

CHRISTIAN DENOMINATIONS

Bible Text: Matthew 16:13-20; John 17:6-21; Ephesians 2:1-22

Lesson Focus: The various Christian denominations share core beliefs.

Big Question: Where did all of the different “churches” come from?

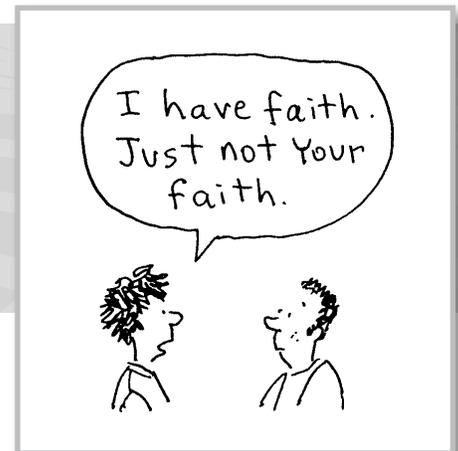
Key Words: PROTESTANT, CATHOLIC, ORTHODOX, CREED, ECUMENICAL, INFALLIBLE, INERRANT, INSPIRED

BIBLE CONNECTION

-] The Christian church includes many denominations that are united in the central belief that Jesus is the Son of God who came to earth to save humanity from sin and death (Ephesians 2:4-7).
-] The two most significant “splits” are the East/West split in 1054 C.E., sometimes called “the Great Schism” between Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox traditions, and the Protestant Reformation in the 16th century, which resulted in the creation of several new denominations in the Western church (John 17:10-11).
-] Many modern denominations formed when disagreements arose among church leaders in regard to specific teachings, doctrines, and/or interpretations of scripture (Matthew 16:13-20).
-] Recent history has seen reunions of denominations that had split in the past and a growing number of ecumenical agreements and cooperative ministry efforts among the various denominations (Ephesians 2:15-17).

CARTOON CONNECTION

-] If someone approached you with the words of this cartoon, how would you respond?
-] Do Christians have to believe exactly the same things, or can they disagree? Why or why not?
-] Is this something you would say to someone? In what ways do you express your faith? Words? Actions? Something else?



STUDENT BOOK CONNECTION

Here We Stand Student Book page 179: Family Tree of Christianity

-] What does this “Family Tree” show you that you didn’t know before?
-] Which branch is the result of a merger or union?
-] Do you think it is easier to split a church body into two or to join two into one? Why?

Here We Stand Student Book page 285: How to Show the World You’re a Lutheran without being Flashy or Boring

-] How do *you* show the world you’re a Lutheran?

Here We Stand Student Book page 180: Comparative Denominations: Liturgical Churches

-] What does it mean to be “liturgical” or “nonliturgical?”
-] Which churches seem the most similar to the Lutheran Church? Which seem the most different?
-] We confess in the third article of the Apostles’ Creed that we believe in the “holy catholic church.” What do we mean by that?

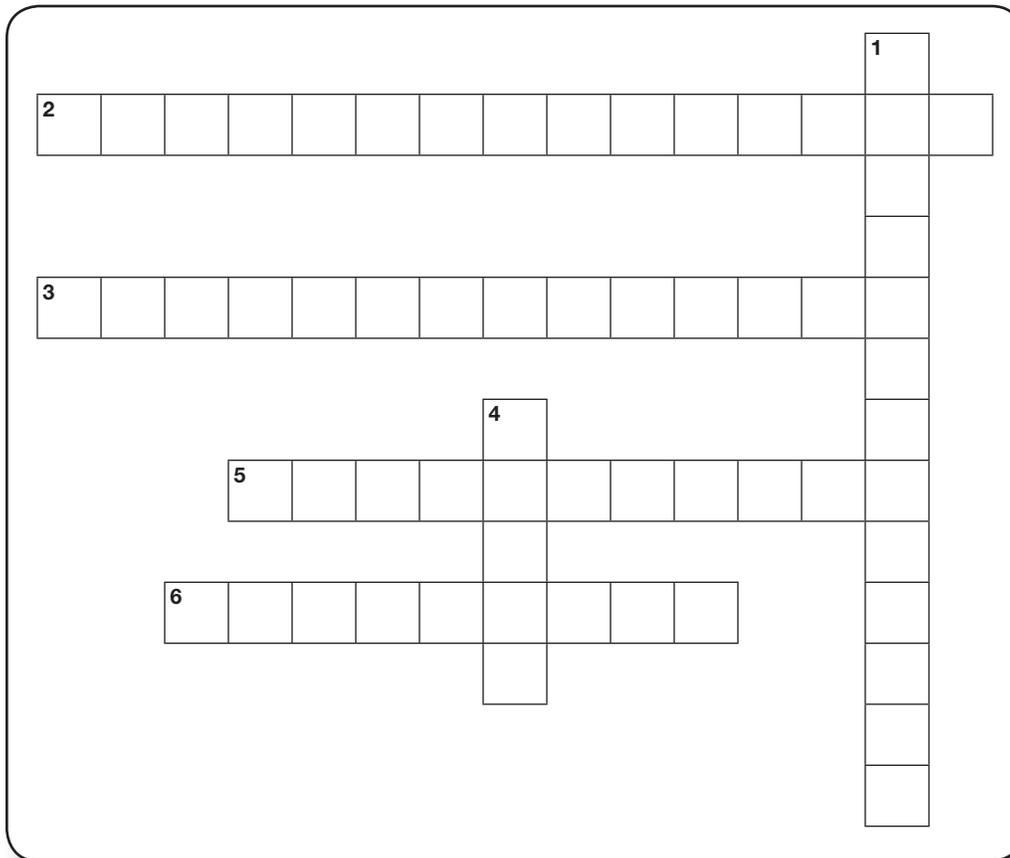
LIFE CONNECTION

Visit worship at a congregation of a different denomination from your own. Bring a worship bulletin to your next class and be ready to talk about your observations.

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Crossword

Write the correct answer for each clue in the crossword puzzle below.



ACROSS

2. The Eastern church existed under the name _____ Church.
3. The 15th and 16th centuries brought significant changes in the Christian church. Collectively, this period of change is called _____.
5. The Great Schism was a split between _____ in the Christian church.
6. Interpretation of _____ is at the heart of many splits in the church.

DOWN

1. The Western church existed under the name _____ Church.
4. Most Christian denominations believe that we are saved by _____, not by works.

Answers: Across 2. Eastern Orthodox 3. the Reformation 5. East and West 6. scripture Down 1. Roman Catholic 4. faith