

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 ACTIVITY AND INTRODUCTION 5 MIN

2. BIBLE STORY 10 MIN

SUPPLIES: *The Gospel Story Bible* (story 131)

3. BIBLE STORY DISCUSSION 5 MIN

Where Is the Gospel?

SUPPLIES: Bible (ESV preferred); Review “Where Is the Gospel?” to prepare

4. SNACK QUESTIONS 10 MIN

SUPPLIES: snack food and beverage

5. SWORD BIBLE MEMORY 5–10 MIN

6. ACTIVITIES AND OBJECT LESSONS (CHOOSE ONE OR MORE) 20–30 MIN

Coloring Activity

SUPPLIES: coloring page for NT Lesson 53—one for each child; markers or crayons

Can I Join Your Club?

SUPPLIES: a puppet

I Have No Need of You

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ a bandanna
- ✓ two lengths of cord
- ✓ toddler puzzle (5 pieces or less)
- ✓ table
- ✓ chairs

7. CLOSING PRAYER 5 MIN

TOTAL 60–75 MIN

THE LESSON**OPENING ACTIVITY AND INTRODUCTION 5 MIN**

In today's lesson the children will learn how God has brought different people together to form the church and how we each have gifts to contribute.

Ask the children to tell you what they think is the most important part of their body. Prime them by asking if they think the most important part is the eye, ear, hand, brain, or foot. (When they answer, try to get them to tell the reason behind their choice.)

Once you get through the class, take an example like an ear and ask, "What if our whole body were an ear, what wouldn't we be able to do?" (We would not be able to see, or walk, or talk.) Do this multiple times for various parts of the body. Then go on to draw the point of the exercise. Tell the class that even though a part might be important, unless you have all the parts together the body just does not work very well.

This is how it is with God's church too. We all need each other. God has given us different gifts and together we help each other. Ask the children what they think their gifts are. Are they strong? Clever? Smart? Can they solve problems? Can they fix things? Sing well? Draw well? Then give examples of how gifts complement other gifts, e.g., how someone who can solve problems might be helped by someone with strength.

Have all the children form a circle and hold hands. Tell them that God designed the church so that if one person is missing or doesn't do their job there is a hole. Tap one person on the shoulder and have them leave the circle. Then show how the others need to stretch to make up for the blank space. God planned that every person in the church has a part to play.

Take time to pray and thank God for including us in his plan. Pray for the remainder of the class time before moving forward with the lesson.

BIBLE STORY 10 MIN

Read story 131, "The Body of Christ," from *The Gospel Story Bible*.

BIBLE STORY DISCUSSION **5 MIN**

After reading the story, use the following questions to involve the children in a discussion:

- **What does today's story teach us?**
(Christians are members of Christ's body. We all need each other because we have each been given different gifts.)

- **What are some of the gifts God gave the Corinthians?**
(some were apostles, some prophets, some teachers, some performed miracles, some were healers, some were helpers, some administrators, some spoke in tongues [1 Corinthians 12:27–28])

- **What do we all have in common?**
(We all share in the Holy Spirit no matter what our gifts are.)

SNACK QUESTIONS **10 MIN**

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

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.

- Why are different people with different gifts called Christ's body?
(The only reason we can come together as God's body is because Jesus died on the cross for our sins. Jesus is called the head of the church.)
- Read through the list of gifts in 1 Corinthians 12:27–28 then ask the children why God gives these kinds of gifts to the church.
(Jesus gave gifts to believers for the benefit of the church, using people to administrate grace for the benefit of the church.)
- Explain to the children how the different gifts help the church.

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.

ACTIVITIES AND OBJECT LESSONS. 20–30 MIN

Coloring Activity

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.)

Can I Join Your Club?

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ a puppet

The object of this puppet skit is to talk about the church being Christ's body. Use the following discussion to talk about the gospel with the children.

PUPPET: Hey, how is everybody doing?

TEACHER: We are doing fine, Puppet. How are you?

PUPPET: I'm doing fine. Can I join your club? It looks like fun!

TEACHER: Well, I'm afraid this isn't a club, Puppet.

PUPPET: Well, when I drove up I saw this great big building and thought for sure it was some kind of club, or school... that's it! I'll bet this is a school!

TEACHER: Nope, we are really not a school. They do call this class Sunday school, but we are not a school.

PUPPET: Aha, a Sunday school! That means this building is a church.

TEACHER: Well, now you are correct. But the building is a church building. The actual church body is made up of all the people who are a part of the church.

PUPPET: A body! What do you mean by a body? How can more than one person be a body?

TEACHER: The Bible describes the church as a body and the head is Jesus Christ himself. We are like his arms and legs. Though each of us is a different part and has different gifts, by working all together we form something bigger than ourselves!

PUPPET: Well, can I join your body?

TEACHER: Anyone who places his hope in Jesus Christ and his death on the cross becomes a part of his body, the church.

PUPPET: I guess I'll have to be an arm or an eye or something because you already have a head and I don't have any feet! *(Puppet shows his lower body with no legs and then laughs.)*

Draw out the class to help Puppet. Ask questions such as, "Can anybody help Puppet understand what we are talking about?" Then, work with the children's answers using the puppet to draw them out. Help everyone understand that Paul's language was only a picture of how we are to work together—we are not real parts of a real body.

I Have No Need of You

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ a bandanna
- ✓ two lengths of cord
- ✓ toddler puzzle (5 pieces or less)
- ✓ table
- ✓ chairs

Recruit three volunteers from class. Blindfold the first volunteer, gently tie the hands of a second volunteer behind his back, and tie the legs of the third volunteer together. Bring out the child's puzzle and place it on a table.

Explain to the volunteers that they will need to walk, not hop, over to the puzzle, bring it back to a table with chairs and put it together. Remind them not to talk as they work. Their handicaps should force them to work together and thus illustrate the Scripture lesson of the day. When the exercise is completed, talk about the wisdom of God in giving us different gifts.

CLOSING PRAYER **5 MIN**

Take time at the end of class to thank God for what you learned today. Include parts of your Bible lesson in your prayer as a way for the children to remember today's lesson.

LESSON 53 - THE BODY OF CHRIST

