

THE MISSION OF JESUS

EPISODE 3: BUILDING THE CHURCH

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

Main Points

Here are the big ideas you want people to understand:

- So far we've focused on two aspects of Jesus' mission: 1) proclaiming the good news of the arrival of God's kingdom, and 2) training a few disciples who would continue his work after he returned to the Father
- This week we'll examine a third aspect of his mission: building the church
- In the Bible, the word **church** is used to describe ***the people of Jesus joined together as his family and working together for his purposes***
- Jesus promised that he would build his church, his family of people on this earth who are living out his purposes together
- Each of us is called to be part of the church and to work to build the church

EXPLORING THE STORY

◀ Look Back

Before diving into this week's session, give the group a chance to share and catch up to see where each person is at. Start with the following:

1. One-up (or One-down)

Invite each person to share one thing that has happened over the past week that they are grateful for (or, they can share one thing that has been weighing on them)

2. Prayer

Have a time of prayer and thanksgiving based on what was shared

3. Review

Quickly summarize where we've been before moving into this week's story:

“ **Last week...** we learned that as Jesus traveled around *proclaiming* the good news that God's kingdom was arriving, he also focused on *training* a small number of disciples. This work of training a few was strategic because they were the ones who continued his work once Jesus returned to the Father.

▲ Look Up

Now that you've reviewed where we've been, shift to this week's episode.

4. Setting the Stage

“ Jesus trained a small *band of disciples* to continue his work after he returned to the Father. Before he left he told them to stay committed to each other (John 13.34-35) and to make more disciples (Matthew 28.18-20). This *group of believers* belongs to the Lord and is made up of disciples who are committed to each other and to serving the Lord together. It is known as the *church*.

As we read, be thinking about this:

- What does it mean to be the church?

5. Read **John 10.14-16** and then discuss:

- “
- How does Jesus describe himself in these verses?
 - How does he describe his people in these verses?

Read **Acts 20.28** and then discuss:

- “
- How is the church described in this verse?
 - Who does the church belong to?
 - Who is shepherding the church in this verse?

Read **Acts 2.36-47** and then discuss:

- “
- What were the 3000 new disciples “added” to? (vs. 41)
 - What did these new disciples devote themselves to? (vs. 42)
 - How often did the disciples in the early church spend time together?
 - How would you describe the early church based on these verses?

► Look Ahead

Help people process the implications of this week's reading and how they should apply its truths to the way they think and live.

6. Implications and Applications

- “
- How did today's lesson change your view of what *church* is and what it means to be part of the church?
 - What does it mean to *build* the church?
 - What is the one thing you will do this week to obey what you learned from today's lesson?

7. Closing Prayer