



2023 | CHILDREN'S LESSON

APRIL 10–MAY 28

“Building up the Body of Christ” EPHESIANS 4:12

Preparation:

- 1 Before the session begins, collect toilet paper tubes and paper towel tubes! Ideally, collect about 10 tubes per participant.
- 2 If you choose to “Play Operation,” acquire or borrow approximately one “Operation” per four children. Make sure all games have working batteries!
- 3 Be aware of any children in this lesson who use their bodies in different ways. For example, if someone does not hear well, be ready to acknowledge that some people “hear” by “seeing” American Sign Language to communicate. Similarly, not everyone moves from place to place with their feet and legs (some use wheelchairs or scooters). Substitute other body parts throughout the lesson as that is helpful to your particular group.

Gathering (10–15 minutes)

As children enter the room, put them in pairs (or small groups) and ask them to build a tower as tall as possible using the toilet paper and paper towel tubes you give them. Give children specific instructions about where the base of the tower should be — the floor or a table. If you use a table, be sure all tables are the same height so that it is easy to see who builds the tallest tower. If a tower accidentally falls over, encourage children to rebuild it.

After most children have had the chance to build for a few minutes, ask them:

- “What makes building this tower easy?”
- “What makes building this tower difficult?”
- “What would help you build your towers even taller?”

If they answer “More tubes!” then encourage children to all combine their tubes together to build a tall tower. If they give other answers, ask them, “What if you combined all your towers together?” After the tallest tower has been built (that your group can build together), tell the children that they did a wonderful job building! “In fact, today, we are going to be talking about building, but we will be talking about building a body!”

Encountering the Word (10–15 minutes)

Form groups of three and give each group a piece of paper and a pencil (be sure someone in the group can write, even if they are not a good speller). Ask the group to write down as many different parts of the body as they can name. Set a timer for three minutes to see who can write down the most. If you wish to give a prize for which group listed the most, you can, but you can also congratulate them verbally!

Ask the children if all the parts of the body they named have the same job. “Why do they all do different things? What would happen if all the parts of the body did the same things?”

Give children copies of Ephesians 4:11–12, 15b–16.

“The gifts [God] gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors, and teachers to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ. ... We must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knitted together by every ligament with which it is equipped as if each part is working properly promotes the body’s growth in building itself up in love.”

For older children, ask them to define the following words: apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, teacher, saint, ministry. Have a dictionary nearby or a computer or phone they can use to look up the words if they are unsure of the definitions.

For younger children, reread the passage (or give them copies) and ask them to circle a word (or raise their hand) every time they hear a word that has something to do with bodies (head, growth, body, ligament, etc.).

After both groups have finished, ask the children why this part of the Bible has so many different parts of the body and so many different jobs. “Is one person supposed to do a lot of different jobs? Is one part of the body supposed to do a lot of different things?” Help children to understand that God wants us all to be different. “It is OK if we are not all alike. Not all parts of our bodies are alike, are they?”

Responding to the Word (20–25 minutes)

Choose one or more of the following activities:

1 For older children — Have lots of different colors of construction paper on hand and scissors for everyone. Ask children to think about what part of the body of Christ they are. Should they be an ear because they are a good listener? Should they be the feet because they are good at sports? Should they be the heart because they have a lot of love? Have children draw the part of the body they think they are on the construction paper and then cut it out. It does not matter if the parts are to scale or not (in fact, if they are not, it makes the next part funnier!).

For younger children — Give the children copies of Resource Page 1 and a pair of scissors. Ask them to cut out the body part that reminds them the most of themselves. Then, color the body part any way they want to color it.

After children have their body parts, ask them to create a new body with their body parts! What does the new body look like? Does it have too many of one thing? Not enough of another? Tell children that the body of Christ is built of all sorts of different parts. Ask children what is missing on their body and make a list as they tell you. Then, point to a body part on your list and ask, “Do we know someone in our church who could be this in the body of Christ?” (For younger children, you might have to say things like “Our intestines keep our insides clean! Who helps keep our church clean?”).

Optional, glue your new “body” together (no matter how silly it looks) and hang it on the wall after it dries as a reminder of what the body of Christ looks like when it needs more people than are just in this lesson!

2 Play Four Corners. Show the children the four corners of the room. Tell them you are going to ask them a question and each question has four answers. When you say an answer, you will point to a different corner of the room. The children should go to the corner of the room that answers the question the closest to how they would answer it (you may have to repeat the questions and answers two or three times so all children can hear). Here are some examples you could use:

- “What kind of vehicle do you like to ride in? Car? Wheelchair? Bicycle? Roller coaster?”
- “If you were part of a play, what would you do? Be an actor/actress? Build the sets? Run the lights? Be the stage manager?”
- “What is your favorite kitchen appliance? A refrigerator? A microwave? The stove? A blender?”
- “What is your favorite vacation spot? The beach? The mountains? An amusement park? Your grandparents’ house?”
- “When you are an adult in the church, would you rather be ... the preacher? A Sunday school teacher? A cook for big meals? A visitor to those who cannot come to church?”
- “If you were in a story, who would you want to be? A dragon? A hero? A villain? A funny person?”
- “Which of these is your favorite sport? Football? Baseball? Volleyball? Basketball?”
- “If you were part of an orchestra, what would you play? Strings (like a violin)? Percussion (drums)? Woodwinds (like a flute or clarinet)? Brass (like a trumpet)?”

Feel free to add questions or situations of your own that you know the children would like.

After playing a few rounds, ask the children:

- “Did you all have the same answers every time? Why not?”
- “Is it OK to like something different than your friends like?”
- “Is it OK to be good at different things than your friends?”
- “Do you think God wants us to be alike or different? Why?”
- “What would our church be like if we were all the same?”

3 Play Operation! Put children in groups of four with an Operation game! Only, the rules are different this time. Start with the oldest player in the group. They need to share one thing they are good at and how they can use that gift in the church! Then, they can try to take something out of the Operation body!

If they are successful, they keep it! If not (meaning you hear a buzzing sound), they put it back and let the next person have their turn!

After the children have removed all parts of the Operation body, put them back in and start again. This time, however, they must share how what they are good at can help their whole community (or even the whole world!). If you have enough adults, put an adult with each group to record what the children are good at and how they can use it to help the church or their community! Share these with parents or caregivers or even the entire congregation so that everyone can be inspired to share their gifts and build up the body of Christ.

Closing Activity

Invite children to sit in a circle and to share one thing that they learned today to do to help build the body of Christ! After all children have shared, say this prayer:

*“Holy God,
Sometimes we feel small and you feel very big;
However, when we share what we are good at,
We are helping to build the body of Christ.
We can be a part of something big!
Thank you for making us all different.
Amen.”*

Extension Options:

With your family, watch the YouTube Video “Dem Bones Skeleton Dance Dry Dancing Bones | Popular Nursery Rhyme” ([youtube.com/watch?v=YjJONLPzGfY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YjJONLPzGfY), 2:27). Ask families to talk about all the bones they learned about! “Why do our bodies need so many different types of bones?”

Give each child a copy of Resource Page 2 and a writing utensil. Ask them to follow the instructions and write (or draw) something next to each body part that they do with that part of their body to serve God! This can be done in worship or at home!

Prepared by Rev. Doodle Harris, Chaplain and Director of Service Learning at Hastings College in Hastings, NE. Doodle has spent the last twenty years serving as a small group facilitator, keynoter, preacher, and curriculum writer at various children’s and youth conferences. She has also served as an associate pastor for Faith Formation and has contributed to the “Follow Me” PC(USA) curriculum, “These Days” devotionals, the APCE blog “The Advocate” and “Lectionary Homiletics” magazine.

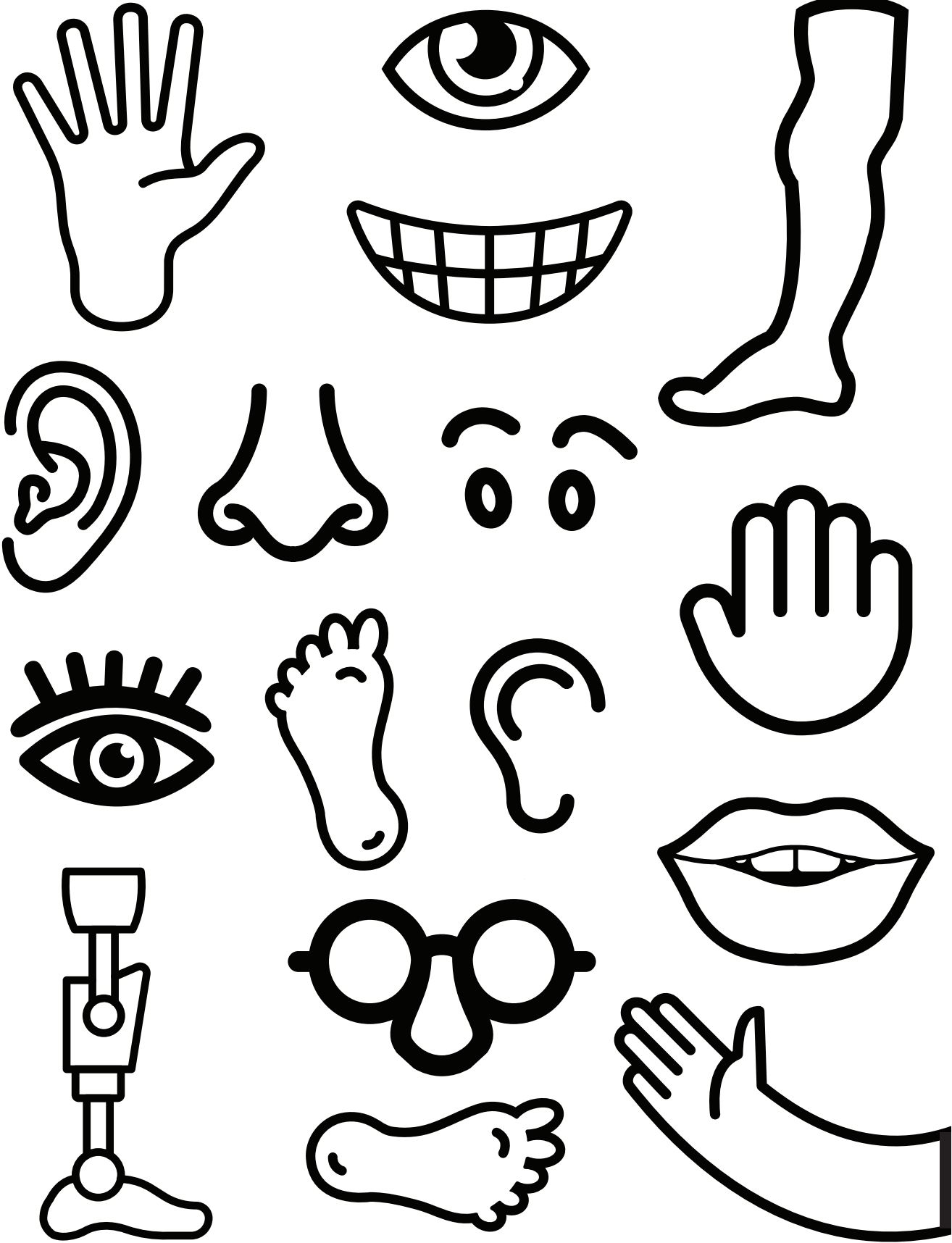


QUESTIONS?

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Resource Page 2:

Pretend this is your body. Next to parts of the body, write or draw something you can do with that part of your body to serve God. For example, if your hands can bake cookies for your neighbors, draw cookies or write “bake cookies” near one of the hands.

