

Many Parts, One Body

Grades
3-4

BODY

1 CORINTHIANS 12:12-31

What's happening in this story?

Paul is writing to a community of Christians divided by their spirituality. However, they deem some gifts as less valuable than others. Paul uses an extended analogy of the human body to explain how every part is important and is to be honored. Because the focus here is on the unity of the church, the gifts Paul highlights relate to ministry: prophecy, teaching, healing, leadership, and so on.

What does this story mean for kids?

Kids will hear the words *ear*, *eye*, *foot*, and so on and think: *This is a story about bodies*. Because their thinking is still so literal—especially among the younger ones—they will need help making the jump to the bigger picture Paul presents. They can extend the concept to see that each of us is unique and valuable, not meant to be someone else.

Why this theme?

People from all walks of life make up the church, and they all bring different talents to the table. The Christian church is always healthiest when people are respected as unique individuals and welcomed as part of the body of Christ.

AGE LEVEL TIP

Kids this age are losing their childhood clumsiness and are able to move with more grace and control. All the body parts are finally working together! Today is a great opportunity to celebrate all of the diverse contributions kids this age can make to God's world.



GENERAL SUPPLIES

- Crayons
- Pens
- Pencils
- Markers

LESSON SUPPLIES

- Mural paper
- Play dough
- Plastic knives (1 per kid)

Do some kids arrive early? Try this.

Lay out a large piece of mural paper. Have kids use a crayon to trace around a kid who is lying down. Label the body parts that can be identified from the silhouette. More time? Trace hands and feet.

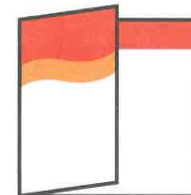
Circle up with kids for an opening conversation.

Who can roll your tongue? Wiggle your ears? Pat your head and rub your tummy at the same time? Enjoy some time for goofing off and let kids work out excess energy before diving into the lesson. **Our bodies are wonderful creations. God gave us different body parts and different talents and gifts to contribute different things to God's world. The word *body* can also mean more than just our own physical body. It can refer to a larger group of people or things that work together. Christians are one body in Christ, with many different parts.**

Pray together: **Dear God, thank you for making us part of your body! Help us to work together so that all parts of the body of Christ know your love. Amen.**

Pass out leaflets and pens.

Have you had a day when you lazed around and slept the whole time? What did you feel like afterward? What would happen if you did this all the time? Have you ever pigged out on candy all day? How did you feel? In each of the spaces on the leaflet, write or draw one way you help keep your body healthy. Ideas include getting enough sleep, eating healthy foods, exercising, playing outside, learning, reading, etc. **How is our church like a body? What can we do to keep our church healthy too?**



Gather kids around the screen where you'll watch the video.

When have you felt really awkward or uncomfortable around new people? Have you attended someone else's church and discovered differences? Pay attention to the many differences our Whirl friends experience today.

View Episode 13, "Second First Church," on the Year Gold Winter Grades 3–6 DVD.

Ask kids these questions about the video:

- **Why do the Whirl kids have to worship in a different church building?**
- **What makes them feel uncomfortable being there?**
- **How do you think you would feel? Why?**
- **At first the kids don't like each other much. How does that change?**
- **How do the two churches use their different gifts to work together?**



Open your Whirl Kids Study Bibles.

Today's passage is from the book of 1 Corinthians. It's in the New Testament in the Letters of Paul section of the Bible. Invite kids to check out the book introduction and comic on page 1366.



Just like today, people in the early churches didn't always get along. Paul wrote a letter to the church in the city of Corinth when the members there were disagreeing. Paul explains that while individual members have different God-given gifts, they are all valuable to God.

Help kids find 1 Corinthians 12:12-31 and read it in this creative way together: Ask kids to gather in a circle. Here's today's challenge. The whole time we read, hold up one hand or one foot, touch your ear, or close one eye. Choose hand, foot, ear, or eye. Ready? Ask kids to read verse by verse.

Invite kids to check out what Gabe says about 1 Corinthians 12:14-21.

Ask these questions after you read the story:

- Why do you think Paul compares the members of a church to members of a person's body?
- Read verse 15 again. Is a foot any less important than a hand? Why or why not?
- Someone in our church is good at singing. Another is good at teaching kids. In what ways are they both important?
- What are the different members that Paul names in verses 28–30? What are some similar roles in our church today?
- Since all members of a body can be useful, which part of the body of Christ do you think you are?

Make your mark on the Wall Chart.

Look at the chart and find the theme for today. Give kids time to find the word *Body*. Paul wrote that every part of the body matters. We are one body in Christ, with many different gifts to share. Invite kids to work together to draw a stick figure in the box by *Body*, with each kid drawing at least one part of the figure.



BIBLE BIT

In this passage, prophets are those called to challenge the community to greater faithfulness. Teachers clarify the gospel and teach core doctrines.

WATCH IT AGAIN

If you watch the video again, invite kids to pick the character from either church with whom they identify most closely.

OUR CHURCH

Look at a list of church leaders and role descriptions for your congregation to see all the different parts that work together.

RESPOND 10

Open leaflets and pass out pens, pencils, play dough, and plastic knives.

Tear off leaflet square.

1. Help kids find a partner. Give each pair two plastic knives and enough play dough to mold a body.
2. **When people call the church *the body of Christ*, they are saying that every part or person is important and contributes something that is needed by the others. You are going to work in pairs to mold different body parts out of play dough, then put them together to create one body.**
3. Each pair of kids makes one body using the shapes on their leaflets as a pattern. **Decide which two body parts you will make first. Use the knife to cut the first two parts and the pencil to add details.**
4. After the first two body parts are finished, ask partners to name how each part might be used in the church. Ushers use legs. Singers at worship use their head. People serving food use their hands. **Write your ideas on the leaflet in the body part shapes.**
5. Repeat twice until each team has a completed body. **Let's talk about all the many things we've named that the body of Christ—the church—does together.**
6. Work together to clean up and find a place to display the creations. **When we all work as one, the clean-up goes quickly. What else can we do more efficiently at church when we all contribute our time and gifts?**

LAUNCH 10

Circle up with kids for a quick review.

The body of Christ is made of many different parts. No part is any more important than another. Our common and unique gifts unite us in Christ. What are some gifts that the people in this class can contribute to the body of Christ?

Return to the leaflet panels and pass out markers.

Ask kids to sit in a circle. **Everyone is important in our church.** Look at each photo and discuss all of the different contributions members of the body of Christ make at your church. **In the space in the middle, draw or write the name of another person who is a member of the body of Christ.**

Send kids out with a blessing.

Circle up with kids. **God blesses all of us. And that means me** (place a hand on your chest). **And that means you** (place your other hand on the shoulder of the kid next to you). Each kid passes the blessing by repeating those words and actions. When the blessing makes it back to you, say, **Go and bless the world.**

Thank kids for coming today. Remind them of the Family Square on the other side of the leaflet.