

# Honor the Body

## 1 CORINTHIANS 12:12-31

4

### GOAL

Youth recognize how baptism grafts us into the body of Christ and explore their own necessary participation therein.

- A Art
- AM Active/Movement
- AT Abstract Thinking
- C Conversation
- CT Concrete Thinking
- D Drama
- G Game
- M Music
- QC Quiet/Contemplative
- S Service
- T Technology
- X Extra Prep

Note: bit.ly addresses are case-sensitive.



### PRAYER

Holy One, remind me that I am not alone. Show me how my gifts strengthen these youth and the entire body of Christ. Amen.

## THIS SESSION

Baptism connects us to the body of Christ. It occurs within the worshiping community and connects everyone to the worshiping community. Baptism both enlarges the body of Christ and also draws it more closely together. Baptism creates a cohesiveness that celebrates the diversity in the body of Christ. After joining the body of Christ, we simultaneously belong and participate. God does not call us to follow Christ alone or passively. Baptism gives permission for Christians to identify gifts that enhance the worshiping community and insists that the Christian use those gifts.

## THE BIBLE STORY

First Corinthians 12:12–31a uses one of the most famous Pauline metaphors in all of his letters. Paul imagines the body of Christ as a literal body. Parts of the body cannot discount, discredit, or exclude other body parts. The body is complete only when all parts are present and working together. In fact, a body often cannot even exist if it is incomplete. Just as the different parts of the body have different functions, the individual members of the body of Christ serve different functions. All members must contribute to the collective work of the body (the church).

## CONNECTIONS WITH YOUTH

Youth know what it means to belong to a *body*. Most are part of a student body. Many participate on sports teams and in bands or choirs. We are taught from a young age that, when we combine our skills with the skills of others, we can accomplish things that we cannot accomplish alone. The challenge with youth is that they sometimes create and participate in competition within those groups that they are a part of. This lesson will challenge youth to cooperate instead of compete within those groups and within the body of Christ.

## SESSION PREPARATION

- Identify gifts and skills you have for ministry and be able to articulate how they are used within the church and in your discipleship.

Depending on the options you choose:

- “Writing Letters” (p. 31): Reach out to appropriate members of your church to acquire names and addresses.
- “Church Leadership” (p. 32): Invite and prepare church leaders.

# GETTING STARTED

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- Glass of water for each participant

## NOURISHMENT

Give participants a glass of water as they arrive. Invite them to drink the water, and remind them that their bodies are sixty percent water! Ask youth what else they do besides drinking water that helps them nourish their bodies. Also, check in to see what has happened in their lives since you last met.



## INTRODUCING THE PRACTICE

Choose one or both options.

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- Index cards
  - Pens
  - Timer

## MAKING A LIST

G

Form groups of two or three. Give each group at least three index cards and a pen. Groups should select one person to write. Tell youth that we are playing a game with three rounds. In each round, participants write as many correct answers as they can on one index card in sixty seconds. When time is up, each group will read their answers aloud while the leader keeps a total of the number of correct answers. At the end of three rounds, the team with the most correct answers is the winner.

- Make a list of what you see in the credits following a movie.
- Make a list of positions for a soccer/football/baseball team (choose the most popular team sport in your town).
- Make a list of instruments in an orchestra.

After cheering for the winners, tell the group that, in our baptism, we join a huge, diverse body of believers. Like movies, sports teams, and orchestras, it takes many different types of people to form the body of Christ, the church.

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- Signs with locations within the room or building

## GETTING THERE

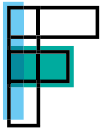
M CT

Form groups of four. Each group should select one *receiver*. The other three are *senders*. One sender for each team will say only “forward” or “backward.” One will say only “right” or “left.” One sender will say only “yes” or “no.”

While receivers have their back to you, hold up a sign of a location within your room or within the church so that senders can see it. Senders then have to get their receivers to that location using only the words they’ve been assigned. Senders may not touch their receivers and should stand behind the receiver so they do not look at each other. Only verbal commands should guide the receiver.

After all receivers have gotten to their assigned location, ask the following questions:

- What skills were necessary to get the receivers to their destinations?
- How were all three senders necessary?
- Could the receiver have gotten to their destination without all three?
- How is this activity like a team sport or something else you do on a team?



## FINDING THE PRACTICE IN THE BIBLE

Choose one or both options.

### BODY PARTS GAME

M C

Form pairs and assign each pair one of the following body parts: hands, feet, ears, eyes, mouth. Tell the pairs that they have 3 minutes to prepare an oral argument to the rest of the body about why they are the most important part of the body. Encourage humor. Have each group make their case to the large group.

Read 1 Corinthians 12:12–31 as a group. Begin by reading the first verse, followed by the person on your right reading the next verse, and so on until the whole passage is read. Wonder together about the lesson in this text and how it applies to their lives.

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Bibles

### MAD LIBS

CT C

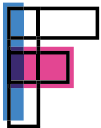
Using Resource Page 1, go around the room asking youth to give you words in each category to fill in the blanks. After all blanks are filled, read the Mad Lib to the whole group.

Then read 1 Corinthians 12:12–31. Ask these questions:

- ➔ What message is Paul trying to send to the recipients of this letter?
- ➔ How is the body of Christ like the parts of an actual body?
- ➔ What types of gifts are important to the body of Christ?
- ➔ How many gifts does this passage list that are important to the body of Christ?
- ➔ How is baptism important in this passage?

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Resource Page 1  
 Bible



## FINDING THE PRACTICE THEN AND NOW

Choose one or both options.

### WRITING LETTERS

QC S

Tell youth that 1 Corinthians 12 talks about honoring the members of the body. Today, the youth have the opportunity to honor their older members by writing letters to them. Give each youth a pen and card or piece of stationery. Give each person the name of an older member of your church and tell the youth what you know about that member and how they contribute to your church body. Encourage youth to write a brief letter to the person, thanking them for what they have done and telling them some things that they enjoy about the church. Collect letters and deliver them after the session.

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Pens  
 Blank cards or stationery  
 Names of older or homebound members of your community

## CHURCH LEADERSHIP

C X

Invite church leaders who serve the church in different ways to join you for this discussion. Have these leaders share how they participate in different ministries of the church and name skills or gifts required to serve in that way. Invite youth to ask questions for clarification. End by having the leaders reflect on the importance of having different types of leaders with different skills within the church.



Church leaders can also video record their answers to these questions in advance, and you can play those recordings instead of having them join in person.



## PRACTICING THE PRACTICE

Choose one or both options.

- Copies of Resource Page 2
- Colored pencils

## SPIRITUAL GIFTS

A QC

Invite youth to find a quiet place in the room. Distribute copies of Resource Page 2 and have plenty of colored pencils accessible to all. Tell participants to read the spiritual gift in each shape. If they think they are good at it or they like to do it, have them color the area the color indicated. Wait a few minutes for everyone to finish.

After everyone has colored, tell them to look at their paper and see which colors they see a lot of and which colors they see little of. Tell them that, in a way, these colors give them some idea of their spiritual gifts and how they might be used in the church.

- Red = gifts for discernment and seeking God's will
- Orange = gifts for caring for others
- Yellow = gifts for building community, helping others feel like they belong
- Green = gifts for arts and creativity
- Blue = gifts for communication and feeling connected
- Purple = gifts for administration and organization

Let youth share their strengths with one another if they wish. Ask how the body of Christ needs each of their strengths. Why is it important for a church to have different types of people that God calls into leadership positions? What leadership positions might fit each of these strengths?

## YES AND . . .

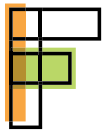
D AT

Invite two youth to face the rest of the group. Their goal is to tell a coherent story together without talking about it first. Have the first person say a sentence that introduces a character or the setting. The second person must start the next line of the story with, “Yes and . . .” They continue telling a story using the phrase “Yes and . . .” to begin each sentence after the first. Let them go back and forth a few times to string together ten to fifteen sentences that tell a story.

Pairs who do this well will be able to tell one story that makes sense without contradicting each other. In fact, each statement will further the plot or conflict of the story. When the first pair is finished, cheer for their efforts and invite another pair to try it. If youth want a challenge, invite more than two youth to tell the “yes and . . .” story together.

After a few minutes of this activity, ask youth:

- ➔ How would the stories be different if you were telling them alone?
- ➔ What’s the advantage or disadvantage of having two people tell the story together?
- ➔ How do we transmit God’s story, alone or in groups?
- ➔ How would God’s story change if it were told by only one person?
- ➔ Why does God need so many different voices telling God’s story?



## FOLLOWING JESUS

Have youth gather in a posture of prayer. Lead the following prayer or one of your own.

Holy Spirit, you have given many gifts and talents to each of us.

Nurture these gifts and help us use them wisely for others. Inspire us to encourage others to use their gifts as well. Make us a complete body of Christ. Amen.

# Mad Lib

A \_\_\_\_\_ from the apostle \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_.  
(noun) (name of person in the room) (name of your church)

For just as the body is \_\_\_\_\_ and has many \_\_\_\_\_, all parts of the body  
(number) (plural nouns)

are one body. If the \_\_\_\_\_ were to say, "Because I am not a/an \_\_\_\_\_  
(part of the body) (part of the body)

I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. And if the

\_\_\_\_\_ were to say, "Because I am not a/an \_\_\_\_\_ I do not belong to  
(part of the body) (part of the body)

the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. If the whole body were

a \_\_\_\_\_, where would the sense of \_\_\_\_\_ be? If the whole body were  
(noun) (verb)

a \_\_\_\_\_, where would the sense of \_\_\_\_\_ be? As it is, we are many  
(noun) (verb)

\_\_\_\_\_ but one body. The \_\_\_\_\_ cannot say to the \_\_\_\_\_  
(plural nouns) (noun) (noun)

"I have no need of you." On the contrary, the members of the body that are

\_\_\_\_\_ are indispensable. Those who are \_\_\_\_\_ do not need this. If one  
(adjective) (adjective)

part is \_\_\_\_\_, all \_\_\_\_\_ with it. Now you are the body of Christ and  
(adjective) (verb)

\_\_\_\_\_ members of it. And God has appointed in the church first \_\_\_\_\_,  
(adverb) (occupation)

second \_\_\_\_\_, third \_\_\_\_\_, then deeds of \_\_\_\_\_, then gifts  
(occupation) (occupation) (noun)

of \_\_\_\_\_, forms of \_\_\_\_\_, forms of \_\_\_\_\_, various kinds of  
(noun) (plural nouns) (plural nouns)

\_\_\_\_\_. All are not the same. Strive for \_\_\_\_\_ gifts. And God will show  
(plural nouns) (plural nouns)

you a more \_\_\_\_\_  
(adjective) (noun)

# Spiritual Gifts

