

The Race You Can't Win Alone

UPPER ELEMENTARY LESSON PLAN

Theme: Pentecost Sunday

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 12:12-22

Memory Verse: For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. - 1 Corinthians 12:12

The Children's Sermon

You'll need:

- Fogged glasses, mitts for hands, leg splints, earplugs, or sound-resistant earmuffs, rope to tie legs of each other together.

Does anyone know what day it is today in the Church? - answers

Today is Pentecost. That is the day we celebrate God the Holy Spirit. Pentecost is a day we remember the Holy Spirit coming down from heaven like tongs or pieces of flames on the Apostles. When the Holy Spirit came to the Apostles, God gave them all sorts of gifts that Jesus had to help them show everyone Jesus' love.

I have a game for us to play this morning. It is a race to see who can get to the back of the church first but, we have some strange rules. I am going to make it just a little harder than just running to the back of the church. The first rule is no one can win unless everyone wins.

(Handing out props)

- You (give fogged glasses) can't see where you are going
- You (leg splints) can't walk
- You (ear plugs) can't hear
- You two (rope) have to use each others legs
- You (no prop) have to tell everyone how to do it but you can't talk
- You (mitts) can't use your hands to help

Do you think you can make it? (answers)

The bible tells us how we can do it. (Read 1 Corinthians 12:12-22 out loud to the kids)

Today we're going to learn about how we all need to work together, like a big team, to do great things. This idea is called Unity in the Body of Christ.

The Bible tells us that just like our bodies have many parts – like eyes, ears, hands, and feet – Christians are all parts of one big body, which is the Body of Christ. Even though we're all different, we belong together and need each other.

So, let's think about our bodies for a minute. Imagine if your feet decided they didn't want to be part of your body anymore because they weren't hands. That sounds silly, right? Your feet help you run, jump, and walk. Every part of your body has a special job, and it's the same with us in the church. We all have our own special jobs to do. That's Unity in the Body of Christ.

Now, imagine if the whole body was just an eye. How would you hear your favorite song or smell fresh cookies? It wouldn't work very well. God made our bodies to have different parts for a reason, and He made us all different for a reason too. We all have our own special skills and gifts that we can use to help each other. That's what makes us strong. That's Unity in the Body of Christ.

Sometimes, we might think that some jobs or gifts are more important than others. But that's not true. The Bible tells us that every part of the body is important, even the parts that seem small or weak. We can't say to someone, "I don't need you!" because we all need each other. That's how we work best. That's Unity in the Body of Christ.

Let's think about a puzzle. Each piece is different, right? Some are edge pieces, some have funny shapes, and some might seem really small. But to complete the puzzle, we need every single piece. If even one piece is missing, the puzzle isn't complete. We are like those puzzle pieces in the Body of Christ. We all fit together to make something beautiful. That's Unity in the Body of Christ.

So, what can we do to make sure we're working together in unity? First, we can be kind and listen to each other. We can also be willing to help, even with small things, because every little bit helps. And we can celebrate each other's gifts, cheering each other on, because when one of us does well, we all do well. That's Unity in the Body of Christ.

Now, let's pray together. Dear God, thank you for making each of us special and giving us gifts to share. Help us to work together in unity, to be kind, and to help each other. Please show us how we can use our gifts to make our church and our world a better place. We love you, God. Amen.

Bible Memory Verse

For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. - 1 Corinthians 12:12

You Will Need:

- Colored construction paper
- Scissors
- Glue sticks
- Markers

Get Ready:

- Cut the construction paper into various shapes and sizes, representing different parts of the body (e.g., circles for heads, rectangles for arms and legs, etc.).
- Prepare a large piece of poster board to serve as the base where the body parts will be assembled.

Do This:

1. Begin by discussing the memory verse and what it means to be part of the body of Christ, emphasizing how each part is different but all are important.
2. Have each child select different colored paper shapes to represent various body parts. Encourage them to think about what part of the body they feel they are in the body of Christ and why.
3. Together, as a class, assemble the paper shapes onto the poster board to form one large body. As they add their piece, have them share why they chose that particular part and how it contributes to the body of Christ.

4. Once the body is complete, discuss how it looks with all the different parts working together, relating it back to the scripture and how we, as individuals, work together in the church.

Bible Interactive Experience

You'll Need:

- A large poster board
- Markers or colored pencils
- Sticky notes or small pieces of paper
- Tape or glue
- Scissors
- Bible or printed copies of 1 Corinthians 12:12-22

Get Ready:

1. Before the class, draw a large outline of a body on the poster board. Leave enough space around each part of the body to stick notes or attach pieces of paper.
2. Write each verse from 1 Corinthians 12:12-22 on separate sticky notes or pieces of paper. Make sure you have enough for each child to have at least one.
3. Set up a table or space where the kids can access the markers or colored pencils, sticky notes or pieces of paper, and tape or glue.

Do this:

1. Begin by reading 1 Corinthians 12:12-22 aloud with the children. Discuss the meaning of the passage, emphasizing how each part of the body is important and how we, as members of the church, are like different parts of one body.
2. Hand out the sticky notes or pieces of paper with the verses written on them to each child. Ask them to think about what part of the body their verse might represent (e.g., a

verse about helping might represent the hands, a verse about speaking the truth might represent the mouth, etc.).

3. Invite the children to come up to the poster board one at a time and attach their verse to the part of the body they think it represents. They can use the markers or colored pencils to draw a symbol or write a word that represents their verse next to where they've placed it on the body.

4. Once all the verses are attached, have a group discussion about how each part of the body (and each verse) is essential to the functioning of the whole. Highlight how this teaches us the importance of every member in the church, no matter how big or small their role may seem.

5. Conclude the activity with a prayer, asking God to help each child recognize their unique gifts and the important role they play in the body of Christ.

Snack Activity: Body of Christ Fruit Salad

You'll Need:

- A variety of fruits (grapes, strawberries, blueberries, apples, oranges, bananas, etc.)
- Large bowl
- Cutting boards and safe knives for children
- Small bowls and spoons for serving

Get Ready: Gather all your fruits, wash them, and set up a cutting area for the children to safely slice the fruits with supervision.

Do this:

1. Read 1 Corinthians 12:12-22 together and discuss how each of us is a unique part of the Body of Christ, just like each fruit is unique but all are important to make a delicious fruit salad.

2. Assign each child a fruit and explain how it represents a different gift or part of the Body of Christ. For example, grapes could represent joy, apples could be for peace, etc. As they prepare their fruit, they can share how they think they are a part of the Body of Christ.
3. Combine all the fruits into a large bowl to make a fruit salad. As you do, emphasize how each fruit contributes to the overall flavor and beauty of the salad, just like each of us contributes to the Body of Christ. Serve in small bowls and enjoy together, celebrating the diversity and unity in the Body of Christ.

Game Activity: Body of Christ Relay

You'll Need:

- A large open space (either outdoors or a large hall)
- Cones or markers to designate start and end points
- Objects to represent different spiritual gifts (e.g., a heart for compassion, a book for teaching, a band-aid for healing, etc. - at least one for each child)
- Baskets or boxes for each team at the start line

Get Ready: Divide the children into teams. Place the cones or markers to create a start and end point for the relay. At the end point, spread out the objects that represent spiritual gifts. Place a basket or box for each team at the start line to collect their gifts.

Do this:

1. Explain to the children that just as our bodies have many parts with different functions, the church, the body of Christ, is made up of many members with different gifts. Read or summarize 1 Corinthians 12:12-22.
2. On 'Go,' the first child from each team runs to the end point, chooses a spiritual gift, and runs back to place it in their team's basket.

3. Once they've placed their gift in the basket, the next child in line goes. This continues until all the gifts are collected.
4. Gather the children and discuss the different gifts they chose. Emphasize how each gift is important and how we must work together as the body of Christ, valuing each member's contribution.

Craft Activity: Unity in Diversity: The Body of Christ

Craft

You'll Need:

- Colored construction paper
- Scissors
- Markers or crayons
- Glue or tape
- A large piece of poster board or a bulletin board

Get Ready: Before the activity, cut out several different shapes (circles, squares, triangles, etc.) from the colored construction paper. Each shape will represent a different part of the body of Christ, as described in 1 Corinthians 12:12-22.

Do this:

1. Begin with a discussion on 1 Corinthians 12:12-22, focusing on how each of us is a unique part of the Body of Christ, yet we all work together in unity. Explain how our differences make the body complete.
2. Give each child a selection of the pre-cut shapes and ask them to decorate each one with markers or crayons, encouraging them to think about the different gifts or talents

they can offer to the Body of Christ. They can write words like 'helping', 'teaching', 'encouraging', etc., on their shapes.

3. Once the shapes are decorated, have the children come together to arrange their shapes on the poster board or bulletin board to create a unified body. As they work on this, discuss how each piece is necessary and how beautiful the body of Christ is when we all work together in harmony.

Prayer Activity: Unity in Diversity: A Pentecost

You'll Need:

- Different colored pieces of paper
- Pens or markers
- A large poster board and glue

Get Ready: Cut the colored paper into flame shapes, symbolizing the flames of the Holy Spirit from the Pentecost story.

Do this:

1. Read 1 Corinthians 12:12-22 together, focusing on how each of us is a unique part of the Body of Christ, just like each flame is unique, but all are needed to make a fire.
2. Ask each child to choose a flame and write or draw a prayer or a talent/gift they feel they contribute to their community or church on their flame. Encourage them to think about how their unique abilities and qualities help strengthen the Body of Christ.
3. Gather all the flames and together, create a large fire on the poster board by gluing the flames in a collective shape. As you do, discuss how each flame (each child's contribution) is crucial to the whole, illustrating the message of unity and diversity within the church. Conclude with a group prayer, thanking God for the diversity of gifts and the unity of the Spirit.