

Where I Fit In

Meeting 5

Purpose:

Children often feel unimportant in the church. But God desires for children to use their gifts to minister within the church. This meeting will help children as they try to find their important role in ministry.

Bible Material:

The Church as a Body (1 Corinthians 12:12-27)

Warm-up

Get-involved Activity
(10 minutes)

As children arrive, involve them immediately in finding pieces of the puzzles you have prepared and hidden. Ask the children to try to guess the subjects of the puzzles, and recognize the first children to be able to do so.

If you made puzzles without decoration and the children find pieces and assemble the puzzles quickly, consider letting them begin to illustrate the puzzles in a tasteful way. (Remember that the puzzles will be used later in the session and the children will be writing on them.) Engage the children in conversation as they are assembling and decorating the puzzles. Ask: "From looking at the puzzles, what do you think today's meeting is about?"

Tell the children: "You will be using the puzzles of the body and the church during the rest of the meeting. The subject today is 'Where I Fit In.' You're going to learn how you can fit into the life and ministry of our church. That explains the church puzzle, but not the body puzzle. The Bible story today will help you understand how the body is involved in all of this."

Bible Verse:

1 Corinthians 12:27

Extra Bible Verse:

Ephesians 4:16

Provide:

- Large poster board, art paper, or large corrugated cardboard
- Markers
- Scissors

To Do:

- Make 2 large puzzles, 1 in the shape of a body (person) and the other in the shape of a church building. The larger you can make these, the better. If you make them smaller than a poster board, you may want to make more than 1 of each puzzle and cut each puzzle differently. Hide puzzle pieces around the room.

Note: The puzzles will also be used in WORKOUT.

Workout

Group Study
(30 minutes)

1. Begin the meeting. Ask the children to line up in a military-style formation: arms straight, chin up, looking straight ahead. Lead the children in marching around the room. Lead the children to form lines to get ready to sit in a large group. Remind them that they are still in “formation,” so they have to be alert to your commands.

While the children are standing still; give the command, “Sit Down.” Say, “You will learn today how you will better be able to fit into the life and ministry of our church.

2. Learn the Bible verse. Call attention to where you have posted today’s Bible verse. Tell the children that they will learn the verse today by learning motions to parts of the verse. Point out the underlined words and explain that these words have motions. Before introducing the motions, say the verse together as a group.

Introduce the following motions to teach the verse:

“ye or you”—point to someone else

“body”—flex muscles

“members”—hold your hand up showing all fingers and thumb

Divide the group into three teams, giving each team one motion to do as you all say the verse together. Rotate the motions so each team gets to practice each motion. Then give each team two motions. Finally, say the verse together with all of the children doing all of the motions.

Ask: “What does this verse say about how you fit into the life and ministry of your church?” Call on a child to answer. Say: “This verse emphasizes that all Christians make up the body of Christ, the church. If you are a Christian, then you are a part of the body of Christ and you fit into the life and ministry of your church.”

3. Introduce the Bible material. Ask: “After learning the Bible verse, which is part of our story, how do you think the puzzle of the body fits into the meeting today?” Help the children see that thinking about their bodies is one way of helping them understand how the church works. Say: “Today’s Bible story will help you understand how looking at your bodies and then thinking about how your church works can help you learn how you fit into the life and ministry of your church.

4. Tell the Bible story. With your Bible open to 1 Corinthians 12 and the puzzle of the body within easy reach, tell the following Bible story in your own words.

Provide:

- Poster board or paper
- Markers

To Do:

- Write 1 Corinthians 12:27 on poster board or paper and display it in your room. Underline the following words: *ye or you*, *body*, *members*.

Provide:

- Puzzle of body used in WARM-UP
- Markers

The Church as a Body

The apostle Paul spoke about the church and compared it to a body in his first letter to the church at Corinth. That letter is in the Bible. We call it First Corinthians.

Can anyone tell me something about Paul? (Call on children to answer.) Thank you for your answers. Paul was very special because he traveled to churches when he could and helped them by writing to them when he could not visit them.

The church at Corinth had many problems, and Paul wrote to them to help them learn about what they should be doing as a church. Since Paul talked about the church as a body in First Corinthians, let's think about the body for a bit.

The body is made of many different parts. I will call out parts of the body. I will ask several of you to write the word I name on the correct part of the body. (Ask volunteers to label the body puzzle as you call out parts such as: ear, arm, mouth, leg, knee, foot, wrist, and toes.) A body can be made up of many different parts, and still be thought of as just one thing.

Paul said that it is the same way with the church. The church is not made up of just one part, but many parts. A church has many members, but those many members make up just one body. (Point to or pick up and show body parts to the children as you refer to them in the story.)

Paul said, "If the foot should say, 'Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,' it would not for that reason stop being a member of the body." A foot is not a hand, is it? They both have jobs to do in the body. They both fit in.

Paul continued by saying, "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 stop being a member of the body." An ear is not an eye, is it? They both have jobs to do in the body. They both fit in.

Then Paul said, "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?" Paul was making his point by being funny. Think about giant eyes or ears walking around. That's pretty funny. But the giant eye could be run over crossing the street because it couldn't hear a car coming, and so could a giant ear, because it couldn't see a car coming.

The body is made up of many different parts because the body has many jobs to do. All the parts have a reason, a purpose. They fit in. A giant eye or ear may do one thing well, but the body functions better because it does many things well. The parts of the body fit in and do their jobs as they were meant to do them.

Think about the body again. God created you, and He created your bodies. Paul says that God arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. God put your bodies together to work in the best way possible. It would be hard to eat if your mouths were on the bottom of your feet.

All the parts of the body fit in and do their jobs. Paul told the church at Corinth: “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!’” All the parts of the body are needed to fit in and do their job. Think about how tiny blood vessels are. But if they aren’t working right, the whole body will know and the whole body will suffer. If a blood vessel is clogged or cut, the body definitely knows it!

Paul said this when he wrote, “On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor.” God knows how to put the body together, and that’s why your bodies are put together in such a special way.

Paul said, “But God has combined the members and has given greater honor to the parts that lacked it, so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other.” Like I just mentioned with the blood vessels, if one part of the body suffers, the whole body suffers with it. If you hurt your foot, your whole body knows because you have to deal with that hurt foot. You may walk differently, which puts stress on different parts of your body. If you hurt your foot enough to need crutches, then the whole body suffers along with the hurt foot. Just ask the armpits!

But Paul also reminds us, “If one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.” Think about a fast runner. The runner may be praised for fast feet or strong legs, but it took a whole body to run so fast. So a runner winning the race may be praised for fast feet or strong legs, but the whole body rejoices in the praise.

Paul then made his point by saying, “Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.” What did he mean by that? He meant that the church is like your body. It has many parts, or members, and each member fits into the body and has a job. There are pastors and deacons, but there are also many other people who fill jobs in the body of Christ, the church. Every person who is a member of a church has a job, a function, a place to fit in.

Our church is not made up of one huge pastor, or one huge deacon, just as your bodies are not a giant eye or ear. Our church is made up of many members, and each member fits into the body of Christ, the church, and has their own special job to do. That’s what Paul was telling the church at Corinth and, through his letter, telling us today. You do fit into the life and ministry of our church! God has designed you to be part of the body of Christ!

—based on 1 Corinthians 12:12-27

5. Review and apply the Bible story. Move the children to thinking about the church as a body by showing the church puzzle. Say: “Remember that a church body is not a building. But a building is what you think of when you talk about a church. What actually makes up a church?” Help them understand that a church is made up of people, not a building.

Ask: “Is a church made up of one member or part?” (*no, of many parts*) Help the children understand that the church is made up of many parts, just as your body is made up of many parts.

Ask the children to name some of the members of their church. Ask them for the names of people. Ask them to name members who are adults, youth, and children.

Say: “Each of the people you’ve named is a member of our church. Each one of these people has a job in our church, and they fit in. What do these people do in our church?” Discuss the members they named: the pastor, deacons, teachers, ushers, and musicians who fill many functions in your church.

Tell the children: “As you name what these people do in our church, please come and write what they do on the church puzzle.” Try to get a broad range of jobs in your church.

Ask the children: “How do you fit in the life and ministry of our church?” Allow some to respond. Some of the children may be uncomfortable at this point. It may appear from the jobs listed on the puzzle that they do not fit into the life and ministry of your church.

If the following items were not added to the puzzle, add them at this time as you say: “Sometimes you have to think hard to find out how you fit in the life and ministry of your church. Sometimes adults don’t let you know how you fit into the life and ministry of your church. But if you are a member of your church, you fit in!”

Continue by saying: “First of all, something every church member, including you, can do is pray. (Ask a child to write *pray* on the puzzle.) You can fit in by praying for your church and for each other.”

Then say: “You can also do what you’re hopefully doing right now—learning. (Ask a child to write *learning* on the puzzle.) You can all fit in by doing that.”

Next say: “Here’s another way you can fit in—tell others about Jesus.” (Ask a child to write *tell others about Jesus* on the puzzle.)

Say: “You can also fit in by serving and ministering to others. What are some ways you can do that?” (Ask the children to answer and to add their responses to the puzzle, along with asking a child to write *serving and ministering to others* on the puzzle.) Help the children see that there are many ways they can fit into the church.

Provide:

- Puzzle of church building used in WARMUP
- Markers

Provide:

- Construction paper
- Pens or pencils

6. Make a prayer reminder. Give each child a piece of construction paper and a pencil. Give the following instructions: “I would like for each of you to tear your construction paper into a shape that will remind you how you fit into the life and ministry of your church. It could be the shape of a church building or something else. Then write or draw on the paper how you can fit in the life and ministry of your church. Please put your name on your shape.”

Give the children time to work. Then quickly make groups according to the number of coaches you have. There should be at least one coach in each group.

Tell the groups: “Share what you wrote or drew on your paper with the members of your group. Then go around and pray about how you can better fit in the life and ministry of your church. The coach in your group will close your time in prayer. After you pray, please pass your paper to the coach. We will give your paper back to you during COOL DOWN.” Give the groups time to share and pray.

7. Dismiss to stretching. Encourage the children and coaches to get to work quickly on their activity pages.

Stretching

Activity Page Time
(20 minutes)

Answers for activity pages are found on the last page of this meeting. You may choose to provide photocopies of this page to the STRETCHING coaches.

The Tournament

Games and Activities
(20 minutes)

Blow the whistle to begin THE TOURNAMENT time. Choose from the following games and activities.

Yarn Toss

Ask players to sit in a circle. Hand a skein of yarn to one player. She holds the end of the yarn and tosses the skein to another player. That player holds a section of the yarn and tosses the skein again. Keep tossing the yarn around the circle until everyone is holding onto the yarn.

To make a more elaborate design, use several different colors of yarn. Start each color at a different point on the circle.

Say: “The yarn is very strong when everyone is holding onto

Provide:

- A whistle

Provide:

- Several skeins of yarn in different colors

her piece of yarn. The circle of yarn becomes weak if a few people let go of the yarn. Each person plays an important role in keeping the circle of yarn tight and strong. God says that each one of you is an important part of the church. God wants you to use your gifts and abilities to strengthen the church. When everyone uses her special gift in the church, a happy healthy body is created.”

Body Doubles

Form teams of four to six players. Keep teams small so that players can participate frequently. Give each team a ball. Explain that teammates will work in pairs to complete the relay. Call out two body parts (hand and elbow, nose and ear, ankle and ankle, etc.) Two players hold the ball using the body parts you call out, run to the other end of the playing area, run back to the starting line, and hand the ball to the next pair of players. These two players repeat the process. After all of the players on each team have carried the ball, call out another set of body parts. Players repeat the relay using the new body parts. Play for as long as children are having fun.

Say: “You need all the parts of your body. God designed your body to work together. God needs all of the members of the church body to work together. Without each member of the church body, the body cannot do its best.”

Church Construction

Group the children in teams of eight players. Give each team a roll of masking tape and several foam noodles or cardboard tubes.

Tell players to work together to build a church building.

Say: “You do your best work when you work together. Each of you has a special talent that you can use in the church. When you put your talents together, you are a healthy body.”

Cool Down

Refreshments and Conclusion
(10 minutes)

As the children return from TOURNAMENT, remind them that they fit in the life and ministry of your church. Encourage them to look for ways to fit in at church. Ask the children to watch as you cut the gelatin dessert into puzzle shapes. Give each child a piece of the puzzle. Close the meeting with a prayer of thanksgiving for being a part of the body of Christ and for fitting into that body.

Provide:

- Foam balls or beach balls

Provide:

- Foam noodles (various sizes) or cardboard tubes
- Masking tape

Variation: Use gumdrops and toothpicks to build a model of a church.

Provide:

- Gelatin dessert prepared in a large shallow pan
- Juice
- Plastic knife
- Cups
- Plates

To Do:

- Keep the gelatin dessert uncut.

Meeting 5: Answers for Activity Books

Grades 1–3

Where Do I Fit In?

helping, Sunday School, giving, missions, worship, praying, singing

My Place in the Church

1. listen
2. sing
3. pray
4. give
5. special Bible studies
6. food
7. helping
8. welcome
9. share

Grades 4–6

My Part in My Church Body

1. prayer
2. sing
3. trash
4. missionary
5. serve
6. chairs
7. sermon
8. friend
9. offering