

St JME Self Study
STEP TWO: Developing a Mission and Vision Statement

Bible Study 2: CHURCH

Bible Study opportunities - Select ONE

DATE	TIME	FACILITATOR	MATERIALS
1. Sunday 3/5/17	10:00am	Mark Youngblood	provided at the meeting
2. Wednesday 3/8/17	7:30pm	Pastor David Parsons	ditto
3. Sunday 3/12/17	1:00pm	Georgeanne Karvunis	ditto
4. 3/5 - 3/18	_____	Self	digital download / email

SOURCES

This bible study has been adapted with minor changes from *Manual for Congregational Mission Planning*, 2013, SW Pennsylvania Synod, ELCA pp 8-10

Bible verses were retrieved 2/23/17 from
<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+2&version=NRSV>

New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

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Respond to this sentence BEFORE you start the study ...

My church centers its life around ...

Who is the “Church”? What is the “Church”?

Opening the book of faith: **ACTS 2:1-4, 37-47**

The Coming of the Holy Spirit

2 When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. **2** And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. **3** Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. **4** All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.

The First Converts

37 Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and to the other apostles, “Brothers,^[i] what should we do?” **38** Peter said to them, “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. **39** For the promise is for you, for your children, and for all who are far away, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to him.” **40** And he testified with many other arguments and exhorted them, saying, “Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.” **41** So those who welcomed his message were baptized, and that day about three thousand persons were added. **42** They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

Life among the Believers

43 Awe came upon everyone, because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles. **44** All who believed were together and had all things in common; **45** they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds^[j] to all, as any had need. **46** Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home^[k] and ate their food with glad and generous^[l] hearts, **47** praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

Asking Questions:

- What were the key beginning points for the forming of the church?
- Who is the promise of the gospel for?
- What was the shape of life in the early Christian community?
- What was the ongoing result of the work in the early church?
- Does the work of the early church have relevance for Christians in the 21st Century?
- How can this guide the shape of our life together as the Church today?

Food for thought

Compare your thoughts from the cover page to the description of the early church below:

My church centers its life around ...	The early church centered its life around ...
	Learning how to live out the gospel through the teaching of the apostles Gathering for fellowship Sharing in the Supper and prayers Helping all in any need Increasing in numbers

Your thoughts now ...

The early church was formed through Baptism and the Holy Spirit. We become the church through water and the Word through the Holy Spirit in Baptism. In the affirmation of faith / confirmation we recall our baptismal covenant:

The pastor addresses those making affirmation:

You have made public profession of your faith. Do you intend to continue in the covenant God made with you in Holy Baptism: to live among God's faithful people, to hear his Word and share in his supper, to proclaim the good news of God in Christ through word and deed, to serve all people, following the example of our Lord Jesus, and to strive for justice and peace in all the earth?

And the response is: I do, and I ask God to help and guide me. (ELW, 236)

- What similarities do you find with this description of faithful baptismal living and the life of the early church? And with the life your church is living now?

The church is those who are gathered for:

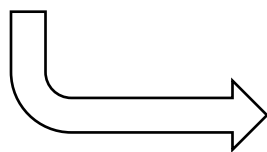
Worship (Word, Sacrament, Prayer)

Discipleship (teaching, learning, and living the Gospel)

Fellowship (coming together, common meals)

Ministry (Helping others, service)

Evangelism (Sharing the good news, adding others)



Ask yourself ... **where am I in this church?**

Closing prayer

God our creator, the resurrection of your Son offers life to all the peoples of the earth. By your Holy Spirit, kindle in us the fire of your love, empowering our lives for service and our tongues for praise, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. AMEN. Prayer of the Day, Day of Pentecost YEAR C

WORKSHEET PART 2

REFLECTION

In the workshop, **Part 2: Church on 3/19/17**, we will *reflect and share* the key ideas that we discerned from scripture, discussion, and the prayer from the biblical study of Church (3/5/17-3/18/17) in order to make a statement about the nature of our church community.

My thoughts ...

Write down YOUR statement about St JME and Who? or What? is THE CHURCH here so that we have some solid well developed ideas to discuss together on the 19th -

Statement: St JME is ...

Children's Study on The Church

If your child is old enough to read then consider letting them do the adult version of the study with you – the activities and coloring page are really geared for younger children.

A good activity is also to have them color in while having a discussion (see page 6.)

Refer to this **website or the pdf** for the children's lesson: (NOTE – Learning Activity #1 is the heart of the lesson, the other activities are not as important and can be included as time permits.)

<http://ministry-to-children.com/the-early-church-team-a-childrens-church-lesson/>

