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

**JOHN 13:34-35**

### ENEMIES OF UNITY

Do nothing out of **selfish ambition** or **vain conceit**.

**PHILIPPIANS 2:3a**

1. **Selfish Ambition**
2. **Vain Conceit**

### ATTITUDE OF UNITY

Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.

**PHILIPPIANS 2:3b-4**

### TAKEAWAY

Jesus Christ and you are more important than my preferences.

### Let's Talk About It

1. What things in our church show that we are united in Christ?
2. In your opinion, does Fellowship of the Rockies take advantage of the variety and diversity of spiritual gifts present in our church?
3. Do you struggle with any of the enemies of unity?
4. How do we have the same mindset as Christ?

### Unity in the Body of Christ

As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

**EPHESIANS 4:1-6**

### ***Let's Talk About It***

1. How do we live a life worthy of the calling that we received?
2. What does it mean to bear with one another in love?
3. What is the "unity of the Spirit"? How are we to keep it?
4. What does "there is one body and one Spirit" mean?
5. How are we brought to complete unity?

### ***Wrap Up***

**BY THIS EVERYONE WILL KNOW THAT  
YOU ARE MY DISCIPLES:**

**IF YOU  
LOVE  
ONE ANOTHER**





