**1. Motivate**

When has being part of a group really helped you succeed?

* playing on a sports team

A video introduction is available. View it at <https://watch.liberty.edu/media/t/1_kwabbdvx>

If you have no Wi-Fi where you teach, best to download to your computer from <tinyurl.com/2uccbmu9>

* working together on a project
* a Bible Study group – encouragement, support
* church prayed for us when family had a health crisis
* working on a construction crew
* church deacons tasked with a project
* mission trip team
* clean up crew after a storm
* kitchen crew on a pancake breakfast fund raiser
* civic club (Rotary, Kiwanis, Lions, etc.)

**2. Transition**

Working as a team multiplies our efforts as individuals.

* This is especially true as members of the Body of Christ, the Church
* Spiritual growth calls for regular interaction with and ministry to other believers.

**3. Bible Study**

3.1 One United Body

Listen for

1 Corinthians 12:12-13 (NIV) The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ. 13 For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body--whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free--and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.

According to this passage, in what way are Christians (the body of believers) like a *human* body?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| The Human Body | The Body of Believers |
| * the body is a unit
* it is made up of many parts
* taken all together, they form one body
 | * the church, the body of believers is a unit, all baptized into one body
* it is made up of many *different* believers
* many parts but one body
* each of you is a part of it
 |

In what way was the human body an apt illustration?

* our bodies are designed by God to have such a variety of parts
* hands and fingers to manipulate
* legs and feet to move us about, muscles to do the movement
* heart and blood to provide energy to all the parts
* sensors … eyes, ears, nose, skin, tongue
* but all these parts cooperate together to accomplish whatever we do

In what ways are believers bound together as one?

* we receive salvation the same way, by faith in Christ
* we receive the indwelling of the same Holy Spirit
* we have the same purpose of life … worship, glorify God, and impact the world together
* we have similar needs of one another
* God empowers us with different gifts so we can minister to one another
* believers of all racial groups, all cultural groups, all nationalities, all languages
* poor and wealthy
* those with common abilities, those with specialized skills

What are the benefits of unity in the church?

* work together to accomplish the Great Commission
* support, encourage, minister to one another
* when one member is hurting, in need … others work together to help
* skills or abilities one member lacks are taken care of by others who are skilled
* then roles are reversed when situations change

What are some ways we can maintain unity in the church?

* be involved in using the skills we do have
* pray for one another
* appreciate the particular skills others have
* celebrate all the skills God has given us
* pray for the different members of the church … the local congregation and the church around the world

3.2 Roles and Responsibilities within the Body

Listen for the attitude “I don’t belong”.

1 Corinthians 12:14-18 (NIV) Now the body is not made up of one part but of many. 15 If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. 16 And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. 17 If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? 18 But in fact God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be..

Why is every member of the church important to the church’s ability to function effectively?

* there is great variety in roles played in the ministry of the church (both locally and globally)
* each is vital
* preaching and teaching will suffer if there is not childcare for babies and toddlers
* visitation outreach will suffer if there is no one praying for them
* choir director and choir members need each other … can’t have all directors and no singers or all singers with no director
* all missionaries with no financial/prayer support or all donors with no missionaries … neither one works

Why should members not brag about or disparage the gifts they have been given or minimize the value of the grace-gifts God has given to others?

* in God’s economy all Spiritual Gifts are needed
* all are equally important
* some may be more visible and receive more attention, but all are needed to carry out God’s purposes
* we don’t know God’s plan or design … He knows best
* possible that one single unseen or unrealized ministry is vital to the success of a church’s outreach

Who arranged the parts of the body of Christ? Why is that significant?

* God did the arranging
* God did the design – both of our physical bodies, and of the church
* we should depend on Him to make them all work together
* we should realize the significance and workability of His design
* we should appreciate each other as God’s design for us as individuals within the church

What body parts come to action when you receive an injury such as a cut?

* feet take you to medicine cabinet
* hands apply antiseptic and band aid
* eyes guide the hand

What elements of the Body of Christ come to action when our church communicates the Gospel message?

* pastor preaches
* musicians lead in worship
* various members invite people to church
* children’s workers minister to kids
* Bible study leaders lead, teachers teach, learners learn, counselors counsel
* people give tithes and offerings to provide resources and pay bills
* people pray for the lost, pray for those who lead the effort
* maintenance people clean the buildings, mow the lawns, trim the shrubs, keep the HVAC working

3.3 Each Believer a Necessary Part of the Body

Listen why every believer is needed.

1 Corinthians 12:19-24 (NIV) If they were all one part, where would the body be? 20 As it is, there are many parts, but one body. 21 The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you!" And the head cannot say to the feet, "I don't need you!" 22 On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, 23 and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, 24 while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has combined the members of the body and has given greater honor to the parts that lacked it,

What did Paul conclude would be the result if each body part were the same?

* we’d be all feet or all hands or all eye, etc.
* each of the body parts need all the others
* can’t be all one thing
* there are too many different needs and functions for one

By implication, what would be the result if we all had the same gift or role within the Body of Christ? Why shouldn’t all Christians perform the same function?

* all singers? no preacher
* all preachers? no listeners
* all maintenance staff? no one to preach, teach, sing, lead

What would be the consequences of this kind of *disunity* in the church?

* energy and time wasted in bickering
* bad testimony to the world
* we fail to accomplish the tasks of ministry
* can drive people away from the church
* the parts of the body are not working together, sometimes working against each other

According to Paul’s argument, which parts of a *physical* body seem to be treated most honorably?

* visible parts
* parts that accomplish great things
* legs that run fast,
* a voice that sings beautifully,
* a brain that solves hard problems
* the skill to preach a powerful sermon

Why do people often assume that certain duties *in the church* are more important?

* that position is more often seen in front or in charge
* “obviously”, the person running things is the most important
* visible jobs are assumed to be important
* if you don’t see someone doing the task, how can it be important
* most anyone could do the behind-the-scenes jobs

Why should the “less honorable” parts be treated with special attention?

* “less honorable” is our perception
* God’s plan/design/intent is not always seen by us
* God died for them, same as us
* there is a special task/gift given to each that only they can fulfill
* we would be incomplete without that person

How can you honor the contributions of others in your church?

* thank them, pray for them
* share with them how important their task is
* have a special time of recognition

Use the last page as a handout so your learners can take home the application points of this week’s lesson.

Application

Talk to someone new.

* Get to know someone in your church you do not know or do not know well.
* Make an intentional effort to build a relationship with the person.

Restore a relationship.

* If you are at odds with someone in your church, get together with the person and seek to work the problem out.
* If you need to confess a wrong attitude or wrong behavior, then do it, and seek to restore that relationship.

Step out and serve.

* Use some of your vacation time to immerse yourself in a new culture and serve a people group that is unfamiliar to you.
* Be part of a mission work that serves the body of Christ in another culture or setting.

Cryptogram Puzzle

One of our agents in Zilny Egeor received this coded message at a secret exchange drop. Our decoding specialist has been banned from social media by his mother, so we need your help. The decoding key is shown below with a sample message to help you see how this works. When you complete the assignment, pass the results as covertly as possible to your Cradle Roll coordinator. If you get stuck go to <tinyurl.com/2uccbmu9>. Other Family Activities there will draw you into the Body of Christ.

 = HELLO WORLD

 = HELLO WORLD

