

**Name:**

# **Abiding Savior Free Lutheran Church Confirmation**

## *Holy Christian Church & Communion of Saints*

After completing the lesson, the student will be able to:

- Describe what the Apostles' Creed means when it uses the word “church”
- Define the word “holy”
- Summarize the difference between the visible and the invisible church
- Explain what is meant in the Apostles' Creed by the word “communion” and the word “saints”

## THE CHURCH

In Greek, the word used for church (*ekklēsia*) means “called out ones” or an assembly or group. When the word “church” is used in the Apostles Creed, this is what it is speaking about: not the building, but the people. It is talking about all those who are called out by God and who gather together to praise and worship their Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Martin Luther defines the “holy Christian church” as a congregation of saints or true believers. It’s the place where the Word of God is preached, and the Sacraments (Baptism and the Lord’s Supper) are administered according to God’s command.

1. What is the meaning of the greek word for church: ‘ekklēsia’?
2. When the Apostles’ Creed uses the word “church”, is it talking about the building or the people?
3. Read the following passages and explain how each demonstrates that the church is not a building or a physical place, but the people:
  - Matt 18:17
  - Acts 14:27
  - Acts 16:5
  - 1 Tim 5:16

## BODY OF CHRIST

The “body of Christ” is a metaphor found in scripture (1 Cor. 12:27) to describe the whole church. Just like humans have one body, but lots of parts (like eyes, ears, hands, knees, and feet), so it is with the church: we are one Body (Christ’s Body), but lots of individual members (you, me, your pastor, your mom or dad, your friends, and even your siblings). And just like the different parts of our body have different jobs (like eyes see things, ears hear things, and hands grab, poke, or hit things), so it is with the members of the Body of Christ. Sometimes people teach, serve, share the Gospel, make sure our building is safe, and/or help organize things. The church is made up of united believers who are connected with, and dependent upon, Christ - yet each one serves in their unique roles.

4. Read the following passages of scripture and answer the associated questions:

1 Corinthians 12:12-13;

- Who makes us part of the Body of Christ?

- How does the Spirit make us part of the Body of Christ?

Colossians 1:24;

- This passage says “His body”... what does that mean? (hint: look at the verse)

## HOLY

In the Apostles Creed, we confess that the church is “holy.” The word holy, when used in the Bible, generally means to be “set apart.” God has set Christians apart by the work of the Holy Spirit and has called us into His church. If you remember from the past lesson, it is the Holy Spirit that awakens us from sin (death) and brings us to a faith in Jesus Christ (life). Also, the Holy Spirit is the One who brings us into fellowship with God and with each other member of the Body of Christ. Think about it this way, becoming a Christian really means being set apart and joined to the church - we aren’t just any old gathering of people... we are those set apart by God Himself!

5. Read Ephesians 4:4-6 and list all the things described as being “one” in this passage?

6. Read the following passages and explain in each passage what was holy and how was it described as being set apart?

○ Exodus 3:5

○ Exodus 20:8

○ Romans 12:1

### **THE VISIBLE AND INVISIBLE CHURCH**

Martin Luther often spoke about the visible and invisible church. The "visible" church is all those who are part of a congregation that we can see with our eyes: all members of the church, those who come on Sundays, or who say that they are Christians. But being a member of a church or attending worship services is NOT what makes you a Christian: only believing in Jesus does that.

On the other hand, the invisible church includes all those who believe in Jesus for the forgiveness of their sins. When God looks towards the invisible church, He sees those who are clothed in His Son's righteousness. Even though you and I can be fooled by someone acting like a Christian, God is not.

7. Read the following passages of scripture and write down what illustration is used to show that there are both true believers, as well as unbelievers, together in the church. (the first one is done as an example)

○ Matthew 3:12 (wheat and chaff)

○ Matthew 13:24-25

○ Matthew 13:47-50

### **COMMUNION OF SAINTS**

In some denominations, the word "saint" is used to refer to an exceptional Christian: someone who goes above and beyond how a normal person lives their lives. But we know that the mark of a Christian is not what we do, but instead, in whom we believe: Jesus Christ! When we refer to the "Communion of Saints," we aren't talking about the people who live really holy lives, but we are talking about those who have put their trust in Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of their sin, and have been justified through faith in

Him. When the word “communion” is used in the Apostle’s Creed it is not talking about the Lord’s Supper. Rather, it refers to the unique fellowship or closeness that members of the church enjoy with one another. The church is a “communion” of saints, or those who are in fellowship with one another. So, the phrase “the Communion of Saints” could also be read “the fellowship of all those who believe in Jesus.”

8. Read the following passages and write down all the names or descriptions used for Christians.

- Acts 9:13
- Romans 1:7
- 1 Corinthians 1:2
- Philippians 1:1

**STUDENT & PARENT QUESTION:** *for the student and a parent to discuss and answer together*  
 Read **Romans 12:6-8** together (see below). (1) Circle each gift in the passage below. (2) Parents, identify if there is one or two of the gifts that you see displayed by your child. (3) Together, discuss how you might use those gifts for the betterment of the church.

*“We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.” - Romans 12:6-8*

**STUDENT & PARENT SIGNATURE:**

*By signing below, we affirm (1) this lesson is complete and that (2) we completed the “Student & Parent Questions” section together.*

*Parent Signature:* \_\_\_\_\_

*Student Signature:* \_\_\_\_\_