



Inquiry - Step 4

A people not a building

Aim

To explore what it means to belong to the faith community, the Church.

Resources needed

Leaders

- *Come and See session notes*
- *Laptop and projector or TV*
- *Wonders of the World Images*
- *Prayer focus items*
- *Large sheets of paper and pens*

For Young People

- *Journals*

Prayer Focus

Expressions of our belief:

Bible - (*God's word is with us*)

Candle - (*the light of Christ*)

Cloth - (*Appropriate to the Liturgical season*)

Divine Office - (*the world united in prayer*)

Bulletins - (*the living Church*)

Liturgical Link

The Church is far more than a building. The Church is the people of God gathered to give worship to God and to share in their desire grow in relationship with God with one another. It is a visible sign of God's presence.

Overview

- What is Church
- Becoming the People of God
- Getting in touch with God through wonder and nature
- Reflection and prayer – becoming one in Christ

Preparation by Catechists

- *Familiarise self with content and resources*
- *Sharing re your appreciation of being one of the people of God*
- *Pray for the young people and leaders*

Scripture Passages

Luke 19:1-10 The story of Zacchaeus

Tenets of Faith (Faith Formation)

- We are a pilgrim Church
- We are a world Church
- Individually and collectively we are called to be in relationship with God, through prayer.
- God accepts us as we are

Gathering

Setting

Create a welcoming environment by having everything in place before the young people arrive

- a sign in sheet
- name badges for each person to collect
- spares badges in case any extras turn up.

Welcome and Introduction

- Welcome the young people back.
- Introduce any here for the first time.
- Provide the context for the gathering.
- Outline the process, the aim and outline of the gathering for today.

Review Previous Gathering

Check if there are any questions or reflections arising from the previous gathering which need clarification.

Introductory Activity

What is the Church – (5 minutes)



On PowerPoint have 4 different images of Church.

For example: The Vatican, People prayerful on pilgrimage; people engaging at a social function; people engaged in an act of service.

- Invite the young people to look at the images and reflect on the conversations and experiences they have had with others about the Church.
- Working in 2's or 3's, ask the young people to identify their own understanding of what the Church is.
- Ask them to record their responses on one side of the A3 sheet of paper. Then ask them to identify society's understanding of Church and write the responses on the other side of the A4 sheet.
- Invite young people to hold up their sheets, and one person from each couple / group to share some of their thoughts. Catechist then draws together common threads.



Explain to the young people that yes, the Church is a building, and the structure of building varies tremendously but the Church is also an organisation. Like all other organisations it has a philosophy (way of living) expectations, rules and regulations. And most importantly it is a living the Church is a living organism, the people of God, the body of Christ.

As the people of God, we are all on a journey, and therefore Pilgrim People. This journey calls us to be united in our love of God, our care for one another and a commitment to deepen our relationship with Jesus, the way to God. The call is for all people across every nation of the world.

*The people of God believe that it is led by the Lord's Spirit, who fills the earth.
Motivated by this faith it labours to decipher authentic signs of God's*

presence and purpose in the happenings, needs and desires in which this people has a part along with other people of our age. For faith throws a new light on everything manifest by God's design for man's total vocation, and thus directs the mind to solutions which are fully human.

(*Gaudium Et Spes* 11)

- Invite the young people to think of the experiences they have had of being part of the Church, in school, with their family, or otherwise.
- How might these fit with the quote from *Gaudium Et Spes* These will lead into prayer, after which we will explore further the meaning of Church.

Opening Prayer

Leader Lord we are your people.
Thank you for the gift of ourselves.
When we want to be different, smarter, stronger, more popular our outgoing,
remind us that we are the way you created us.

Remind us too that all those around, however different they may seem,
were also created by you, and are loved by you, just as we are.

Thank you for the gift of your Church, a pilgrim people journeying to you.
People who inspire and encourage us along the way.

Lord, help all of us to be the best of what you created us to be.
We make this prayer through Christ our Lord, Amen.

Exploring

→ **Activity – Becoming the People of God:**

No family unit is perfect, nor is the Church. Though all Christians are called to grow in holiness, however, we do at times fail, by making poor choices and serious mistakes. The rClyp journey of faith has 5 distinct areas of focus. Each is designed to help us on this path to holiness through a growing appreciation of what the Church is and what being a disciple of Jesus requires.

- On the wall, or different tables have 5 large sheets of paper each representing one of the 5 different areas.
- **Being** – We have been created by God, How are we called to be in relationship with God the Father, Son and the Spirit?
- **Story** – What are the most important stories about Jesus life and teachings?
- **Liturgy** – What are the different kinds of prayer and worship of the Church?
- **Belonging** - What helps people to develop a sense of belonging to the Church?
- **Service** – What are the ways in which the Church serves its own community, and people in need? (also see p 5 of the *Perth 'Come & See' rClyp Introduction*)

- o Invite the young people to write down a couple of practical examples on each sheet.
- o Gather the group and look at the responses, noting common threads and any misunderstandings
- o If clarification is sort comment appropriately.

Explain to the young adults the five areas of focus.



Being

- belief in God as the creator of all
- willingness to share in the work of creation by getting to know God better
- learning more of the God story
- spending time in prayer and reflection

Story

Refer back to some of the stories about how Jesus befriended people. Remind the young people that

- Jesus taught through words and examples
- simplified the meaning of the 10 commandments into 2 – love God of God and love of neighbor [Matthew 23:34-40]. Like the original 10 these commandments are based on respect.

Liturgy

Each week at Sunday Mass we gather as a faith community to be reminded of the story of our faith.

- we listen to the word of God
- we remember the words and actions of Jesus at the last supper
- we remember his promise to be with us always
- we pray for the needs of our Church and
- we are sent out to live in God's love.

There are many other Liturgical celebrations through which the Church supports people to grow in faith in their daily life.

Belonging

People show they belong to Church by becoming involved in the life of the parish community

- o use the parish bulletin to show the rosters, and activities that offer ways of involving people in the life of the Church.

Service

All baptised Christians are called to help those who are in need. Service (help to those in need) is given from the parish

- by inviting people to come together through social events,
- by helping people grow stronger inn their faith through study groups and seminars,
- by reaching out to the sick and elderly by taking communion to them in their homes or hospital
- by helping the unemployed and those who are facing difficulties through groups such as the SVDP, Mission appeals etc

The House of God is the place we gather as Church to

- show reverence and respect to God
- celebrate and strengthen our faith
- meet new friends,
- help people in need

Being Church, the People of God, happens 24/7 as our faith is an integral part of our life and influences every aspect of it.

All in this together



Explain to the young people that trying to do things on our own can be lonely, hard work and at times plain impossible. This is true for many aspects of life, including our spiritual life. To be Church we need not just to believe in God and pray daily, we need also to be in relationship with others and committed to working together so we can make a difference in our world. Let us see faith, trust and co-operation can achieve.

➔ **Activity – Making the impossible, possible** (requires 8 or more people)

- invite group to stand in a circle, and huddle as close together as possible.
- Place hands on the shoulders of the person in front.
- On the count of three all very gently sit back, to rest on the knee of the other person.
- When steady invite the group to put their arms out to the side.

The circle will support itself, so long as each person trusts and cooperates with one another.

➔ **Getting in touch with God – the wonder of creation:** (see ppt resource)



Explain to the young people that the Church is not the only way to get in touch with God, and for many certainly not the starting point in their faith journey. Creation itself has much to teach us and inspire us.

- Ask the young people
 - Have you heard the phrase the 7 wonders of the world?
 - Do you know what they are?

In ancient Greece the 7 wonders were the 'must sees' of their day. The only one that still exists is the Great Pyramids of Egypt. The wonders were a combination of natural beauty and human ingenuity. Had the ancient Greeks visited other parts of the world not known to them at the time, the list might have been different. In creation along, there are so many wonders for us to enjoy.

✠ **Personal Reflection**

- Invite the young people to reflect on the following questions:
 - Have you heard the phrase the 7 wonders of the world?
 - What amazing places would go on your wonders of the world must see list, and why?

- Think of some of the most important 'wow' moments in your life.
 - What did they reveal about God, and about you?
- o Ask young people to sharing in 2's and 3's and Identify what is common and the range of wonders known about or experienced.



Explain to the young people that appreciation of nature helps to deepen our awareness of God around us. It also develops our sense of awe and wonder. There are many times in our lives when we say 'wow' or 'that's amazing' to something we have seen. These are moments of recognition of the presence of God.

Wonders of creation, whether in nature, buildings or a civilisation all show us something of the God through whom all things were created. Human-kind is invited to continue the work of creation. Many of the wonders of the world are examples of this happening, and we can marvel at them. Yet a quick look at the news headlines on any day also makes us aware of the destructive side of human nature.



- o Show young people the images of
 - the 7 Natural Wonders of the World – announced in 1997,
 - the 7 Modern Day Wonders and
 - the 7 New Wonders of the World identified in 2007.

✦ **Further reflection**

- o Show slides of the words of the world with gentle music playing in the background.
- o Invite the young people to:
 - sit with each image allowing themselves to become lost in wonder
 - consider, what must the nature of God to have brought these things into being
 - invite God to speak to your heart.
 - call to mind a place that are special to them, a place where they feel the closeness of God's presence
 - Allow time for the young people to enjoy being in that space and encourage them thank God for it.

Scripture Reflection

→ **Gathering together as one**

- o Ask the group to in an arc around the prayer table.
- o Invite the young people to reflect on how Jesus calls all people to be one with him and the Father while the scripture passage is read.
- o Set the scene by inviting the young people to imagine being present in the story witnessing the events that take place
- o Ask the young people to listen for a particular word or phrase that resonates with them.



Read The story of Zacchaeus [Luke 19:1-10]

- After hearing the scripture passage, invite the young people, in turn, to speak aloud the word or phrase that remained with them.
- Ask them invite to consider if the word or phrase has a link to something in their own lives, now or past. –
- Discuss with the young people:
 - Why do you think Zacchaeus was so keen to see Jesus?
 - How would you describe the way Jesus engaged with Zacchaeus?
 - Why do you think Jesus chose to have dinner with Zacchaeus?
 - How did others react, and why was that?
 - Who might any of the characters in the story represent in the Church or society today?
 - What is the message being presented in the story?
 - How easily can we apply that message to our lives? Is there a cost?
- Draw together the responses.



Explain the young people that one thing that humans desire is happiness. Though Zacchaeus seemed to have plenty going for him, maybe he was lonely and unhappy. He must have heard about Jesus healing and bringing people to new life and maybe that is what he wanted too – a new life, with real meaning and purpose, with dignity and respect.

The story emphasised that Zacchaeus made a great deal of effort just to see Jesus walking along the road. How surprised must he have been when Jesus looked up and noticed this little man in a tree. With the simple act of looking up and noticing Zacchaeus, Jesus changed the man's life.

In this gesture Jesus invited Zacchaeus into a relationship with him. So willing was Zacchaeus to respond that his heart recognises the need to make up for his wrongdoing. He offers to give away half of what he has to the poor and to pay back anyone he has defrauded, 4 times the money. This is a huge step and leap of faith with a huge cost as tax collectors were despised by the Jews.

The story highlighting to us the fact that how we look, our past history and others view of us is not important to God. Anyone whose heart is open to God is accepted by God; such acceptance changes lives.

This is the kind of conversion of heart we are being called to as we journey to the Sacraments of Initiation. Just as Jesus sought Zacchaeus and invited him into a relationship with him, so too does Jesus invite each of us into a deep and lasting relationship, with him. God is well aware of our failings, but is willing to accept us as we are, and if we are open to God's grace, we will become the person God created us to be.

Closing Prayer

A response to the Zacchaeus story

Leader Lord Jesus, from the moment of our conception you have been with us.

All *Open our hearts so that we may love you, Lord.*

Leader Lord, our lives are not perfect, but we have come on this journey to improve them by growing in relationship with you. Lord may that strengthen each day.

All *Open our hearts so that we may love you, Lord.*

Leader At times we forget to look up, so fail to see the needs of the family, our parents need a hug, or that others within and beyond our circle need our time and support.

All *Open our hearts so that we may love you, Lord.*

Leader Each day Lord, help us to look to you - the way, the truth and the life.

All *Open our hearts so that we may love you, Lord.*

Closing Remarks & Next Step

- Check how group is feeling about today's gathering.
- Time, date and venue for the next stepping-stone, **Growing in faith** towards acceptance
- Encourage personal and prayer support of one another and offer to attend Mass with the young parishioners accompanying the inquirers on the journey.