

Member Not Visitor

For teens ages 12–14 · about 45–60 minutes · Buried & Raised · game **Member Not Visitor** · built on **Hebrews 10:25, 1 Corinthians 12:12–27, and Acts 2:42**

Your students live in a culture that treats church like a buffet — show up when it feels good, leave when it doesn't, and call yourself “spiritual but not religious.” Some bounce between youth groups like tourists. Some got baptized but never plugged into a real local family. Some think membership is a boring adult formality. This session goes deeper than attendance: baptism joins believers to Christ's **body** — a covenant community where you both give and receive, not anonymous seating on Sunday morning.

Before you teach anything, pray.

Some students feel like outsiders even inside their own church. Some have only ever been spectators. Others resist commitment because family church hurt them or bored them. Ask the Spirit for clarity without guilt — belonging as gift and responsibility, not pressure to perform.

The heart of the lesson

The church is not a building you visit. It is **Christ's body** on earth (1 Corinthians 12:12–27). When a believer is baptized, they are joined to a real local family — not floating as a lone Christian with a private Jesus-and-me spirituality. The early church **devoted themselves** to the apostles' teaching, fellowship, breaking of bread, and prayers (Acts 2:42). That is membership language: learning together, sharing life, remembering Christ, praying as one.

Visitors watch. Members belong.

Hebrews 10:25 commands believers not to neglect meeting together — but the point is not guilt-driven attendance. The assembly exists so we **stir one another up** to love and good works. Members receive care, correction, and encouragement; members also **give** those gifts to others. A hand cannot say to the foot, “I don't need you” (1 Corinthians 12:21). The spiritual-but-not-religious mindset cannot replace the body God designed.

You were baptized into a family — not a crowd.

The root issue underneath consumer Christianity is self-protection: I want the benefits of community without the cost of commitment. Symptoms look like skipping when inconvenient, never serving, treating small group like entertainment, or hiding when things get hard. God’s way out is covenant belonging — showing up, giving time and gifts, receiving Scripture and accountability, and staying loyal to a local church even when it is imperfect (because Christ is still faithful).

1 CORINTHIANS 12:27

“Now you are the **body of Christ** and individually members of it.”

ACTS 2:42

“And they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the **prayers.**”

How the session flows

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| 1 | Name the body. Church as Christ’s family, not a venue. | ~8 min |
| 2 | Member vs. visitor. Covenant belonging and Acts 2:42. | ~12 min |
| 3 | Play the game. “Member Not Visitor” on screen. | ~12–15 min |
| 4 | Quiet honesty. Reference card, private reflection. | ~5 min |
| 5 | Worksheet. In class or take-home reinforcement. | ~15 min |
| 6 | Belong on purpose. One membership step for the week. | ~8 min |

Screen for the game, printed cards and worksheets, pens. Optional: draw a simple body outline on a whiteboard and label parts — every believer has a place.

Leading it, part by part

Name the body

Ask: when you say “church,” do you picture a building or a people? Read 1 Corinthians 12:12–14. One body, many members — foot, hand, eye, ear. Christ is the head; the local church is where the body actually lives together. Contrast **visitor** (comes to watch, leaves unchanged, takes no responsibility) with **member** (belongs, serves, receives, stays). Baptism is not a solo swim — it joins you to a family.

Member vs. visitor

Walk through Acts 2:42 devotion: teaching (learning Scripture together), fellowship (real life shared), breaking of bread (Lord’s Supper and meals), prayers (corporate and personal).

Membership is not a paperwork ritual for adults — it is how young believers grow. Hebrews 10:25: we meet to encourage, not to check a box. Name the worldly lie: “I can follow Jesus without the church.” The biblical answer: you cannot love the Head while despising the body He loves.

Discuss “spiritual but not religious” honestly. Many teens hear that phrase online. Scripture never gives a third option between Christ and His assembly. You can be hurt by church people (we address that in another lesson) — but consumer Christianity is not the cure.

Play the game

Run “Member Not Visitor” — rounds sort visitor habits from member habits, Scripture on the body, and real scenarios about belonging. Twelve to fifteen minutes. Bridge afterward: every card asks whether you are treating church like a hotel or a home.

Quiet honesty

Hand out the reference card and give them five quiet minutes. Nobody collects it. Let students assess whether they are visitors or growing members — and what one step of belonging could look like for them. Honor the silence; some will feel convicted, others relieved to finally name it.

Worksheet

The worksheet reinforces what you taught: body-of-Christ verses, true/false on membership, and one real-life scenario. The card went heart-level; this is Scripture practice.

Belong on purpose

Close with one concrete step: introduce yourself to someone new, volunteer for one service role, commit to a small group, or talk with parents/leaders about formal membership when ready. Pray for covenant hearts — not perfect church, but faithful members who love the body Christ died for.

Take it further

- What is the difference between attending church and *belonging* to a church? (1 Corinthians 12:27)
- What four things did the early church devote themselves to? (Acts 2:42)
- Why can't a hand say to the foot, "I don't need you"? What does that look like in youth group? (1 Corinthians 12:21)
- What does Hebrews 10:25 say about neglecting to meet together — and what is the *positive* reason we gather?
- Why doesn't "spiritual but not religious" replace biblical membership?
- Where are you more visitor than member right now — and what would one member step look like?
- How does baptism connect to joining a local body, not just a private decision? (Acts 2:38–42)
- What gift could you offer the body this month — time, encouragement, service, prayer?

A final word

Teens need to hear that church is not a concert they review on the way home. Christ bought a people with His blood — and baptism places them inside that people. Give them the body picture, the game, the card, and a door into real belonging. Visitors watch from the edge; members lock arms and build. Pray that your room fills with young Christians who decide to belong.