

PUZZLE PIECES/BODY OF CHRIST:

By Lee De Groot

OUTLINE

1. PUZZLE (MINUS 1 PIECE)
2. BIBLE VERSES-1 CORINTHIANS 12:12-27
3. BODY OF CHRIST
 - a. DEFINITION
 - b. THE UNIT
 - c. PERSONAL APPLICATION
4. READ STORY-A SIMPLE GESTURE
5. BIBLE VERSES-JAMES 5:19-20
6. LAST PIECE OF THE PUZZLE
7. PRAYER

ACTIVITY:

Supplies: puzzles that have approximately 25 pieces (it needs all its pieces...can be picked up at garage sales, borrowed from friends, or bought at 2nd hand stores)

Divide the youth in groups of 2 or 3 in a group. Before you hand out the puzzles take a piece out of each puzzle....take a corner out of one, a side piece out of another, a very significant one out of the middle, and an insignificant one out of another. Have each group fix their puzzle. What is missing? Discuss the importance of the pieces that are missing. Keep the puzzles fixed with the missing piece...at the end of the lesson plan they will add the missing piece to the puzzle.

When you hear the words "the body of Christ" what comes to mind? Have the kids answer and then add these to their list.

- Christ Himself and His physical body
- the Church
- followers of Christ
- those who have accepted Christ as their personal Savior

All are correct...however, we will be looking at the "body of Christ" in the terms of the Church and us being a part/or a piece of the body of Christ through our acceptance of Him as our personal Savior.

BIBLE VERSES: UNITY IN THE BODY OF CHRIST:

I Corinthians 12:12-27

¹² Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. ¹³ For we were all baptized by ^[c] one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. ¹⁴ Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many. ¹⁵ Now 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 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 stop being 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 placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. ¹⁹ 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 put the body together, giving greater honor to the parts that lacked it,* ²⁵ *so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other.* ²⁶ *If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.* ²⁷ *Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.*

1. Body Of Christ - The Definition

The Body of Christ is a common, yet complex term used in the Christian faith. Some may initially think we are talking about the physical body of Christ, as in His human form on earth. But the term "Body of Christ" actually refers to the members of His church, throughout history. Who or what is the body of Christ? The body of Christ is the Church, made up of all those who have accepted Jesus Christ as their personal Savior. Each Christian, then, is a part of the body of Christ.

The first biblical reference to this body was made by Jesus during the last supper. Mark 14:22 says, *"While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, 'Take it; this is my body.'"* This symbolic act is the beginning of the communion service which Christians accept as a remembrance that they are a part of the body of Jesus Christ, due to Jesus' death on the cross.

Paul uses the term "body of Christ" many times in his letters. In a few of those places he is referring to Jesus' actual body, but most of the time he is applying the term to the church.

2. Body Of Christ - The Unit

The Body of Christ, like all bodies, is comprised of many parts. There are limbs, organs, and various members that, when left alone, are useless, but when assembled make up the entire body. 1 Corinthians 12:12-14 describe it like this: *"The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. (Just like our puzzle) So it is with Christ. 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. Now the body is not made up of one part but of many."* This means each Christian is an equal part of the body of Christ!

There is organization to the body of Christ, as described in Ephesians 1:22-23, *"And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way."*

1 Corinthians 12:27-28 also says, *"Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. ... Each member of the body of Christ is also called to serve the church through his or her natural gifts and abilities. This service is offered out of devotion to Christ for the sacrifice He made on the cross, providing them with eternal life in heaven. The diversity of gifts, each supporting the other, makes the body strong!"*

THOUGHT QUESTION:

What are some of the reasons why people are not a part of the body of Christ-the Church?

Why have some people not accepted Christ as their personal Savior?

Have the kids say their thoughts and then add these to their list.

1. isolation and/or depression
2. feeling of being unworthy
3. family does not belong
4. friends do not belong
5. no friends
6. ashamed
7. hurt

8. inadequate
9. nervous
10. bored
11. just do not get it
12. have not heard "The Story"
13. denial of Christ

READ THIS INTERNET STORY AND THE COMMENTS THAT FOLLOWED:

A Simple Gesture

By: John Wayne Schlatter

Mark was walking home from school one day when he noticed the boy ahead of him had tripped and dropped all of the books he was carrying along with two sweaters, a baseball bat, a glove, and a small tape recorder. Mark knelt down and helped the boy pick up the scattered articles. Since they were going the same way, he helped to carry the burden.

As they walked Mark discovered the boy's name was Bill, that he loved video games, baseball, and history, that he was having a lot of trouble with his other subjects and that he had just broken up with his girlfriend. They arrived at Bill's home first and Mark was invited in for a Coke and to watch some TV. The afternoon passed pleasantly with a few laughs and some shared small talk, then Mark went home.

They continued to see each other around school, had lunch together once or twice. They ended up at the same High school where they had brief contacts over the years. Finally the long awaited senior year came, and three weeks before graduation, Bill asked Mark if they could talk. Bill reminded him of the day years ago when they had first met.

"Do you ever wonder why I was carrying so many things from school that day?" asked Bill. "You see, I cleaned out my locker because I didn't want to leave a mess for anyone else. I had stored away some of my mother's pills and I was going home to commit suicide. But after we spent some time together I realized that if I had, I would have missed that time and so many others that might follow. So you see, Mark, when you picked up my books for me that day, you did a lot more. You saved my life."

Debra's comments:

A friend forwarded the previous story to me, and while the story itself is different, the message is loud and clear - LOVE ONE ANOTHER. The simple things in life are the things that make the most impact sometimes. A smile, an opened door, an encouraging word. Sometimes we get hung up thinking about what others will think of us for the beliefs that we have without realizing that there's someone out there that really wants to hear what we have to say, or that would just like for us to listen. I can't tell you the number of times that I've simply sat and listened to someone that was distressed and had them walk away thanking me for being such a big help to them when I had done nothing. Remember, we don't have to do anything grandiose in life to make an impact. Just be sincere and those around you will sense it. You will emanate God if He is the motive for your actions.

In His Love,

Debra

"The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams."
-Eleanor Roosevelt

Comments by John Wayne Schlatter

Hi Debra,

My name is John Wayne Schlatter and I wrote The Simple Gesture for Chicken Soup For The Soul Vol.1..

I feel complimented that you put in on the internet in an effort to help other people...You might like to know the whole story..

The two boys met in 1973 at Oak Jr. High where I was teaching.. they remained very close friends and were the best man in each other's weddings.

When I met them they were my students, they became my friends and eventually we grew into a brotherhood....I spoke at both of their weddings. One is a minister and the other is a highly successful businessman. They have come through many storms and their friendship has helped them sail to safe ports...

God Love Ya for Loving People...

J.W.Schlatter

BIBLE VERSES:

James 5:19-20

¹⁹ My brothers and sisters, if one of you should wander from the truth and someone should bring that person back, ²⁰ remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of their way will save them from death and cover over a multitude of sins.

3. Body Of Christ - Personal Application

As a part of the church, what can you do to enhance the body of Christ? The body is a holy entity and is to be respected and treated with complete honor and care. The Bible provides several action principles for building up the body of Christ:

- **You are called to promote truth and unity** - Ephesians 4:25 says, "Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbor, for we are all members of one body."
- **You are called to service** - 1 Corinthians 12:4-11 outlines the importance of using your God-given spiritual gift. Your gift is unique and equally important. It is essential to the body that you use your special gift in service to God.
- **You are called to share Jesus** - Romans 1:16 says, "I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes..." As part of the body of Christ, you are to share your life-changing story with others!
- **You are called to worship** - "It is good to praise the LORD and make music to your name, O Most High, to proclaim your love in the morning and your faithfulness at night" (Psalm 92:1-2).
- **You are called to love each another** - "1 John 4:11 says, "Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another

BIBLE VERSE:

1 Timothy 4:12

Don't let anyone think less of you because you are young. Be an example to all believers in what you say, in the way you live, in your love, your faith, and in your purity.

Each one of you is an important part of the Body Of Christ. You are each an important piece to the puzzle. You each have a role to play to make up the Church. You need to take ownership of your role. You need to be active in your church. You need to share with others your amazing stories of what Christ is doing for you in your lives. You are not too young.

ONE LAST THOUGHT:

Are you a contributing member of the body of Christ? Are you actively serving God and sharing Him with others? Are you contributing to peace and unity within the body? Do you worship regularly? Are sharing what Christ has done in your life? Are you going after those who have strayed away? Are you taking in those who are alone? **"Are you looking for THE MISSING PUZZLE PIECE?" "Are you THE MISSING PIECE"?** Think for a minute. Where are you falling short?

ACTIVITY:

-End the lesson with the leaders handing them the missing puzzle piece. Have them complete their puzzles.

"Heavenly Father, Thank you for making me part of Your body...a piece of the big puzzle. It is my desire to be an active part of Your church by serving, promoting unity, and sharing my faith with others. Give me opportunities to accomplish these things for Your glory! Use me LORD. In Jesus' name I pray, amen."