

My Church is a Part of the Community

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Overview

Mason Temple Church of God in Christ (COGIC) is the last place where Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. gave a speech. Mason Temple is located in Memphis, Tennessee. It is named for Bishop Charles H. Mason, the founder of the Church of God in Christ. King delivered his speech “I’ve Been to the Mountaintop” on April 3, 1968, and was killed the next day.

This lesson focuses on the church’s role in the *community* beyond worship services. Aimed towards younger children, the lesson asks students to think about and describe their own *church* (or a place that is special to them, for students who have never visited a church—see “Background/Preparation.”)

New Words

Community, Church

Grade Level

Lower Grades

Primary Learning Objectives

The Students Will:

- connect their place of worship to their larger community.
- describe their place of worship.
- will engage their peers as they describe their place of worship.
- review the five senses.
- identify key words (community and church).

Approximate Duration of Lessos

30-50 min.

Materials and Equipment Needed

Pencils, paper, art supplies, picture of Mason Temple Church of God in Christ, picture of Bishop Charles H. Mason

Background/Preparation

Teachers will need to understand that not all students attend a place of worship—or have ever set foot in a place of worship. For these students, the teacher can instruct them to draw a picture of a place that is special to them. Teachers should be careful to neither affirm nor negate the religious beliefs of their students. The lesson does not focus on religious beliefs; instead, the lesson helps students to recognize their place of worship as a part of their larger community. Everyone’s place of worship holds equal value.

Procedures/Activities

- Teachers will begin by asking students the following questions, “What is a church?” [Possible answers: a place where you learn about God, where you go on Sundays.] Who has heard of Martin Luther King, Jr.? Who is he? What did he do? [Possible answers: Civil Rights leader, Baptist preacher, helped integration, fought against segregation.] Teachers can continue by providing background about Dr. King (He gave a lot of speeches in many places. Our country was very different when he lived. He worked to bring everyone together and to help everyone get along. Some people did not like what he was doing. He died on April 3, 1968. The day before he died, he gave his very last speech at Mason Temple Church of God in Christ. Even though people worship God at their church, they sometimes use their church to bring the community together. This is what Dr. King did when he gave his speech at Mason Temple.)
- Teachers will show a picture of Mason Temple Church of God in Christ.
- Teachers will show a picture of Bishop Charles H. Mason, founder of the Church of God in Christ.
- Teachers will invite students to think about their place of worship. They will explain that not everyone calls his or her place of worship a church. Some people say temple, tabernacle, sanctuary, cathedral, chapel, synagogue, etc.
- Teachers will invite students to think about their church leader. They will explain that the names for church leaders include preacher, pastor, reverend, elder, bishop, rabbi, etc.
- Teachers will review the five senses (sight, hearing, touch, taste, smell) to prepare students for the art activity. Teachers will ask students to describe each sense in relation to their place of worship. Ex: What are some of the things you see in church? Hear? Touch? Smell? Taste?
- Next, teachers will distribute paper and art supplies. They will instruct students to draw a picture of their place of worship (or something about their place of worship). Students have reviewed the five senses in relation to their place of worship, so they should have plenty images readily available. If students have no regular place of worship, then teachers should invite them to think about a place of worship that they’ve visited in the past—even if only once. What do they remember about that place of worship? Characteristics to think about include color, shape, size, symbols (crosses, stars, etc.), windows, doors, stairs, etc.
- Teachers will take time to instruct students who do not have a place of worship. Care should be taken not to make these students feel excluded!!! Allow them to draw a picture about a place that is special to them (their house, school, grandparents’ home, favorite restaurant, favorite place to play, etc.).
- After students complete their pictures, they will stand before the class and share one thing about their church (or special place)—whatever they want. [Possible topics: youth activities, Sunday School, worship service, refreshments after service, group outings, etc.]
- Teacher will end activity by explaining that although our places of worship are different, they are special to us, and they bring our community closer together.
- *End of activity*

Assessment Strategies

- Have students review definitions for the following vocabulary words: community and church.
- Have students review the five senses.
- Have students to summarize the significance of Mason Temple Church of God in Christ in relation to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
- Check drawings for attention to detail.

Extension

Teachers can check www.google.com for pictures of different places of worship. Share these pictures with the students.

Additional Resources: Google, library books, magazines, pictures (*see attachments*)



Bishop Charles H. Mason, founder Church of God in Christ



Mason Temple, Church of God in Christ National Headquarters

Social Studies Standards

FIRST GRADE

Standard 2. Describe how primary sources serve as historical records of families and communities.

Examples: oral histories, vacation pictures in scrapbooks, videos, timelines

Standard 3. Identify historical events and celebrations in communities and cities throughout Alabama.

Examples: Mardi Gras, Helen Keller Day, National Shrimp Festival, Boll Weevil Festival

10. Discuss civic responsibilities of participating members of a community and state.

Examples: paying taxes, voting • Discussing the meaning of patriotism E G H PS

11. Identify roles and responsibilities of leaders within the community and state.

Examples: recognizing the mayor as city leader, recognizing the governor as state government leader

- Recognizing how laws protect rights and property
- Identifying reasons for having rules at home and at school

THIRD GRADE

11. Identify significant historical sites in Alabama, including locations of civil rights activities.

Examples: Montgomery—birthplace of the Confederacy, birthplace of the modern Civil Rights Movement; Tuskegee—home of Tuskegee Institute; Mobile—site of Fort Morgan and the Battle of Mobile Bay; Huntsville—home of the United States Space and Rocket Center; Tuscumbia—location of Ivy Green (birthplace of Helen Keller); Moundville—location of Moundville Archaeological Park; Birmingham—home of Vulcan and Vulcan Park, Birmingham Civil Rights Institute, and Sloss Furnaces National Historic Landmark; Selma—site of voting rights activities

FORTH GRADE

14. Describe the social, political, and economic impact of the modern Civil Rights Movement on Alabama.

- Identifying important people and events of the modern Civil Rights Movement Examples: people—Martin Luther King, Jr., George C. Wallace, Rosa Parks; events—Montgomery bus boycott, Birmingham church bombing, Selma-to-Montgomery march
- Identifying benefits of the 1964 Civil Rights Act and the 1965 Voting Rights Act

