

### AIMS OF LESSON 7

For each learner to:

- a. Be committed to join the local group of believers.
- b. Learn three descriptions of Christ's church from 1 Peter 2.
- c. Memorize 1 Peter 2:9.
- d. Be able to find different passages in 1 Peter.

### TO START THE MEETING

#### **START WITH PRAYER**

#### **LAST WEEK'S PRACTICAL TASK:**

- Say: "Lesson 6's Practical Task was to spend a dedicated time with God each day. Did you manage to do this? Did it help you keep close to your heavenly Father?" *[Ask each person to respond.]*
- "For those who did not manage it, what were the obstacles and how can you overcome them?" *[Personal responses.]*

#### **TODAY'S TOPIC:**

- Say: "Today, we will learn about Christ's community which is called the church, or the community of believers. Please bring your own Bible or New Testament with you each week."

#### **ANSWERS TO THE LESSON REVIEW**

- Turn together to the Lesson 7 Review and ask what the learner(s) wrote:  
*Question 1:* a) house; b) chosen; c) family  
*Question 2:* Jesus Christ  
*Question 3:* chosen people, royal priesthood, holy nation, God's special possession, declare the praises, called you out of darkness into his wonderful light (1 Peter 2:9)

## A) INTRODUCTION (& Questions 1-2)

 **Read** the account of Majid, including the speech bubble.

 **Ask:**

- “Do you think Majid is wise to keep his faith secret, or should he join a group of believers? What did you write for question 1?” *[In some countries Christ’s followers from Muslim countries can freely join with others, while in other countries it may be dangerous. So listen to the different opinions of the learner(s).]*

**Say:**


- “After completing today’s discussion we will return to this question.”

 **Read** the teacher’s speech bubble after question 2.

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## B) A SPIRITUAL HOUSE (Questions 3-10)

### Question 3

 **Read** 1 Peter 2:4-8 *[Check that each learner can find place in their Bible or New Testament, then one person should read out the passage.]*

 **Ask:**


- “According to verse 5, which people are like living stones?” *[Find the answer in the verse. It says ‘you also’, that means all of us who are Christ’s followers.]*
- “According to verse 5, what are we, the living stones, being built into?” *[‘a spiritual house’.]*
- “Verses 6 and 7 describe a ‘cornerstone’. What part does a cornerstone play in a building?” *[it sits at a bottom corner and sets the direction for all the walls]*
- “Who do you think is the precious cornerstone described here?” *[It refers to Jesus Christ, who is chosen by God (v.6) and precious to his followers (v.7) but rejected by others (v.7) who will be judged by him (v.8).]*

### Cultural Clue: Two Special Stones

Millions of Muslims have gone on pilgrimage to Mecca, where the black stone of the Ka’ba marks the very centre of their devotion. But for us, Christ himself is the even more precious stone at the centre of our devotion, and the cornerstone of our ‘spiritual house’!

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### Question 6

 **Read** the last paragraph.

 **Ask:**

- “What is the correct answer?” *[(b), the homes of their members.]*
  - “In our town, what are the best places for Christ’s followers to meet?” *[Discuss the different options, according to the local situation. This course was originally written for believers in a strict Muslim country with no institutional church. In other countries there are plenty of places for believers to meet. Even so, a fellowship group of Christ’s followers from Muslim background might choose to meet in a home, not a church.]*
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## Question 7

 **Read** the second paragraph, beginning with “The Lord Jesus told his followers...”

 **Ask:**

- “Here today, are we at least two or three people gathered in Jesus’ name?” *[Yes.]*
  - “So, is Jesus present with us in a special way?” *[Yes! We can’t see him physically but he is definitely with us, by his Spirit.]*
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## Question 9

 **Read** the entire question.

 **Ask:**

- “What did you write here?” *[Each learner should speak. If they have nothing to say, check their course books to see if they wrote anything. Remind learners to write their personal responses so that they are ready to share them in discussion.]*
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## C) A CHOSEN PEOPLE (Questions 11-18)

### Question 11

**Say:**

- “1 Peter chapter 2 says we are being built into ‘a spiritual house’. It also calls us a ‘chosen people’. Let’s keep reading in 1 Peter chapter 2.”

 **Read** 1 Peter 2:9-10

 **Ask:**

- “Which phrase in verse 9 do you like the most, and why?” *[Personal answers.]*
- “How does verse 10 make you feel?” *[Personal answers.]*

### Practise the memory verse:


- 1 Peter 2:9 is the memory verse. If in a group, one way to learn it is for the advisor to ask the first person, 'who are we?' and the answer is 'a chosen people'. That person asks the same question to the next person and the answer is 'a royal priesthood' and so on. Repeat it round the group, going faster and faster.

### Cultural Clue: Healing a Divided Identity

One British Pakistani girl grew up confused about her identity, torn between the British part of her and the Pakistani Muslim part of her. When she turned to Christ she said she found one new identity, and it was 'astounding'. The Bible passage which spoke to her most powerfully about this was the one we have just studied, 1 Peter 2:9-10.

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## Question 14

 **Read** the entire question.

 **Ask:**

- "Which answers did you tick in this question?" [*In fact they are all correct*]
- "From what different nationalities or ethnic groups have you met Christ's followers? What common links have you experienced with them?" [*Personal answers. It is a great privilege to meet with believers from other backgrounds and to see how Christ binds us together!*]


### Cultural Clue: *Ummah*

Muslims have a deep sense of belonging to a worldwide community which they call the *umma*. For them, the ideal *umma* is the community that follows the Law of Allah (*shariah*) and in theory should be governed by Islamic leaders (*caliphs*). This global community is demonstrated visibly at the annual pilgrimage when Muslims from many countries gather in Mecca, all dressed alike. In practice however, divisions and discrimination (including racial discrimination) mean that the Islamic *umma* falls far short of its ideal.

In some ways this is similar to the Church's ideal of global community which Christians worldwide do not always live up to. Some Arabic translations of 1 Peter 2:9 use the word '*umma*' for God's people, and it may be helpful to discuss with your learner(s) similarities and differences.

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## Question 15

 **Read** the first paragraph.

 **Ask:**

- “According to this verse, out of what has God called us, and into what?” [*Out of darkness into his wonderful light*’.]
  - “For what purpose has God chosen us?” [*To ‘declare his praises’, see verse 9.*]
  - “What does this mean we should do?” [*We should tell other people about God’s great deeds and his goodness.*]
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## Question 16

**Look** at this picture.

 **Ask:**

- “These two brave ladies know that Christ called them to shine for him in the darkness. Are we willing to do the same?” [*Discuss together.*]
  - “Do you have the opportunity to tell anyone about God’s wonderful deeds?” [*Discuss together. We will discuss this more in lesson 13.*]
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## Question 18

 **Ask:**

- “In 1 Peter 2, what two descriptions have we learned so far about us as Christ’s church?” [*We are ‘a spiritual house’ and ‘a chosen people’.*]
  - “What third description do we find in the heading of point 19?” [*A family*’.]
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## D) A FAMILY (Questions 19-22)


### Question 22a

 **Read** the whole of question 22, including the questions in bold but not the speech bubble.

 **Ask:**

- “Being honest, how would we answer these questions?” [*Discuss together. If we obey God’s Word then we will definitely accept one another as brothers and sisters in Christ. This does not mean we lose our ethnic or social identity but it does mean our identity in Christ is even stronger.*]
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## Question 22b


 **Read** the teacher's speech bubble.

 **Ask:**

- “To describe yourself to your Muslim family, would you prefer to tell them ‘I have become a Christian’ or ‘I am following Jesus Christ’ or what? What would these different terms mean to them?” *[Discuss together. Although the word ‘Christian’ is a good one, in some contexts it can cause misunderstanding if Muslims associate this with alcohol, pork, sexual promiscuity and taking sides against the Arabs. In other contexts Muslims may have a more accurate understanding of ‘Christian’. We have a choice of labels to use depending on our situation.]*
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## E) DO YOU NEED CHRIST’S CHURCH? (Questions 23-25)

### Question 24

 **Read** the entire question.

 **Ask:**

- “What did you write here?” *[Personal answers. Clearly, like the charcoal, if we cut ourselves off from the community of believers our faith will grow cold.]*
- “If Majid in the beginning of this lesson does not meet at all with other believers, do you think he can keep warm as Christ’s follower?” *[It is very unlikely he can stay warm. Most likely he will gradually grow spiritually cold.]*
- “Look again at what you wrote in question 1. In the light of today’s discussion, what advice would you give to Majid?” *[Personal answers. Hopefully the discussion has shown how important it is for him to meet with other believers, even if he has to be careful about it.]*

## Cultural Clue: Weighing up the Risk

In some Muslim countries, there is a risk when believers meet together. Sometimes informers penetrate a group, pretending to be believers themselves. They obtain names, contact information and photos of the believers in order to expose them, and this can bring a lot of damage. In such situations believers are wise not to expose ourselves to everyone straightaway, but to get to know them slowly and carefully. The Holy Spirit will show them whom they can trust more and whom they should trust less. They will be very careful about having any photos and videos of their group.

However, there is also a risk the other way. If everyone is like Majid and refuses to trust others, the community of believers can never grow. Also, isolated believers grow cold in their faith. They will have no one to help them in time of need. And if their children never enter the community of believers, they will go back to the old religion. If believers want the best for their children's future they have to find their place in the community. Therefore, there is some risk if we meet with other followers of Jesus, but there is a bigger risk if we do not.

In the West, believers of Muslim background who join a church are not usually in physical danger. But in some situations they may still want to be discreet (for instance, to avoid causing embarrassment to their families). It should be their choice whom they tell when. Christians should not gossip about them to Muslims.

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## TO FINISH THE MEETING

### ASK:

- "What difference will today's lesson make in your life?" *[Each person should share, including you as advisor.]*

**READ** the Lesson 7 Practical Task.

### SAY:

- "Do you all have at least one other believer to meet with this week?" *[If anyone lacks someone to meet with, they can meet with someone from the group, or with you.]*
- Remember to do the home study for lesson 8.

**CLOSE IN PRAYER** thanking God for our brothers and sisters in Christ and ask him to help us trust one another.