

Lesson 1 / June 1, 2025

Connecting with Others

By RLD Editorial Team

 for use as
STEP 1

Lesson 1
Focus:

We are joined together
in Christ.

Lesson 1
Bible Basis:

I Peter 2: 4-10;
Ephesians 2:19-22

Lesson 1
Memory Verse:

And he is the head of the body, the church;
he is the beginning and the firstborn from
among the dead, so that in everything he
might have the supremacy.
—Colossians 1:18

As an introduction to the lesson on how we are joined together in Christ, students will learn about the architectural features of the Notre Dame Cathedral—and discuss how the stones were designed to withstand destruction.

Materials:
☐ Internet access

In the spring of 2019, the famous Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris ignited in flames. Despite the disaster, it remained standing. Do you know why? According to Lisa Reilly, an associate professor of architectural history at the University of Virginia and a scholar of medieval architecture, “It’s designed so that if the roof burns off, it’s hard for [the fire] to spread to the rest of the building.... In the Middle Ages, the thought was that stone vaults [could be] used to prevent the spread of fire.”

The collapse of the roof is also not necessarily a threat to the integrity of the building. In 12th- and 13th-century buildings of this type, the walls are held in place by flying buttresses. “Basically, it’s a structural exoskeleton, with the support system largely on the outside of the building,” Reilly says. Another bit of good news, original construction of Notre Dame took place in 1163 to 1345. During that era, the walls were built thicker than they would have been 50 or 60 years later.

➤ **Has anyone here ever visited the Notre Dame Cathedral? Why do you think it’s so often visited?** (The Cathedral is one of the premiere tourist sites in Paris—approximately 13 million people visit it each year. It was built 800 years ago and demonstrates the unique architecture of the Middle Ages. It also contains a large amount of artwork and religious artifacts.)

➤ **The collapse of the roof didn’t necessarily threaten the integrity of the building. Why is the foundation of a building more important than its accessories or façade?** (The foundation determines the structural strength of the entire building. Most of the outer materials are just showpieces.)

The restoration work on the famous cathedral reopened in December following several years of restoration work. Let's take a look.

Play the following video clip for your students [2:47; start at 1:25; stop at 2:32]:

Get a first glimpse inside the newly restored Notre Dame Cathedral

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hcTDAQ3XWRo>

The foundation of that great cathedral is a “vault” built of stone—joined together in such a way to produce endurance. Today we are going to take a look at what holds the Church—the Body of Christ—together.

Additional resources:

“Amid Notre Dame’s Destruction, There’s Hope for Restoration”

<https://www.citylab.com/design/2019/04/notre-dame-cathedral-fire-paris-gothic-architecture-history/587191/>

(Continue on to Steps 2 and 3 in your teacher’s guide; your Step 4 appears below.)

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STEP 4 **Lesson 1
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Materials:

- ☐ Deck of cards
- ☐ Interlocking building blocks (like Legos™ or equivalent)
- ☐ Smartphone with timer feature
- ☐ Whiteboard and marker (or screenshared document)
- ☐ Index cards
- ☐ Pens/pencils

In this step, students will be exploring the bond that unites all believers in Jesus Christ. (If your class is meeting online, you can demonstrate building the different structures and showing students on screen. You can invite students to bring supplies with them to class.)

Studying the early church helps us understand how their impact spread across communities. Considering the foundations of Jesus' message, how can we withstand outside pressure and stay connected to each other?

Choose two pairs of students to come to the front of the class. Give one pair a deck of cards, and the other pair a pile of interlocking building blocks. Tell each pair that they will have 2 minutes to construct a structure designed from their materials (either cards or blocks). Set a timer to give notice when time is up.

When they're finished, examine each structure and discuss the following questions as a class.

➤ **Which pair created a sturdier structure? Was their success due to their skill in building—or was it the materials they were given?** (Even the most skilled builder can't make up for weak building materials—like cards. On the other hand, Legos™ are built to create sturdy structures.)

➤ **How can some relationships among teenagers be more like a house of cards?** (Teen relationships can sometimes be loose and unstable. Friendships can be casually formed in temporary arrangements like classes or activities or in unrealistic circumstances such as social media. The foundations beneath them aren't very lasting.)

➤ **Why do Legos™ (or interlocking building blocks) stick together so well?** (The materials are molded from sturdy plastic and are designed to fit specifically in lock-tight indentations. They are designed to connect in unlimited configurations.)

Distribute supplies (or invite students to have them ready at home) and ask:

➤ **The Body of Christ is designed to stay connected, even under pressure. But its members have a responsibility to love and serve each other. What can you do to stay closely connected to each other?** (Students' answers will vary; as they respond, write their thoughts on the whiteboard [or screenshared document]. Some answers mentioned may be: study Scripture together, fellowship, accountability, pray for one another, and so forth.)

Ask your students to copy down one of the “bond makers” listed on the whiteboard (or screenshared document). Have them add the name of a member of the Body of Christ that they will connect with this week to actively pursue that type of bonding that will keep them strong and unified under the banner of Jesus.

When you are finished, pray together, thanking Jesus for being the cornerstone of our faith.

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