



Body of Christ Lesson: Ankle, Eye, or Pinkie Toe? (1 Corinthians 12:12-31)

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There are many ways to consider how the church operates as a team of believers...the Bible makes it clear that every person has special gifts and abilities. We can use those unique elements to come together and do amazing things. But we have to use each other to make it happen. As adults we may be used to this message, but for kids sometimes it takes a little extra illustration and activity. This lesson aims to emphasize the importance of working together for God.

Lesson focus: God has given us all special individual talents and strengths. No one is unimportant to Him and He wants us to work together for building His kingdom.

Passage: 1 Corinthians 12:12-31

Target Audience: Kindergarten-7th Grade (adaptable older or younger)

Materials Needed: Jigsaw puzzle(s); uncooked spaghetti noodles; cheerios; paper; markers/crayons (not all are needed)

Lesson Opening: Start off today's lesson with a quick game that illustrates teamwork, how things work together or how body parts are working together...pick one depending on interest and kid skill level:

- Play "teamwork tower..." have students work in pairs to see who can be the first to stack Cheerios up onto a raw spaghetti noodle...the catch is that each student may only use ONE hand and the other must assist to make up for it.
- Have a jigsaw race...work in pairs or teams to see who can quickly put together a puzzle (especially one that has to do with the body or skeleton).
- Demonstrate making a snack or recipe, but leave out an important ingredient (maybe one that seems insignificant). You might bring in something that is already prepared, like bread without yeast or cake without eggs...
- Similar to the Cheerio stacking game, have students work in pairs or teams to complete a simple task like preparing a peanut butter and jelly sandwich...but limit the amount of body parts each kid can use (someone might have no arms, another only one hand, etc.)
- Play a "musical body parts" freeze dance game...every time the music pauses, call out two body parts. Have students find another student and put those parts together (if you holler "elbow/knee," one kid puts elbow on another's knee).

Explain that today we will be talking about how we are a body as part of a church, a body of believers, the Body of Christ. That means that we have special God-given abilities and jobs that work together when we use them for the church.

Bible Lesson:

What is your favorite body part? This might seem like a strange question, but really...which is the most important? If you had to LOSE one part of your body (yes, slightly morbid thought) or ability, what would it be? These can be tough questions because essentially we need all of our body parts to work together for our tasks. The same is true in a church setting. St. Paul says it well:

Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. 13 For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. 14 Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many. -1 Corinthians 12:12-16

Why is it important to be part of a church? The church is not the only way to serve God, but it allows us to be one part of a whole group that serves Christ. That group is made of us as individual people, and we all have unique abilities from God that can be used for Him.

21 The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you!" And the head cannot say to the feet, "I don't need you!" 22 On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, 23 and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, 24 while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has put the body together, giving greater honor to the parts that lacked it, 25 so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. 26 If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.

— 1 Corinthians 12:21-26

How loudly can you clap with only one hand? How well can you write without using a thumb? Even parts of our body that seem insignificant or not as critical can actually be quite important. If your pinkie toe hurts, it blocks thinking from quite a lot of other things. Sometimes in a church or on a team of any sort, people want to leave if they are not seen as the most important part. But all of us work together to achieve something. Or think of a music band. If everyone played the same line of music and the same instrument, it would sound pretty boring (imagine a dozen clarinets repeating the march of *Bolero* over and over and over...). Having different voices combine to form a larger group is what makes music out of noise. Most importantly, we must remember that it is GOD who places us in our roles as a body:

Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. 28 And God has placed in the church first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, of helping, of guidance, and of different kinds of tongues. 29 Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? 30 Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? 31 Now eagerly desire the greater gifts. -1 Cor. 12:27-31

Nobody, not even priests or Pope Francis, can do everything...and we are not meant to do so! God wants us to cooperate and use each other's talent and ability to make anything possible. Sharing resources, time, and especially our gifts is what makes things work. This applies to individual and small group needs as well as on a broader level. Sometimes we want to be someone we aren't...but God chose who He wants us to be.

There are many Christians that are not Catholic in the World. They are also part of the Body of Christ and we need to learn to work together. Pope Francis has asked us to pray that all Christians become one church again as it was after Jesus was here on Earth. Often we forget that even though we disagree on things we still all love and worship Jesus.

Close with the following Unity prayer. Ask Him to help everyone work together,

Eternal Father, we praise you for sending your Son to be one of us and to save us. We thank you for giving us the gifts and talents to work together and be your hands and feet in the world. Look upon your people with mercy, for we are divided in so many ways, and give us the Spirit of Jesus to make us one in love. We ask this gift, loving Father, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.