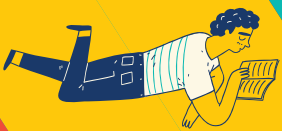




OUR CHURCH

NAZARENE MEMBERSHIP
FOR KIDS



THE FOUNDRY
KIDS

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The Foundry Publishing®
P.O. Box 419527
Kansas City, MO 64141

978-0-8341-4186-5

Printed in the
United States of America

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INTRODUCTION

WHAT EVEN IS MEMBERSHIP EXACTLY?

Put your hands in the air. Then put up a finger for every year you've been coming to this church. Whether you have one finger up or 11 isn't what's most important. What's important is that you're here now, and you have an opportunity to make a new commitment to your church home. Becoming a member is like officially joining a team. You practice with the team. You play with the team. Everyone knows that's your team. But you made it official when you put on that jersey. You made it public. When you become a member of your church, you make it official. You make it public. You tell the world, "This is my church. I belong here. I'm here for them. They're here for me. I want everyone to know." That's membership.

Here are just *some* of the things you'll find in each chapter.

THE ONE BIG QUESTION

Each chapter asks *one big question*. You'll get to ask and answer like a thousand tiny questions along the way, but at the end of the lesson you'll have an opportunity to actually answer this one big question in your own words.



LOOK IT UP

We're going to be using our Bibles. A lot. You'll want to bring your Bible from home or talk with your leader about providing you with a Bible. It's an amazing tool that will guide us as we explore each question. At the beginning of each chapter, you'll find a list of Scriptures that are used in the chapter. Look them up ahead of time and you'll have them ready when the time comes.

BELONG - BELIEVE - BECOME

Each chapter of this membership book is split into three major sections. The **Belong** section is all about finding our place in the bigger story of our faith. God's been revealing his story to us for thousands of years. We'll meet some important people from that story, and figure out how their story and our story fit together. We'll call these people the *Belong Bunch*. **Believe** is all about learning important Christian truths revealed in the Bible. We'll study, read, and do activities that help us remember. **Become** is all about taking what we learned in the first two sections and applying it to our lives. How do these truths help us become people who are more like Jesus? What can we do to grow our faith together?

LEARN-A-WORD--MATIC

This is an amazing invention that our team of researchers created in their mom's basement. It will help you learn words you didn't even know were words. They might not even be words from your own language. But they are words that will help us know our faith better—words that will help us remember. Words are cool.

SEE THIS BOOK YOU'RE HOLDING?

This book is important. You're going to use it every single week of this class. If you are given an opportunity to take this book home, you must bring it back for the next class! Don't leave it in your sock drawer or use it to clean your cat's litter box. You'll use this book basically the entire time every class. So, yeah, you'll want to take good care of it.

All good? Alright. High five your neighbor, and let's get started.

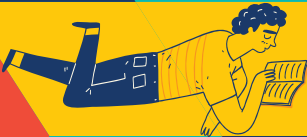


CHAPTER 1

WHAT IS THE CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE?



What is the church, really? And what is a Nazarene, really? Why is Naz such a cool nickname for Nazarene? And for that matter, what are words? Who decided these sounds we make with our mouths actually mean things? We've got answers to all . . . most . . . well, some of your deepest, most curious, and totally Naz questions here. Welcome to *Our Church!*



LOOK IT UP

- John 1:43-46
- Mark 2:8-12
- John 8:1-7
- Luke 9:12-17
- Matthew 5:1-2

BELONG

BELONG BUNCH

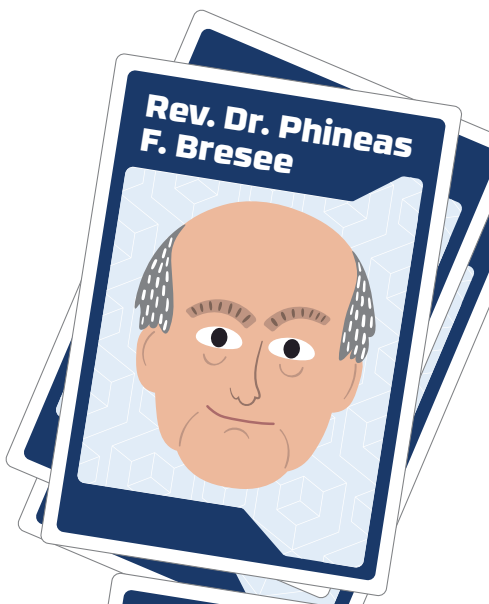
We belong to a bunch of people throughout history who help us understand and live our faith. This is our community.

Rev. Dr. Phineas F. Bresee

In the late 1800's there was a Methodist pastor in southern California named Phineas F. Bresee (bruh-ZEE). He felt led to minister to some of Los Angeles's poorest people. He worked with a rescue mission there for a while and then started a church that was dedicated to ministering to entire families. They called this brand new church the Church of the Nazarene.

More Nazarene churches started from there. Bresee talked with other churches that weren't Nazarene and realized that they had many of the same ideas and goals. So, they got together and formed an official partnership. In 1908 the Nazarene denomination was born. (A *denomination* is a group of churches all connected under a common theology, goal, leadership, and name.)

There are LOTS of denominations around the world. Like, tens of thousands. Almost all of them have similar stories of being connected to another denomination, and then differences in leadership led them to begin on their own. Denominations who are very similar to us are: Methodists, Wesleyans, The Salvation Army, and Free Methodists. Some others you might have heard of, that believe much of what we do but have some differences, are: Baptist, Presbyterian, Assembly of God, Church of Christ, and Lutheran. But the overall list of denominations is much, much bigger!



BORN—1838
FROM—New York, then Iowa, then California
OCCUPATION—Pastor, Church Planter, College President
FAMOUS FOR—Founding the Church of the Nazarene
FAMOUS QUOTE—“The Nazarenes, putting the old things behind them, went out to follow in the footsteps of him whose name they bear . . .”
SKILLS—Starting churches. Including people who were often excluded.
ALIAS—Phinny B.

*from the January 1898 issue of “The Nazarene”

MARK IT UP

Grab a highlighter and highlight three things you really want to remember about how the Church of the Nazarene got started.



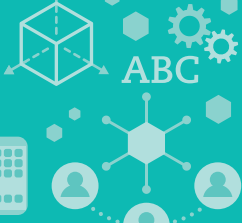
FROM NAZARETH TO NAZARENE

Color in the correct path on the maze by following the major events in the life of the church and the Church of the Nazarene in chronological order.



What an amazing story! A couple of thousand years all leading to this moment. We're so glad you're part of the Church of the Nazarene. But, even more, we're so glad you're part of the holy catholic church.

You are taking this membership class in one of those churches. (present day)



LEARN-A-WORD-MATIC

This ultra-intelligent super-computer knows every word that's ever been said. Let's learn a brand new word.



Catholic (KATH-lick or KATH-uh-lick)

From the Greek word meaning *universal*. You are a Nazarene, but you're also part of a whole, inclusive, worldwide church. In the Apostles' Creed, it's called the "holy catholic church." This can be confusing because there's also a church called the Catholic Church. Here's a hint: look for the big C or little c. If it's big-Catholic-it's the denomination. If it's little-catholic-it's all believers, no matter their denomination.

Here are more important words to watch out for: denomination, Nazarene Manual, holiness, and Core Values.

Our Nazarene Manual* states, "The Church of the Nazarene confesses itself to be a branch of Christ's 'one, holy, universal, and apostolic' church." In other words, we believe God's church is bigger than just the Nazarenes. We have brothers and sisters in Christ all over the world in lots of denominations. We love the same God and read the same Bible. We are all Christians and we're part of one, big, giant, Jesus-following, others-loving, holy catholic church.

BELIEVE

Check out **John 1:43-46**. Nazareth was known for being a place full of everyday, ordinary people. So, when people heard Jesus was from Nazareth, they went, "Wait, that's *not* where rich, famous, and powerful people come from. Why does he matter?" But then, Jesus's words and loving way of life started changing the world. That's the idea behind our name, Nazarene. We strive to

live as Jesus the *Nazarene* did. The Church of the Nazarene wants to be a place where everyone belongs, especially those who Jesus always reached out to: people with needs, those who feel like outsiders, or those who need freedom from sin and brokenness.

***The Church of the Nazarene Manual is a book that clearly explains our theology and how we do life together. It helps people organize and operate Nazarene churches and organizations. We'll talk more about this in Chapter 3.**

Nazarenes believe people can change. This means our minds, hearts, and lives can be made new and made like Jesus. It also means we can work together to help the world be a better place. From the earliest days, Nazarenes worked to bring spiritual and social changes.

SPIRITUAL AND SOCIAL CHANGE

Nazarenes are a Christian people. We were created to be in a relationship with Jesus that keeps growing. As our Savior, Jesus forgives us and we accept his love. As our King, Jesus provides for us and we give him our worship and obedience. As our Friend, Jesus guides us, and we follow him no matter what.

Nazarenes are a Holiness people. Jesus changes us, sanctifying us to be more like him. His desires become our desires. His plans become our plans. We call this holiness.

Nazarenes are a Missional people. Like Jesus taught, we are to be a part of making our world the way God created it to be—a peaceful, just, and beautiful place. This has been the call of Nazarenes since the start. Whether that is telling people about Jesus, feeding people, educating and discipling people, giving people places to live, thinking about how our choices affect others, or speaking up for others, we believe God has given all of us this mission. Jesus was the perfect model for it.



CORE VALUES:
Nazarenes are a Christian people.
Nazarenes are a Holiness people.
Nazarenes are a Missional people.

Quick review. **Nazarenes are a Christian people. Nazarenes are a Holiness people. Nazarenes are a Missional people.** We have a name for these three phrases. We call them our *Core Values*. Everything we do is inspired by these values.



JESUS STARTED IT

Check out the following verses. Choose from the list at the bottom of what sort of help Jesus was offering and write that next to the verse. Then write an example of a way you or your whole church could do the same to lead the way for change in your community.

Mark 2:8-12

John 8:1-7

Luke 9:12-17

Matthew 5:1-2

Healing • Feeding • Supporting • Teaching

BECOME

So, how do Nazarenes live out these Core Values? First, we start with what God wants to do in us, and then we ask how God wants to use us *in others*.

WESLEYAN COVENANT PRAYER

Prayer is one way we are shaped into who God wants us to become. One of the Nazarenes' great-great-grandfathers is John Wesley. He wrote a prayer to help people be open to God's work, called the Wesleyan Covenant Prayer. Pray this prayer as often as you can this week.

God, I am no longer in charge; you are my King.
I trust you. Use me however you want to do your good work in the world.
Put me to the work you have for me, and put me among the people you want me to be with.
With you, I'll be okay, empty or full; I'll be okay with all things, or nothing.
Help me to give you everything I have.
Help me to give you all the space you want in my life.
Good and Beautiful God,
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
You are my God and I am your child.
Amen.

OUR CHURCH. MY VERSE.

Look back through today's scriptures. Choose one that feels especially important to you, and write down the whole thing here to help you remember it. How can the words of that verse influence who you become this week?

MARK IT UP

Grab a pen and circle a couple of things you want to remember about what makes us Nazarene.



Q's and A's

Let's see if we can remember some important points from this chapter. Use index cards to make flash cards. Write your question under each answer below. Then copy it over to your card, putting the answer on one side and the question on the other. Finally, quiz your friends!

SAMPLE:

Answer: Phineas F. Bresee.

Question: Who was the Methodist pastor that started the first Church of the Nazarene?

YOUR TURN:

Answer: In 1908.

Question: _____

Answer: It's catholic, with a little "c".

Question: _____

Answer: Nazareth

Question: _____

Answer: Christian people. Holiness People. Missional People.

Question: _____

Answer: Wesleyans and Methodists

Question: _____

THE ONE BIG QUESTION

Let's go back to where we started. After everything you've discovered so far, how would you answer the one big question: What is the Church of the Nazarene?



Three horizontal white rectangular boxes stacked vertically, intended for writing an answer to the 'one big question'.