

<b>Lesson Aim</b>	To understand these three affirmations in the Apostles' Creed: "I believe a holy catholic church, the communion of saints and the forgiveness of sins."
<b>Steps to Learning</b>	Read the <a href="#">Heidelberg Catechism Lord's Day 21</a> and <a href="#">Matthew 28:16-20</a> . Discuss the sermon and the particulars of the lesson below. It may be best to work through the material over several days or sessions.
<b>Discuss</b>	<p><b>What does the word "church" mean?</b>          It means an assembly. It refers to a gathering of people called out of the world.</p> <p><b>What are the two aspects of the church?</b>          The invisible and the visible church. The <u>invisible church</u>, according to Louis Berkhof, the invisible church is "the whole body of the faithful, whether in heaven or on earth, who have been or shall be spiritually united to Christ as their Savior."          The <u>visible church</u> is simply the gathering of people who confess Jesus Christ together with their infants and children.</p> <p><b>The visible church must be true in following the teaching of Christ. What are the marks of the true church?</b>          According to the <a href="#">Belgic Confession of Faith, article 29</a>, they are: the preaching of the pure doctrine of the gospel, maintaining the pure administration of the sacraments and exercising church discipline according to the pure Word of God.</p> <p><b>Why is it so important for churches to have the three marks?</b>          Because it is Christ's church! He is the King and Head of the church. In <a href="#">Matthew 28:16-20</a>, Jesus makes it clear that he has been given all authority in heaven and on earth. The only way people can be disciples or pupils of Christ is when the church baptizes people and teaches them everything Christ taught his disciples to teach.</p> <p><b>What do we learn from the doctrine of the "keys of the Kingdom of Heaven?"</b>          We learn that there is a correspondence between the authority of the church on earth and what happens in heaven.</p> <p><b>What does it mean that Christians are "saints?"</b>          It means that we are holy in Christ. That is, we are sinful yet justified, holy, in God's sight.</p> <p><b>What is important to note in the phrase, "I believe in the forgiveness of sins?"</b>          That we are in fact justified in God's sight! Also, the key characteristic of the church is its preaching and teaching on the subject of the Gospel, the good news about Jesus' work of atonement on our behalf.</p>
<b>Bible Reading</b>	<a href="#">Psalms 64-81</a> (Reading through the Psalms)