

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 10 MIN

List the 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

We Need Each Other

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ fifteen bandanas
- ✓ 120 connecting blocks in a variety of colors
- ✓ one long table

6. SWORD BIBLE MEMORY 5 MIN

7. ACTIVITY TIME 15 MIN

Bodies and The Body

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ paper
- ✓ crayons, markers, or colored pencils

8. CLOSING PRAYER 5 MIN

9. BONUS OBJECT LESSON 25 MIN

Part of the Body Skit

TOTAL 100 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).

A LITTLE BIT MORE

Body of Christ

Paul uses the analogy of a body to describe the church. He brings the analogy to life in 1 Corinthians 12 but also uses the term elsewhere, e.g., Romans 7:4 and Ephesians 4:12. In Ephesians 1:22–23 Paul tells us that Christ is the head of the body, which is the church. (See a similar declaration in Colossians 1:18.)

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 10 MIN

List the Gifts

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ whiteboard and dry-erase marker

We can falsely assume that the gifts listed in the Bible are the only gifts and that other gifts don't exist or are less important. The lists in the Bible are not exhaustive. If a person is a

gifted artist, for instance, they have a spiritual gift even though a gift of art is not specifically mentioned. The reality is that all gifts come from God (see James 1:17) and can be given and stirred by the Spirit to build up the church.

Make a list of all the gifts you see in the lives of the people in your church that work to build up the church and keep it functioning. Then draw out the children and ask them what they think some of their gifts might be.

Finish by asking the class what all the gifts are designed to do. The answer, of course, is to promote the gospel and advance the kingdom. The gifts are to build up the church so it can grow.

TEACHING/DISCUSSION 10 MIN

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

OBJECT LESSON 2 15 MIN

We Need Each Other

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ fifteen bandanas
- ✓ 120 connecting blocks in a variety of colors
- ✓ one long table

The object of this lesson is to demonstrate the way the various parts of the body work together and need each other.

Ask for twelve volunteers and divide them into four teams of three. Give each team a pile of thirty colored blocks. Explain to the team that they are going to sort the blocks by color, connect all the blocks of the same color, and finally take the connected blocks to your desk (or a spot you designate). The first team to finish wins.

Ask the teams if they are ready and then just before starting say, “Oh, I almost forgot.” Pull out the bandanas and do the following:

- Team one: Tie their hands together behind their backs.
- Team two: Blindfold them all.
- Team three: Tie their legs together at the ankles.

Team four: Tie up 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.

Use this to talk about why it is important for all of us to work together in the church. Talk about how the different gifts God has given people in your church work together. For instance, what would it be like if everyone wanted to serve but no one wanted to preach or vice versa?

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 15 MIN

Bodies and the Body

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ paper
- ✓ crayons, markers, or colored pencils

Draw a body by grouping smaller drawings of people to make up the arms and legs of a body. You might draw one person from the elbow to the hand, another for the forearm. Two each for the legs and one or two to form the trunk of the larger body. Write the word "Christ" where the head should be. Color each person differently. Talk to the class about how we work together in the church to form the body of Christ.

CLOSING PRAYER 5 MIN

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

BONUS OBJECT LESSON 25 MIN

Part of the Body Skit

Divide the class into teams and have them pick one of the two following ideas and create a skit:

SKIT 1: In this scenario Person 1 who is not as outwardly gifted as the others starts to feel sorry for herself and confides in Person 2 that they are not going to go to church anymore because they are not gifted. Person 2 should tell the others in the group. They all gather round dejected Person 1 and assure her of her importance. Pick one of the following areas to inspire her in:

■ **encouragement**

(Use kind words and deeds to support those who are more outwardly gifted.)

■ **servanthood**

(Those who have more public gifts could never do what they do without behind-the-scenes support.)

■ **administration**

(It takes a lot of hard work to make anything happen, and Person 1 can always be counted on to organize events and see that everything gets done well.)

SKIT 2: In scene one, Person 1 thinks they are better than the others and they pridefully tell the group that they can do just fine on their own. In scene two, Person 1 is in need of help, but there is no one to help them unless they repent of their former arrogance. Choose from the following scenarios:

Person 1 loses a wallet and wants others to help find it, but there is no one to help.

Person 1 is asked to organize and lead a skit for the youth ministry and realizes that to get help it will be necessary to go back and ask forgiveness.

Person 1 forgets to bring a lunch on a field trip. After refusing to share lunch, he needs to go back to those who offered him food and ask for something to eat.

Take time to perform the skits for the class and talk about how, in the body of Christ, we all need each other.