



### THEME OVERVIEW:

During this unique season, our goal with “Cahoots!” is to help Wagon Train campers grow a greater love for the local church and a desire to participate in it. On the surface, this theme might just seem like theological pillars of the Church, which in many ways is true. However, our heart is that kids will hear of God’s love for the Church and God’s love for them in the gospel. We pray the natural outcome is a passion that leads your kids to proclaim Christ to the corners of the globe, to use their gifting in the body of Christ, and to gain excitement for the Church’s destiny of heaven.

### THEME VERSE:

#### 1 Peter 2:9

*“But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.”*

### MESSAGE THEMES:

#### 1. What is the Church?

What is the Church? What is its job? Why does it exist?

#### 2. The Church as the Gospel Family

The Church is made up of all those who have been adopted into the family of God.

#### 3. The Church is for God’s Glory

The Church and the people in it exist to give God glory.

#### 4. The Church’s Job for the Believer

The Church’s job is to encourage, care for, and correct one another.

#### 5. Your Place in the Church

Every believer of every age is filled with the Spirit of God to do the work of God.

#### 6. The Church’s Job in the World

The Church has been given the job of sharing the gospel with the world.



## THEME SKIT OVERVIEWS:

Our theme skits tell the story of Kiddo, a regular 11-year-old kid, who sets off for cowboy camp to learn to be a lone ranger. There, he accidentally falls through a time portal and finds himself in the real old west learning what it means to be a part of a real cowboy posse and serve "The Rancher."

## THE GOAL OF THE SKITS:

1. Provide a fun way to encourage kids to ask questions about the Church.
2. Give the speaker a launching pad to answer those questions and have visual examples from the skits to reference.
3. Equip counselors with a tangible resource to use during group/individual discussions with kids.



# MESSAGE 1 - WHAT IS THE CHURCH?

**Primary Scripture:** 1 Peter 2:9-12

## MESSAGE NOTES:

Most kids have a pretty basic understanding of what the Church is, but their understanding tends to be very narrow. Often kids will define the Church by the physical church building itself, the Sunday morning (or online) service, or perhaps the group of people that go to the building (or watch the video) each week.

The goal of this introductory message is to challenge some of these narrow views of what the Church is and to get students to start asking the questions that the rest of the sessions will seek to answer:

“What or who is the Church?”

“What are the jobs of the Church?”

“Why does the Church exist?”

Each of these questions is answered at least briefly in the theme passage (1 Peter 2:9-12):

1. The Church is a chosen people (v. 9), God’s special possession (v. 9), the people of God (v.10).
2. The Church’s jobs are to declare God’s praises (v. 10) and to abstain from sin. (v. 11).
3. The Church exists for God’s glory (v. 12).

## MAIN TAKEAWAYS:

1. The Church is not just a building or a program, but the people of God all over the world.
2. The Church has a purpose and a job to do.



## MESSAGE 2 - THE CHURCH AS THE GOSPEL FAMILY

**Main Passages:** Luke 15:11-24, John 1:12, Ephesians 2:19

**Supplemental Passages:** Romans 3:23, Romans 6:23, 1 Peter 3:18, Ephesians 4:4-6

### MESSAGE NOTES:

The goal of this message is to answer the question, "Who is the Church?" with the gospel and to show the beauty of the Father's love shown through adoption. The story of the prodigal son in Luke 15 offers the perfect illustration of God's fatherly love for His rebellious children.

1. The son rejects the father. / We reject God.
2. The son deserves only punishment. / We deserve death.
3. The son returns to his father and is embraced. / If we repent and turn to Him, we are saved.
  - a. This costs the father dearly. / Our price is paid at the cross.
4. The son is once again a part of the family. / We are adopted into God's family.

For the students who know Jesus, we want to emphasize that they are now a part of the family of God. That every believer is their brother or sister, and that God is their father. So whatever might divide believers from each other, they are united by their Father in heaven.

For the students who don't know Jesus, we want to emphasize that if they repent and put their faith in Jesus, the Father will welcome them with open arms and adopt them into His eternal family.

### MAIN TAKEAWAYS:

1. We have sinned against the Father but He offers us forgiveness in Christ.
2. Everyone who has trusted in Jesus is a part of the family of God.



## MESSAGE 3 - THE CHURCH IS FOR GOD'S GLORY

**Main Passages:** Isaiah 43:7, 1 Corinthians 10:31, 1 Peter 2:12

**Supplemental Passages:** Matthew 22:36-40, John 14:23

### MESSAGE NOTES:

In this message, we want to provide a purpose for the Church that will then act as the basis for the various jobs of the Church discussed in the following messages. This purpose is stated in Isaiah 43:7 as bringing glory to God: "Everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory." The Westminster Shorter Catechism famously states this purpose like this: "The chief end of man is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever." We want students to understand that this is their purpose individually as Christ-followers, but it is also our purpose corporately as the Church.

It is important to define the word "glory." A simple definition with which an elementary student may resonate is that bringing God glory is bringing fame to His name. Showing, sharing, and singing how great He is.

One area that is particularly helpful for kids in understanding what glorifying God looks like, is worship. Most kids will immediately think of worship through music—and that is a good example—but worship more broadly defined is the simple act of bringing praise, adoration, and fame to the name of God. In using worship through music as an example, we can demonstrate not only why we sing in church but also what the goal of "doing all to the glory of God" (1 Cor. 10:31) looks like in the rest of our lives, and how loving and obeying God brings him glory, fame, and credit.

### MAIN TAKEAWAYS:

1. The purpose of God's people and God's Church is to bring Him Glory.
2. Worship is the act of bringing glory to God, and we are to do it in every part of our lives.



## MESSAGE 4 - THE CHURCH'S INTERNAL MISSION

**Main Passages:** Romans 12:10-15, Hebrew 10:24-25, Luke 17:3-4

### MESSAGE NOTES:

The goal of this message is to teach kids the three-fold mission of the Church toward believers. This mission is summed up as this: care, encourage, and correct. For each of these aspects, we have chosen one particularly important passage that illustrates the Church's role—although there are many, many more passages in Scripture that powerfully communicate the necessity of each.

The central point behind the message is that the Christian life is meant to be lived together. That part of our God-given mission on this earth is to help our brothers and sisters in Christ to live lives that look more like His by caring for them in times of need, encouraging them in love and good works, and correcting them when they stray in their walk with God.

Two key things to include in the discussion of each of these aspects are that they are to be driven by a genuine love for each other and that they are to be filled with prayer. When our brothers and sisters are hurting, we pray with and for them in their pain. We should also pray for their sanctification and continued growth into Christlikeness, and when they falter we should pray for their repentance and restoration.

### MAIN TAKEAWAYS:

1. In the family of God, we help each other to be more like Jesus through care, encouragement, and correction.
2. We should always be praying for, and with, each other.



## MESSAGE 5 - THE CHURCH INCLUDES KIDS

**Main Passages:** 1 Corinthians 12

**Supplemental Passages:** 1 Timothy 4:12, Romans 8:11

### MESSAGE NOTES:

In this message, we want to emphasize to kids (and their parents) that they are empowered by the Spirit of God and given gifts to serve the Church of God TODAY! Too often, kids are viewed by adults and by themselves as second-class Christians simply training to be a part of the Body of Christ when they grow up. The Bible tells us, however, that all who have trusted in Christ are indwelt by the same Spirit that raised Christ from the dead, and are gifted as a part of Christ's body; it gives no minimum age for that gifting.

The bulk of this message will be an exposition of 1 Corinthians 12. Take care to include for kids a basic theology of spiritual gifting as found in this passage, including that all believers are gifted by the Spirit, that those gifts differ greatly, and that those gifts are given for the common good of the Body of Christ.

Be sure to regularly ground the conversations of gifting in concrete examples throughout your message, challenge kids to think through what their individual gifting might be, and how they can use that gift for building up the Church today.

### MAIN TAKEAWAYS:

1. Every believer has been given a gift of the Holy Spirit and has a part to play in the Church.
2. Serving in the Church is not just for adults, but for the whole family of God.



## MESSAGE 6 - THE CHURCH'S EXTERNAL MISSION

**Main Passages:** Matthew 28:19-20, Acts 1:8

**Supplemental Passages:** 1 Peter 2:12, Isaiah 43:7, John 13:35, Romans 10:14-15

### MESSAGE NOTES:

In this final message, our goal is to call kids to share their faith through the great commission that Christ left for His Church. We want kids to know that while the Church is a family, it is not called simply to focus inwardly, but it is called to go out.

Like all of the commands for the Church, the Great Commission has both corporate and personal application. It is valuable to mention both of these applications when discussing the Great Commission with kids. Specifically, mention the global nature of the commission in both Matthew and Acts. The Church is indeed to make disciples globally, and while a kid may not be able to go overseas and carry the gospel to unreached people groups (at least not today), they can and must bring the gospel to those around them.

For many kids, the question of how they are supposed to share the gospel is difficult. They conjure up pictures in their heads of standing on the lunch table with a megaphone and reciting the entire gospel of John to their whole cafeteria, and are terrified at the idea. While we certainly want to encourage kids to be bold in the proclamation of the gospel, we also want to impress that we are to share Christ with our words AND our actions, and that we are to preach Christ not necessarily with a megaphone, but with our character, actions, and words.

### MAIN TAKEAWAYS:

1. The Church and everyone in it is to share the good news of Jesus with the world.
2. My life and my words should show the gospel of Christ to everyone around me.

