

LESSON 53

The Body of Christ

1 CORINTHIANS 12:12-31



BIBLE TRUTH

CHRISTIANS ARE CALLED TO WORK AND SERVE TOGETHER

LESSON SNAPSHOT

1. OPENING REVIEW **5 MIN**

Use last week’s lesson outline to review with the children what they learned.

2. BIBLE STORY **10 MIN**

Read 1 Corinthians 12:12–31 from the Scriptures or read story 131, “The Body of Christ,” from *The Gospel Story Bible*.

3. OBJECT LESSON 1 **15 MIN**

God Has Given Us Gifts

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ whiteboard and dry-erase marker

4. TEACHING/DISCUSSION **10 MIN**

Using the teaching points, teach through the lesson for today.

5. OBJECT LESSON 2 **15 MIN**

Cooperation Relay

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ twelve bandannas
- ✓ about 120 colored connecting blocks (forty blocks each of three different colors)
- ✓ one long table

6. SWORD BIBLE MEMORY **5 MIN**

7. ACTIVITY TIME **10 MIN**

Color a Picture

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ coloring page for NT Lesson 53—one for each child
- ✓ markers or crayons

8. CLOSING PRAYER **5 MIN**

9. BONUS OBJECT LESSON **10 MIN**

Powered by the Same Spirit

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ three electric appliances: an electric light, an electric fan, an electric hair dryer
- ✓ an extension cord or power strip with room for three plugs

TOTAL 85 MIN

PREPARING TO TEACH

TEACHING POINTS

The Spirit of God and his gifts exalt Christ—The Corinthian church was struggling—struggling with immorality (1 Corinthians 5:1), lawsuits among believers (1 Corinthians 6:1–11), and divisions (see 1 Corinthians 1:11–12; 3:1–4). Instead of being an interdependent, connected family of believers, the members of the Corinthian church were competitive and divided.

In addressing spiritual gifts within this church, Paul first reaffirmed the solid foundation upon which the Spirit of God operates. First, the Spirit of God testifies to Christ. No true Christian testimony can come except by the Spirit of God. Secondly, all gifts come from the same Spirit and are therefore given for the ministry of Christ. God’s gifts, though given to individuals, are for the common good—that is, for the good of the body of Christ, which is the church.

Every Christian is a dependent part of the body—One of the most helpful pictures of the church is Paul’s analogy of the church as a body. Though each member has a different role, we are all important for the effective functioning of the body. None of us can say we don’t need others in the church. Since we have all been given different gifts, we need each other. Our gifts and placement in the body have been sovereignly directed by God (1 Corinthians 12:18). There are two ways we can reject God’s design. First, we can live in a prideful independence and say to others, “I have no need of you” (1 Corinthians 12:21). Another way we reject God’s design is to live in self-pity and say, “I’m not good enough” or “I don’t belong” (1 Corinthians 12:15–16).

Christ is the head of the body—Paul tells us that we are the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:27). In Ephesians, Paul also explains that Christ is “the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior” (Ephesians 5:23b). The whole church—all the people in it—are called to work together in unity under the direction of Christ (Ephesians 3:6).

Where Is the Gospel?

How does today's Bible story fit into God's greater plan of redemption?

Christ is at the center of Paul's entire discussion regarding gifts. In 1 Corinthians 12:3, Paul tells us that the Spirit helps us to exalt Christ in our words. The gifts are also meant to exalt Jesus. The gifts are given not for individual benefit and pleasure but for the benefit of the church.

The Spirit of God poured out his gifts for the purpose of building the church. The church is called the body of Christ because the Spirit of Christ lives in us. We are to use our gifts to bless one another and to reach out to others with the gospel. This is only possible because God has changed our hearts. Apart from the gospel we are selfish and use our gifts for our own glory. Though God has given various gifts to individual members, all believers are to pursue their spiritual gifts to strengthen the body of Christ.

THE LESSON

OPENING REVIEW 5 MIN

Use last week's lesson outline to review with the children what they learned.

BIBLE STORY 10 MIN

Read 1 Corinthians 12:12–31 from the Scriptures or read story 131, "The Body of Christ," from *The Gospel Story Bible*.

OBJECT LESSON 1 15 MIN

God Has Given Us Gifts

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ whiteboard and dry-erase marker

Have the class tell you who the most important people are in your church and why. Write their names on the board, along with why the children think they are important. After writing about

ten names help the children see how different folks have different gifts. You should end up with a list of people who have different gifts that operate in the church but who all depend on each other. Ask the children how each person on the list benefits from the others.

TEACHING/DISCUSSION 10 MIN

Using the teaching points, teach through the lesson for today.

OBJECT LESSON 2 10 MIN

Cooperation Relay

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ twelve bandannas
- ✓ about 120 colored connecting blocks (forty blocks each of three different colors)
- ✓ one long table

Tie up two teams of three as follows. Tie the first person’s hands and ankles but leave his eyes free. Tie up the second person’s hands and blindfold him but leave his legs free. Tie up the third person’s ankles and blindfold him but leave his hands free. Each team should have one person with eyes free, one person with legs free, and one person with arms free. Assign a color to each team. Each team needs to separate their blocks, connect them into a structure of some kind, then walk them across the room to a designated location. The first team to complete the assignment is the winner.

This exercise illustrates how we need each other in the church. Talk about the two sinful responses found in Paul’s description of the body in 1 Corinthians 12:14–22. The first group consists of members who, out of self-pity or jealousy of others’ gifts, want to quit (see 1 Corinthians 12:14–16). The second group are members who out of pride think they are better than others and do not need them (see 1 Corinthians 12:21–22).

SWORD BIBLE MEMORY 5 MIN

Take time during the class to review the SWORD Bible Memory verses with the class. Provide the opportunity for each child to recite the verses to an adult worker.

ACTIVITY TIME 10 MIN

Color a Picture

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ coloring page for NT Lesson 53—one for each child
- ✓ markers or crayons

While the children are coloring, engage them by asking the following questions:

- **What is the problem with the person in the drawing?**
(He doesn't have arms. He has ears where his arms should be.)
- **What problems do you think this person would have living without arms?**
(He wouldn't be able to pick up things, write, etc.)
- **What do you think this person might be really good at doing?**
(With extra ears this person might be really good at hearing.)
- **Why would the person in the drawing need other people to help him?**
(If necessary review today's story [1 Corinthians 12:14-20]. This person might need others to help him carry things, open doors, etc.)

CLOSING PRAYER 5 MIN

Pick several children to pray prayers based on the day's Scripture passages.

BONUS OBJECT LESSON 10 MIN

Powered by the Same Spirit

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ three electric appliances: an electric light, an electric fan, an electric hair dryer
- ✓ an extension cord or power strip with room for three plugs

Plug all the appliances into the cord and then plug the extension cord into an outlet in class. One by one show the different objects to the class and ask them what they do to serve. Then turn on the light. Ask the class what gives it power. (Electricity comes through the cord from

inside the wall.) Do the same with the other appliances. Then ask how these appliances are like Paul's description of the body in 1 Corinthians 12. (The different appliances serve different roles. They have different gifts but they are all powered by the same power source. So it is in the church. God gives different gifts to different people [1 Corinthians 12:7–10, 29–30], but it is the same Holy Spirit who empowers them all [1 Corinthians 12:11].)

LESSON 53 - THE BODY OF CHRIST

