

4

Nourishing Waters

1 CORINTHIANS 12:12–31



GOAL

By hearing Paul’s letter to the Corinthians about the body of Christ, children explore their differences and similarities and discover ways that they are an essential part of the church.

- A** Art
- AM** Active/Movement
- C** Conversation
- D** Drama
- F** Food
- G** Game
- M** Music
- NS** Nature/Science
- QC** Quiet/Contemplative
- S** Service
- T** Technology
- X** Extra Prep

Note: bit.ly addresses are case-sensitive.



PRAYER

Lord, thank you for the children in my care. May I help them know how special they are as members of the body of Christ. Amen.

THIS SESSION

In this session, children explore what it means to be a member of God’s family and the body of Christ, with gifts that help the whole body. Through the gifts of the Spirit to the church, baptism builds relationship with God, with one another in the body of Christ, and with the whole world God loves.

THE BIBLE STORY

In Paul’s counsel to the Corinthians, he encourages them to live together in dignity, mutuality, and equality—respecting one another, serving a common purpose, and seeking the welfare of all. In this passage, Paul also makes it clear that baptismal relationships do not require uniformity; rather, they thrive in diversity and demand difference in order for the body to fulfill the function God intends.

CONNECTIONS WITH CHILDREN

Young children are egocentric in their worldview and concrete in their thinking. This idea and passage—about being the body of Christ and individually unique members of it—is challenging but not impossible. Help young children see that they have differences from one another and those differences are good. Imagining what it might be like if we were all the same is a good exercise. Understanding that they are part of something bigger than themselves, and yet an important part to the well-being of the whole, is also a helpful concept for young children to attain. Wondering about their roles in the home, school, and church help them see that they are a part of the body of Christ as well.

SESSION PREPARATION

- “Centers: Art and Puzzles” (p. 36): Set up two centers. For the art center, you will need mural paper, markers, and crayons. For the puzzle center, you will need puzzles.

Depending on the options you choose:

- “People in My Church” (p. 37): Invite several people who have special jobs or tasks in the church to meet with your group. If possible, visit with these guests where they do their work.
- “Worship Art” (p. 38): Ask the pastor for upcoming Scripture passages that will be used in worship that the children could illustrate. Suggest that their pictures could be used in the worship bulletin or on the video screens, depending on what is used in your church.



GETTING STARTED

- Art center
- Puzzle center

CENTERS: ART AND PUZZLES



As the children enter, greet them by name, and welcome them into the space. Invite them to visit both of the centers. Make sure everyone gets their body traced. Some children may need to play with the puzzles while waiting for a turn for the body tracing.

At the art center, invite the children to lie down on mural paper and be traced by a leader or another child. Have them color their pictures by adding some of their features and clothing.

At the puzzle center, invite children to work on puzzles.



If there is not time for children to finish coloring their pictures, tell them they may have some time later in the session or may take them home to color.

- Bowl of water (preferably a clear bowl)
- Small table

WATERS OF BAPTISM

Place a bowl of water on a small table where the children can sit in a circle or semicircle around it. Gather the children by chanting:

I have some good news, good news.

I have some good news. Come sit with me.

As each child comes to the area, invite them to dip their fingers in the water. As they do, say to each child, “(Name), through the waters of baptism, God loves you and calls you God’s own beloved child.”



INTRODUCING THE PRACTICE

- Pictures from “Centers: Art and Puzzles” above
- Puzzle

PICTURES AND PUZZLE PARTS



Gather and display the body tracings from “Centers: Art and Puzzles” in your space. Guide the children in a discussion about their similarities and differences. Wonder together what it would be like if everyone were the same. Then ask the children why they think differences make us special. Invite everyone to share what makes them different and special. Suggest that it may be something they like to do, something they are good at, or something about their family, as well as how they look.

Show the children the puzzle. Wonder together how we are all like a puzzle. Take away a piece or two and ask the children what happens when a piece is missing from the puzzle.

Tell the children that, as part of God’s big family, we have many similarities, like the way we love God and want to follow Jesus. We also have differences. We are each unique and special but all of us together make up the big family of God, just like puzzle pieces make up a puzzle. If one is missing, the puzzle is not complete.



FINDING THE PRACTICE IN THE BIBLE

LETTING THE STORY FLOW OVER YOU



Resource Page 1

Tell the children that today's Bible story is from a letter that Paul, a follower of Jesus long ago, wrote to a group of new believers. Explain that Paul talked about this new church and the people of God being like a body with all its different parts, like ears and eyes, hands and feet, but that they were all part of the same body.

Read the adapted Bible story from 1 Corinthians 12:12–31 on Resource Page 1. Engage the children in conversation using the following questions, making connections between the body metaphor, the children's lives, and the family of God:

- When was a time that something in your body hurt, and you felt awful?
- When was a time when you, a friend, or a family member was sad and others were sad too?
- When was a time when you had something good to eat and your whole body felt good?
- When was a time when you, a friend, or a family member had good news or something wonderful happened to them? How did you all feel?



FINDING THE PRACTICE ALL AROUND US

Choose one or both options

PEOPLE IN MY CHURCH



Invited guests

Tell the children that in your church there are many people who help to do its work of ministry. Comment that, just like Paul talked about the church being like a body with different parts, your church is like that too. Different people have different functions or ministries or jobs to do. Wonder together what might be some different jobs that happen in the church. Wonder who are some people the children know and what ministries they might be involved in.

Tell the children they are going to meet some people they may, or may not, know and learn about their special ministry in your church. If possible, go to the places where your invited guests do their ministry. Some examples might be:

- The organist at the organ or choir director/musician in the choir space to demonstrate some music
- The church secretary or administrator to show what happens in the church office
- The janitor or sexton to show the supply closet or furnace
- A member of the worship committee to show how communion is prepared
- A nursery worker in the nursery to show how a baby is taken care of

After your tour, or after your guests leave, wonder with the children what your church would be like without one of these members of the body,

without one of these people doing their ministry. Ask the children what they think they might like to do to help the church do its ministry. Give thanks for each person in your church who serves, including the children.

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- Copies of Resource Page 2
 - Crayons, colored pencils

PEOPLE WHO HELP ME

A C

Remind the children that we all have special jobs that we do to help God's big family. Wonder together what some of these jobs might be. Some suggestions might be people who lead worship, take care of the building and grounds, manage the money, lead Sunday school, take care of the babies, and so forth.

Wonder together who are people at church who help the children. Try to think beyond the Sunday school leaders and pastors, but those are good answers too! Suggest people who may lead singing, help them in worship, provide snacks at fellowship time, or shovel the snow (if you live in that kind of climate) in the winter. Hand out copies of Resource Page 2 and invite the children to draw a picture of them and a helper they have named. Assist the children with writing as needed. Display the pictures in a common area of your church.



PRACTICING THE PRACTICE

Choose one or both options

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- Paper
 - Crayons, markers
 - Worship bulletins (optional)

WORSHIP ART

A

Tell the children that one special job in the church is leading people in worship. Ask the children who the people are who lead worship in your congregation. Suggest that there is a special way they could help people lead worship. If your church uses worship bulletins, show the children some of the bulletins. If your church uses video screens, ask the children what are some of the things they see on the screen during worship. Suggest that the children can draw pictures that could be used in the worship bulletin or on the video screen to help people worship.

Wonder together what kind of pictures might help people worship. Some ideas might be a heart, Jesus and his friends or Jesus and children, a church, a favorite Bible story, and so forth. If you know of an upcoming Bible story that the children could illustrate, give suggestions for that story. Provide paper, crayons, and markers.

Give the children's art to whomever produces the worship bulletins or program for the video screens.

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- Internet-connected device
 - Variety of small toys of people (action figures and cartoon characters work as well)

YOU ARE THE BODY OF CHRIST

AM M T

Reinforce the message of 1 Corinthians 12 and how we live out our baptism as part of God's big, diverse family by showing the YouTube video "1 Corinthians 12 12–27 Bible Stories for Kids—Mr Potato Head—One Body Many Parts" (bit.ly/FMOneBody, 2:35).

After watching this retelling of the 1 Corinthians passage, tell the children you will show another video of a song about being the body of Christ. Show the YouTube video "You Are the Body of Christ Song—1 Corinthians 12:27—Kids Bible Songs" (bit.ly/FMYouBodySong, 1:20). Hand out two or more small toy people, action figures, or characters to the children. Tell the children you will play the video again, and they can sing

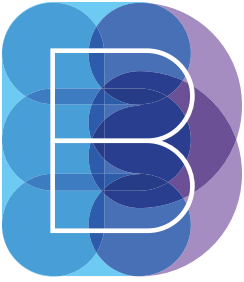
and dance along with the song. When the video shows all the toy characters coming together, tell the children to run to a table and place one of their toys on it, like they do in the video. When the video shows the toys being added to the table again, have the children add the rest of their toys to your table. Invite the children to shout “You!” and point to one another when the song says, “You are the body of Christ.”

Enjoy the energy of being part of Christ’s body!



FOLLOWING JESUS

As the group gets ready to leave to follow Jesus in their daily lives, gather in a circle. Invite the children to bless one another by following your example. Turn to the child on your left and take their hand, saying, “(Name), you are a child of God; say yes to God. Go and follow God’s ways.” Tell the children that it is their choice to hold a hand, place a hand on a shoulder, do an elbow bump, or have a high-five as they offer the blessing. Have the children take turns going around the circle until the blessing comes back to you and you say, “And all God’s children say. . . .” Pause, and have the children say “Amen” with you.



BIBLE STORY

BASED ON 1 CORINTHIANS 12:12–31

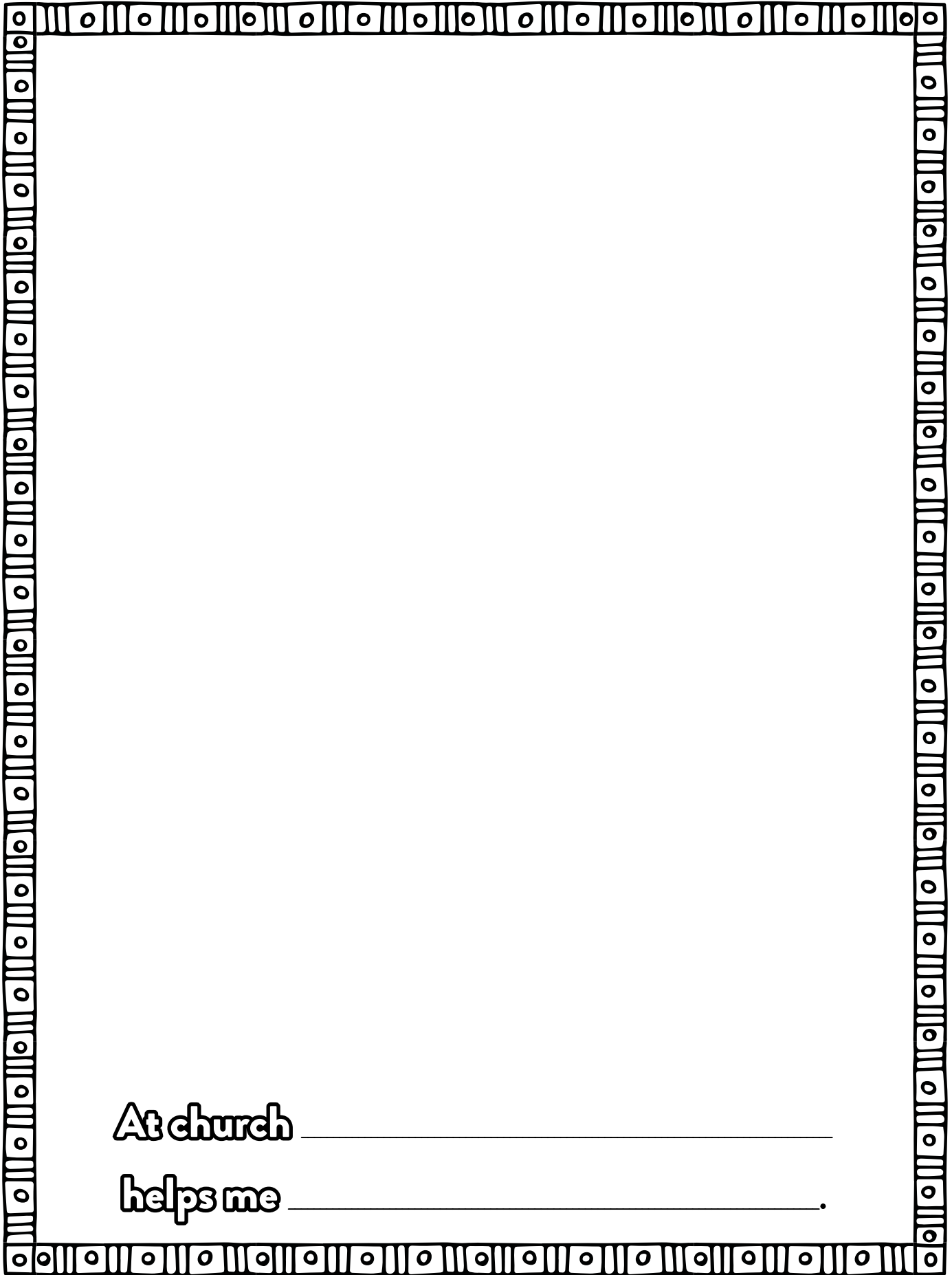
Paul was a follower of Jesus who lived long ago. He traveled around to cities and towns and told people about God’s love and Jesus. Many people decided to be followers of Jesus too. They met together, learning more about Jesus, worshiping God, praying, and helping one another. These groups of people in different cities and towns were the first churches. After Paul left them, he often wrote letters to the people in the different cities and towns to encourage them.

One church group was having trouble; they weren’t getting along with one another. Some were saying they were the best and most important, and others were saying that they were more important.

Paul thought about this problem and wrote the people:

“You are like a body with many parts, but it is still one body. Each part has a special job. If your foot said, because it is not a hand, it isn’t part of the body, how would you walk? Or, if your whole body was an eye, how would you hear? Each part of the body is special and different, and is there for a reason, but they all make up one body. All parts of the body are needed, whether big or small, strong or weak. All parts of the body work together.

“Being part of God’s big family, or the church, is like being part of the body of Jesus. We are different but part of the same family of God. We all have jobs to do to show our love for God and serve one another.”



At church _____

helps me _____.

