



SESSION 1 of 4

The body of the Church

MEETING AIM

To discover that we all have important roles to play in the Church

BIBLE PASSAGE

1 Corinthians 12:12-31

BACKGROUND

This is the first in a series this month on imagery in the epistles in the New Testament. Letters don't usually form part of a curriculum for younger children, but there is lots for them to explore and begin to understand, so don't shy away from passages like this one!

In this picture, Paul compares the people of God to a body. He reiterates that everyone is important and everyone, even those who are most vulnerable (especially those who most vulnerable), should be cared for and valued. Everyone has something vital to offer the body, even the youngest members of our community.

5 CIRCLE TIME

Gather the children together and share out any refreshments you have brought with you. Chat together about what has happened this week. What events did they enjoy? Did anything make them sad this week? Ask the children who the important people are in their lives. What makes those people important? Are they important to other people?

10 INTRO ACTIVITY

You will need: medical / hospital free-play equipment

Set out all the free-play equipment you have around hospitals and looking after people. Let the children lead the play, exploring what it is like to look after others and to be looked after. Join in the children's play, allowing them to direct you in what you should do.

As you play together, encourage the children to think about the importance of and role played by the different parts of the body as they look after them.

10 BIBLE STORY

You will need: large sheets of paper (lining paper is ideal); art and collage materials; Bible
Spread out your large sheets of paper and invite volunteers to lie down on them. Draw around your volunteers to produce an outline of a person. If you have a small group, all work together on one outline; if you have lots of children, invite smaller groups to work together. Encourage the children to work together to decorate the outline of the person. They can decide on hair colour, facial features, cloths and shoes. Once everyone has finished, admire the different people the children have created.

Show your Bible to the children and explain that, in the New Testament, there are lots of letters written to Jesus' friends to help them to follow God's way and tell others about how wonderful Jesus is! Show the children 1 Corinthians and say that this letter was written by a man called Paul to his friends in a city called Corinth. Read 1 Corinthians 12:12-18 and ask the children to point to the different parts of the body on their pictures as they are mentioned. Wonder together what it would be like to have lots of hands but no feet, or many ears but no nose.

Read verses 19 to 26 and explore moving around together. Comment on how all our body parts work together so that we can move, greet people and dance! Have fun moving and dancing around together for a moment.

Finally, read verses 27 to 31 and ask the children to think about what they might be good at. How can they be part of the body of the church?

5 CHATTING TOGETHER

Ask the children these questions, encouraging everyone to take turns in contributing:

- What is your favourite part of this story from the Bible?
- What is the most important part of this story?
- Do you have any special gifts and talents? What are they?
- How can you use this special gifts and talents to help others in your church?
- Who helps you? How do they help you?

10 CREATIVE RESPONSE

You will need: card cut-outs of people (available online or from craft shops); felt-tip pens or crayons; volunteers from your church leadership

Give out the card people shapes and invite the children to decorate them to look like them. As they work, ask them to think

about what special gifts and talents God has given them. The children's ideas about themselves might not be well developed; you might need to help them come up with suggestions about their gifts and skills. These could be 'Helping others', 'Helping people feel better when they're sad', 'Baking cakes for people' or 'Singing'. Once everyone has finished personalising their card people, encourage them to write or draw their gifts and skills on the back.

Gather the group together and ask them to wave their card people in the air. Then invite them to chat to others and share with them what their special gifts are. After a minute or so, comment about how different everyone in the group is and how all your gifts fit together to make a bigger whole.

Invite the volunteers from your church leadership into your group and ask them to share with the children what role they play in the church and how it is different from those around them.

5 PRAYER

You will need: card people and volunteers from 'Creative response'

Invite everyone to stand in a circle and to wave their card people in the air. Say a simple prayer thanking God for each of the children by name and for the special gifts that they bring to the body of the Church.

Ask the volunteers from your church leadership to pray for the children too. Having those who lead your church pray for them can be a powerful experience for the children – it shows that they are valued and important in the life of the church.

After the session, it would be worthwhile exploring with your church leadership how younger children can play a wider and more visible part in the life you're your community. Ideas might include joining the welcome team or helping to lead prayers. Of course, they will need assistance to do this, but if you can organise it, it would be valuable for the whole church.

ALEX TAYLOR

is resources editor for *Premier Youth and Children's Work*.

For the rest of this month's sessions go to youthandchildrens.work/together.



SESSION 2 of 4

The fruit of the Spirit

MEETING AIM

To discover how being Jesus' friend can help us be more like him.

BIBLE PASSAGE

Galatians 5:22-26

BACKGROUND

This is the second in a series this month on imagery in the epistles in the New Testament. Letters don't usually form part of a curriculum for younger children, but there is lots for them to explore and begin to understand, so don't shy away from passages like this one!

In this picture, Paul compares the outworkings of 'immoral ways' with the fruit of the Spirit. Many of these are accessible for younger children – they have many opportunities to be kind, gentle, loving and patient. However, be careful not create the impression that this is all about behaviour. This fruit comes out of being a friend of Jesus and letting the Spirit change us to be more like him; it is not about behaving in a certain way so that Jesus will like you.

5 CIRCLE TIME

Gather the children together and share out some different kinds of fruit. Chat together about what has happened this week. What events did they enjoy? Did anything make them sad this week? Ask the children when someone was kind to them this week. Was there a time when anyone was patient with them? (You may need to explain the idea of patience, if the children don't understand.)

10 INTRO ACTIVITY

You will need: shop free-play equipment
Set out all the free-play equipment you have around shopping. Make sure you include fruit and vegetables in your equipment. Let the children lead the play, exploring what it is like to buy and sell, sharing, being kind and patient with each other. Join in the children's play, allowing them to direct you in what you should do.

10 BIBLE STORY

You will need: large sheets of paper (lining paper is ideal); art and collage materials; Bible

Spread out your large sheets of paper and draw the outline of a large tree on each one. On each tree, draw nine different fruit (they can be all the same kind of fruit or all different, if you're feeling creative!). If you have a small group, all work together on one tree; if you have lots of children, invite smaller groups to work together. Encourage the children to work together to decorate the tree and fruit. Once everyone has finished, admire the different trees the children have created.

Show your Bible to the children and explain that, in the New Testament, there are lots of letters written to Jesus' friends to help them to follow God's way and tell others about how wonderful Jesus is! Show the children Galatians and say that this letter was written by a man called Paul to his friends in an area of the world called Galatia, part of modern-day Turkey. Read Galatians 5:22-26. Look at your tree and say that when a fruit tree, like an apple tree or a cherry tree, is good and strong, it will produce good fruit. Paul is telling his friends that when we love Jesus and follow him, the Holy Spirit lives in us and helps us become more like Jesus.

Have fun deciding together which of the fruit on your tree will symbolise love, joy, peace and so on.

5 CHATTING TOGETHER

Ask the children these questions, encouraging everyone to take turns in contributing:

- What is your favourite part of this story from the Bible?
- What is the most important part of this story?
- Is Jesus your friend? Why? Why not?
- Are there times when you have been loving, kind or gentle? What happened?
- What happens when we don't feel particularly kind, patient or loving?

10 CREATIVE RESPONSE

You will need: different coloured card; child-safe scissors; felt-tip pens or crayons; volunteers from your church leadership (if you did session one, try to get different volunteers if possible)

Let the children choose a colour of card and help them to draw the outline of a piece of fruit on their card. Encourage them to cut their fruit shape out (giving help to any children who need it) and decorate it however they would like. As the children

work, share a story from your own life about how loving and following Jesus has meant that you have been able to be more faithful, loving or self-controlled (or show another fruit of the Spirit). If the children have any examples of from their own experience, then let them tell the group about it. Once you have finished your fruit, enjoy looking at your creations together.

Invite your volunteers to share something about their own story, concerning when they had to ask the Spirit to help them be more faithful or loving. Encourage them before the session to think about how they might talk about this with the youngest members of the church family.

5 PRAYER

You will need: card fruit and volunteers from 'Creative response'

Invite everyone to stand in a circle and to wave their fruit in the air. Say a simple prayer thanking the Holy Spirit for being with us and helping us become more like Jesus. Ask him to help you be more loving, kind and patient in the week ahead. Ask the children to wave their fruit in the air and to pray for themselves quietly as they do so.

Ask the volunteers from your church leadership to pray for the children too. Having those who lead your church pray for them can be a powerful experience for the children – it shows that they are valued and important in the life of the church. Invite them to pray for the children; they could ask the Spirit to help the children get to know Jesus better and become more like him.

In your next session, remember to ask the children how God helped them to be more patient or faithful. If your team works on a rota system, then ask the person leading the next session to pick this up with the children.

ALEX TAYLOR

is resources editor for *Premier Youth and Children's Work*.

For the rest of this month's sessions go to youthandchildrens.work/together.



SESSION 3 of 4

The armour of God

MEETING AIM

To discover that God keeps us safe.

BIBLE PASSAGE

Ephesians 6:10-20

BACKGROUND

This is the third in a series this month on imagery in the epistles in the New Testament. Letters don't usually form part of a curriculum for younger children, but there is lots for them to explore and begin to understand, so don't shy away from passages like this one!

In this picture, Paul talks about taking up armour of God when we fight spiritual enemies. In the lives of younger children, they might not experience such spiritual warfare and expect to fight it on their own. At this time in their development, it might be enough to focus on protection offered by armour, rather than the fight.

Be aware that talking about being safe might be difficult for children whose home lives are not as safe as they could be. If you need to, follow your church's safeguarding procedure. Or, if appropriate, mobilise your church to help improve any child's situation that is less than ideal.

5 CIRCLE TIME

Gather the children together and share out any refreshments you have brought. Chat together about what has happened this week. What events did they enjoy? Did anything make them sad this week? Ask the children where they feel the safest. Try to draw out what helps them to feel safe.

10 INTRO ACTIVITY

You will need: dressing-up free-play equipment

Set out all the dressing-up free-play equipment you have. Try to have a large variety of clothes available, and include some items of armour if you have them (these could be made from stiff card if you have the time).

Let the children lead the play, exploring what it is like to dress up in different clothes. Join in the children's play, allowing them to direct you in what you should do. Ask the children how safe all these pieces of clothing make them feel.

10 BIBLE STORY

You will need: large sheets of paper (lining paper is ideal); art and collage materials; Bible; card versions of a shield and sword
Spread out your large sheets of paper and invite volunteers to lie down on them. Draw around your volunteers to produce an outline of a person. If you have a small group, all work together on one outline; if you have lots of children, invite smaller groups to work together. Encourage the children to decorate the person with clothing that will protect them in some way – a helmet, knee pads, big gloves etc.

Show your Bible to the children and explain that, in the New Testament, there are lots of letters written to Jesus' friends to help them to follow God's way and tell others about how wonderful Jesus is! Show the children Ephesians and say that this letter was written by a man called Paul to his friends in a city called Ephesus, part of modern-day Turkey. Read Ephesians 6:10-20. Look at all the protective clothing your person is wearing. Does the person have any of the armour that Paul talks about to his friends?

Place your card shield onto the picture and ask the children if they know what it is. Explain that Paul isn't Paul was telling his friends to wear actual armour. He was saying that God will keep them safe in difficult times. Place the sword onto your picture. Say that sometimes we have to stand up for Jesus when others are unkind or say bad things about him. Reassure the children that when we feel scared we can ask for his help and he will be with us.

5 CHATTING TOGETHER

Ask the children these questions, encouraging everyone to take turns in contributing:

- What is your favourite part of this story from the Bible?
- What is the most important part of this story?
- How can God help us to feel safe?
- How can we talk to God about what worries or scares us?
- Who else has God given us to help us?

5 CREATIVE RESPONSE

You will need: different coloured card; child-safe scissors; felt-tip pens or crayons; Bible; volunteers from your church leadership (if you did session one and two, try to get different volunteers if possible)

Give out the card and invite the children to draw one of the pieces of armour from Ephesians 6:10-20 (have a Bible handy

so you can remind the group of what Paul writes about). Create some simple templates before the session if that would help the children. Encourage the group to cut out their armour and decorate it how they wish. As you work, chat about times when the children feel like they need to wear God's armour. Reassure any children who seem particularly worried and follow these up with parents, carers or through your safeguarding policy.

Invite your volunteers to share something about their own story, concerning a time when they stood up for Jesus and had to rely on God to protect them. Encourage them before the session to think about how they might talk about this with the youngest members of the church family.

5 PRAYER

You will need: card armour and volunteers from 'Creative response'

Invite everyone to stand in a circle and to wave their armour in the air. Say a simple prayer thanking God for protecting us and keeping us safe. Pray specifically for any of the issues the children raised in 'Creative response'. Ask the children to wave their armour in the air and to pray for themselves quietly as they do so.

Ask the volunteers from your church leadership to pray for the children too. Having those who lead your church pray for them can be a powerful experience for the children – it shows that they are valued and important in the life of the church. Invite them to pray for the children; they could ask God to help them be brave and tell someone about Jesus this week.

ALEX TAYLOR

is resources editor for *Premier Youth and Children's Work*.

For the rest of this month's sessions go to youthandchildrens.work/together.



SESSION 4 of 4

The power of the tongue

MEETING AIM

To discover that our words can have a positive and negative impact on others.

BIBLE PASSAGE

James 3:1-12

BACKGROUND

This is the fourth in a series this month on imagery in the epistles in the New Testament. Letters don't usually form part of a curriculum for younger children, but there is lots for them to explore and begin to understand, so don't shy away from passages like this one!

In this picture, James (thought by many to be Jesus' brother) writes to Christians about the power of the words they say. He uses the tongue as a symbol of that language – something small that can make great boasts. The words we say are an indication of the person we are: "Can a fig-tree bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs?" (verse 12).

Younger children will be familiar with the way that language can build up and tear down. The children may have spoken badly about others or have been spoken badly about themselves. Focus on the fact that as we follow Jesus, the Spirit helps us be more like him. This means that our words will be like Jesus' words.

5 CIRCLE TIME

Gather the children together and share out any refreshments you have brought. Chat together about what has happened this week. What events did they enjoy? Did anything make them sad this week? Ask the children what the nicest things someone has said to them this week. What have they said to others that has made those others feel happy and good?

5 INTRO ACTIVITY

You will need: family free-play equipment
Set out all the free-play equipment you have around home and families. This could include furniture, kitchen play and play houses.

Let the children lead the play, exploring different home and family situations. Join in the children's play, allowing them to direct you in what you should do. If the children are happy to do so, talk about families and the different things family members say to each other. Be aware that not all family situations are happy nor are all words spoken positive. Be sensitive when discussing this with your group.

10 BIBLE STORY

You will need: large sheets of paper (lining paper is ideal); art and collage materials; Bible; card versions of a shield and sword
Spread out your large sheets of paper and draw the outline of a head on each one. If you have a small group, all work together on one outline; if you have lots of children, invite smaller groups to work together. Encourage the children to decorate a face with eyes, nose, mouth, hair etc. Talk about what the tongue does – speak, taste, whistle – and draw a tongue on the face.

Show your Bible to the children and explain that, in the New Testament, there are lots of letters written to Jesus' friends to help them to follow God's way and tell others about how wonderful Jesus is! Show the children James and say that this letter was written by a man called James, who might have been Jesus' brother. Read James 3:1-12. Look at the mouth and tongue on your picture of a face. Ask the children what kind of things people say to each other; are they all kind things or can they make you feel sad too?

Ask why James might have been warning Jesus' friends about the nasty things the tongue might help them say. Chat together about the times when we need to be kind and patient and gentle, and how our words can make people feel better. If we follow Jesus, then we have the Holy Spirit to help us be more like Jesus. And that includes knowing what to say to people.

5 CHATTING TOGETHER

Ask the children these questions, encouraging everyone to take turns in contributing:

- What is your favourite part of this story from the Bible?
- What is the most important part of this story?
- How easy is it to say nice things to people, even when they are being horrible to us?
- Have you ever said mean things to someone? Why? How did you make things better?
- How can we become more like Jesus?

5 CREATIVE RESPONSE

You will need: free-play equipment from 'Intro activity'; volunteers from your church leadership (if you've done other sessions in these series, try to get different volunteers if possible)

Set out your free-play equipment from 'Intro activity'. As a group, think of a couple of different situations that the children might find themselves in where their words are important. This might be when they are disagreeing with a friend at play group, or when their brother or sister is annoying them at home. Use the play equipment to help the children pretend they are in one of those situations. What different things can they say? What are they best things to say in these situations? Explore with the children how those things can make them feel.

Invite your volunteers to share something about their own story, concerning when they had to make a choice about the words they said to someone. Encourage them before the session to think about how they might talk about this with the youngest members of the church family.

5 PRAYER

You will need: your volunteers from 'Creative response'

Invite everyone to stand in a circle. Say a simple prayer thanking God giving us the best words to say and thanking him for the Holy Spirit who helps us be more like Jesus. Pray specifically for any of the issues the children raised in 'Creative response'.

Ask the volunteers from your church leadership to pray for the children too. Having those who lead your church pray for them can be a powerful experience for the children – it shows that they are valued and important in the life of the church. Invite them to pray for the children; they could ask God to help the children use their words to be kind and build people up, to say Jesus' words to each other!

ALEX TAYLOR

is resources editor for *Premier Youth and Children's Work*.

For the rest of this month's sessions go to youthandchildrens.work/together.