

Strengthening connections to church

**Why the world
needs church
and church
needs youth**



The First Church of
Christ, Scientist™

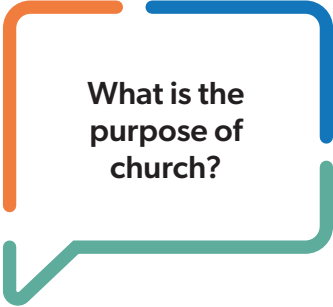
**A resource guide
for churches, parents,
and Sunday School
teachers**

How can we show
the community—both
inside our edifice and
outside—the purpose
and value of church?
How can we inspire
engagement?

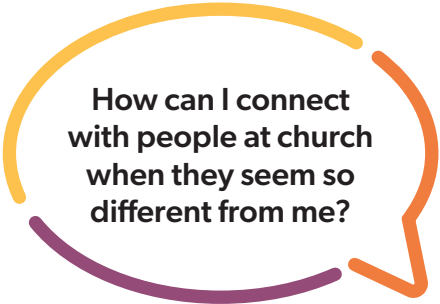
Each one of us plays an important part. Youth is a vital part of each community, and we have developed a resource guide for youth in parallel with this one for you to explore.

The problems that youth face aren't unique to youth at all. Everyone in the world is facing many of the same issues—and church is a place where young people, newcomers, and long-time members can find healing and transformation through Christian Science. This is the mission of our church. And each person is needed and can contribute to this healing work.

While this resource for churches, parents, and Sunday School teachers is focused on how we can support youth in their discovery of church, you may find that these pages also support your church in thinking about how to engage and support anyone who is new to your congregation.




What is the purpose of church?



How can I connect with people at church when they seem so different from me?

Thoughts &

We asked a group of young Christian Scientists about church. Here were their questions:



I have questions. Who can I ask or talk to?



After getting to talk and share in Sunday School, am I just supposed to sit and listen every Sunday?

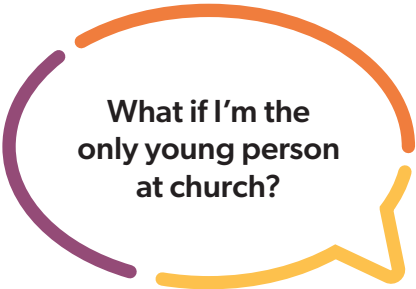


How can I participate?




I've never been to church before.

Questions



What if I'm the only young person at church?



How can church help me?

GROUNDED IN LOVE

Church* is grounded in Love. Have you acknowledged all the love you and your church are already expressing? In what other ways do you see this love expanding?

“Love never fails [never fades out or becomes obsolete or comes to an end].”

(I Corinthians 13:8 Amplified Bible, Classic Edition)

“Love for God and man is the true incentive in both healing and teaching. Love inspires, illumines, designates, and leads the way. Right motives give pinions to thought, and strength and freedom to speech and action.”

(Mary Baker Eddy, *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, p. 454:17–21)

“Millions of unprejudiced minds — simple seekers for Truth, weary wanderers, athirst in the desert — are waiting and watching for rest and drink. Give them a cup of cold water in Christ’s name, and never fear the consequences.”

(*Science and Health*, p. 570:14–18)

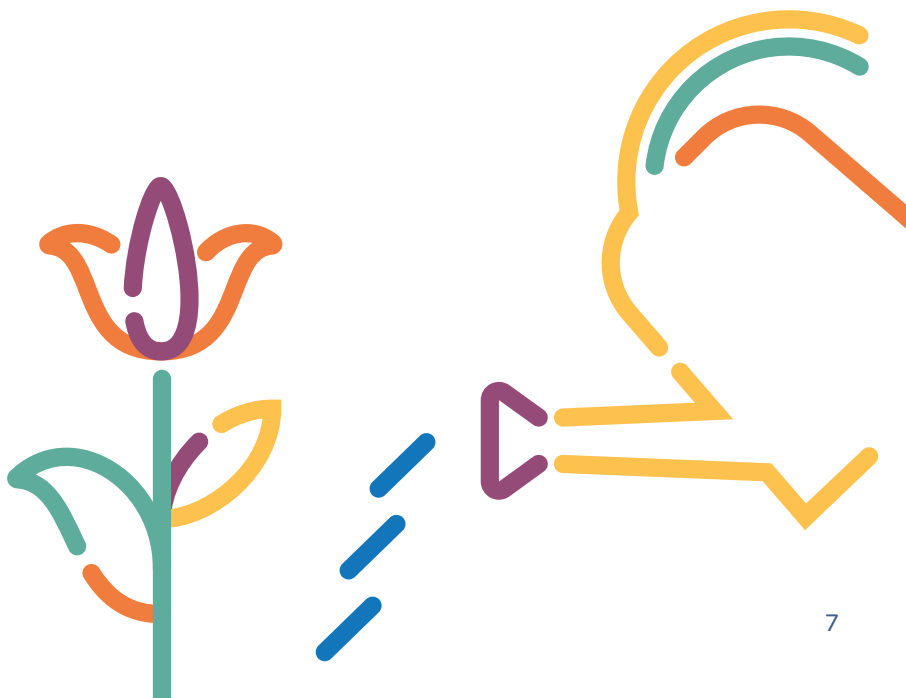
**Science and Health*, p. 583:12



QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

Your church is a special place! As a spiritual idea, it includes everyone, and so it's natural for young people to love it and to want to be a part of it. Here are a few questions to consider individually, or to discuss as a church, on this topic:

- How can we help our church feel like a community that loves and cares for each other?
- How can we make sure young people feel like they are a part of this community?
- How can we show them that we value their voice and that we welcome their ideas as we think through the activities of church?
- How can we invite their ideas and participation without pressuring them?
- How can we be a solid support system for them?



A SUPPORT TO YOUTH

As mentioned earlier, we designed a resource in parallel to this one for young people to investigate with their Sunday School teachers, parents, or friends in church. We hope this helps youth to discover the biblical basis for church and its value and purpose today. These resources are only a primer. We are all needed to help young people (and newcomers) gain a complete picture of the purpose and value of church. And to help them see it in action.

Here are some more thoughts and ideas for your church to discuss together:

- How can we help young people feel the heart and soul of church?
- What opportunities do Sunday School students have to *share* their ideas and insights about their church?
- What opportunities do Sunday School students have to *contribute* to the healing mission of this church?
- What am I specifically doing to embrace young people and other spiritual seekers?
- Am I listening to God for how I can uniquely support young people? Or am I waiting for others to act first?



RESOURCES

The most important resource is each one of us. Here's how to get started:

- As we read this week's *Christian Science Quarterly* Bible Lesson, what ideas help strengthen and inspire us to take specific action to embrace our communities, including young people?
- We can also read and engage with the youth articles in the *Christian Science Sentinel*. How can we use the ideas in these articles to support the youth in our communities and in our Sunday Schools?
- Visiting Sunday School and interacting with students on a regular basis can help us understand them better and start meaningful conversations.

Additional resources:

Connect with other Sunday School teachers

Join conversations with other Sunday School teachers and superintendents about supporting youth in church on the Christian Science Sunday School Connections Google Group: christianscience.com/connect

Conversations facilitated by The Mother Church

We can continue thinking about this together! This opportunity to collaborate can help us all further explore the topics in this resource guide. These conversations generally take about 90 minutes and can include topics such as:

- Sharing Christian Science with others
- Starting, restarting, and strengthening Sunday School
- Engaging youth in the healing mission of church

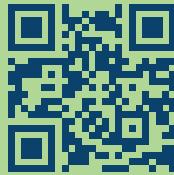
Learn more and be in touch with The Mother Church about this opportunity at:

christianscience.com/branch-churches

MORE IDEAS

For more inspiration, go to [christianscience.com/connections](https://www.christianscience.com/connections) or scan the QR code. You can watch video stories from others around the world who are discovering the value of church. Find digital versions of this guide, and a place to share your branch's experiences. (We'd love to hear from you!)





Watch video stories from branch
churches about strengthening
connections to church at
[christianscience.com/connections](https://www.christianscience.com/connections)