



CHUCK KNOWS CHURCH

The Committee: Children & Families

This group study is designed for a 45-60 minute discussion after viewing the film.

All Chuck Knows Church videos can be viewed and downloaded at:

www.ChuckKnowsChurch.com

Introduction:

The Committee is a humorous and poignant online series that examines the struggles congregation's face as they look toward a preferred future. Using real world topics, *The Committee* is sure to open discussion in your congregation.

The series follows Park Grove Community Church, a make-believe urban U.S. congregation, which has lost its pastor and is closing its doors, unless it reinvents itself. Park Grove is faced with a difficult decision. They seemingly have tried everything humanly possible. Should it close? Things are so bad that a retired pastor didn't show up to help them decide the congregation's future – so it's up to the last remaining members to discover it for themselves.

Although some of the characters and situations are simplified to accommodate the format, they may feel familiar. Your congregation may not be facing closure, may have a wonderful pastor, and be a vital and growing church. However, all congregations face the issues addressed in *The Committee* at some point.

Have an open conversation about the issues covered in the series.

Chuck Knows Church Resources

Website: www.ChuckKnowsChurch.com

Discipleship Ministries Website: www.UMCdiscipleship.org

Facebook: www.facebook.com/ChuckKnowsChurch

Twitter: @ChuckKnows

Instagram: ChuckKnowsChurch

Suggest ways on Twitter to save Park Grove. Use this Hashtag **#SaveParkGrove**

> Watch *The Committee: Children & Families*
(15 minutes)

> Starters (15 minutes)

List five ways you believe a church fruitfully engages with children and families.

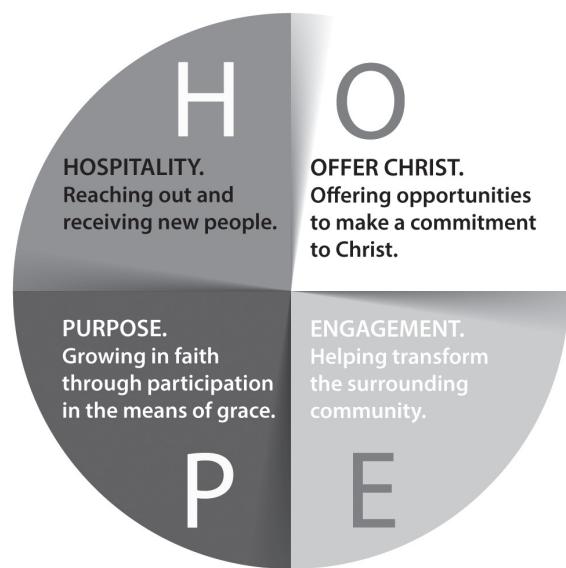
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Discuss with one or two people, and then share with the whole group:

- Of the five ways you listed, which do you think is the most important for faith formation? Why?
- Which is the way that your congregation is most gifted to engage with children and families?
- What does a church offer children and families that is different from what community organizations offer?

> Welcoming Children (15 minutes)

We live in a world that offers children and families more choices of activities and experiences than at any point in history, and congregations are often competing with those opportunities. Today's parents feel the pressure for their children to do more at earlier ages so that their children have greater chances of success. Faith formation is one more thing for those parents to check off their to-do lists, or even leave off the schedule entirely. Some parents even see the church as irrelevant in a time when community can be found in a variety of places.



Then we have some congregations that are saying, “We don’t have any children here,” but surrounding them are schools and neighborhoods filled with children and families who have physical, emotional, and spiritual needs that are not being met. Even within our own congregations, it is easy to forget that the primary place for faith formation is in the family. But parents often feel ill-equipped to guide their children in the faith. Congregations may assume that parents and guardians are churched and that they had a positive experience in church during their formational years. However, this may not be the reality for many adults who have responsibility for the growth and development of children.

Congregations wanting to attract children often make think they need to plan high-entertainment activities, but just entertaining children deprives them of the opportunity to engage with others in a way that is transformational. Congregations that reach out and discover the needs of children in the community can offer the love of Christ that is transformational for communities and the children who live within them.

Questions for Discussion:

If your group has more than seven members, divide into groups of four to discuss the Scripture passage below.

- How are you helping adult members of families understand their role in the spiritual development of their children?
- In what ways can you connect with the children in the surrounding community?
- What is the best way for you to gauge the needs of families in the surrounding community?

> Reflection on the Bible (20 minutes)

Ask a member to read aloud the following passage from Mark 10:13-16
Ask another person to read the Background.

People were bringing little children to him in order that he might touch them; and the disciples spoke sternly to them. But when Jesus saw this, he was indignant and said to them, ‘Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it.’ And he took them up in his arms, laid his hands on them, and blessed them.

Background:

“And he took them up in his arms, laid his hands on them, and blessed them.” We read this text and immediately see the value Jesus placed on children and those new to faith. We also see how important it was for families to give their children the best there was to

offer. The disciples reacted in a way that is similar to how people experience the church today. They created a barrier that only certain people could cross, and this did not include children. However, there is a movement here that Jesus repeated throughout his ministry. He breaks down barriers. He takes children into his arms. Jesus reaches out to them and offers them love, protection, nurture, and God.

Questions for Discussion:

If your group has more than seven members, divide into groups of four to discuss the Scripture passage.

- Who in your congregation and community wants to see Jesus lift up their children and bless them?
- Can you identify your church in this text? Are you the disciples? Are you Jesus? Are you the people? How do you know?
- How might your congregation reach out to meet the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of children and families in the surrounding community?

> Making it Personal (5 minutes)

At one point in this episode, Chuck says, “But look first at our congregation, our gifts. What can we do? What are the needs of the community? We can’t out-entertain Disney, but we can out-relationship them.”

- How are you building deep relationships with families in your community?
- What is the most important idea you learned from this episode?

Taking it Further:

Be sure to check out these websites for more information about ministry with children and families:

Ministry with Children: <http://www.umcdiscipleship.org/leadership-resources/children>

Ministry with Families: <http://www.umcdiscipleship.org/leadership-resources/intergenerational-family-ministries>

Passing it On (book) by Kara Oliver: <http://bookstore.upperroom.org/Products/1497/passing-it-on.aspx>