



A Small Group Curriculum

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Theme Scripture:

“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.”

- 1 Corinthians 12:12

SESSION 1

*This is the first time for your small group to be together and it is important that you **get to know each other**. Take some time during this hour to learn the names and a little something about each student.*

OPENER Options:

“Hey, You’re Like Me!”

How-To: This game demonstrates how people are alike and different. Have all the students stand along one wall. The leader stands in the middle of the room. The leader then asks the students which of them has a certain trait, like, dislike, etc. The students that fit the characteristic cross the room to the other side. If there is time, the students can then describe what it is like to be a part of that group.

For instance, one of the traits could be “Plays on a Sports Team,” and a couple students can discuss what it is like to be a part of that team. It gets good when students end up talking about serious things, like what it’s like to deal with anger, or to be from a broken home.

“Secret Identity” (aka, Who’s On My Back?)

How-To: Have everyone secretly write down the name of a person on a small piece of paper or a sticker. It has to be a person that everyone in the room would know of- a famous historical figure, an actor, sports celebrity, or a popular politician. Then have them tape the name on the back of the person on their left.

Everyone goes around and asks people yes or no questions about who is on their back. They can only ask each person one question. The person who can do it in the least number of questions wins.

After your group has successfully played one or both of these ice-breaker games, tell them a little bit about yourself and what you all will be studying for the weekend.

THEME VERSE

(I Corinthians 12:12) “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.”



DISCUSSION 25

- What are some instances when you have had to work with other people as one unit to accomplish a task? *(If available, you may use a chalk/marker board to list student responses.)*

(Session 1 continued)

- Discuss some times when you've tried to complete a task without enough help.
- What are some unique things about the human body? Why would this be a good analogy for the church?
- Is it more exciting for you to accomplish a task on your own and receive all the glory, or accomplish a task as a part of a team and have someone to celebrate with?

Did You Know?

If all the blood vessels in your **body** were stretched out, they would completely circle the Earth.

WHAT'S THE POINT?

Christ calls all Christians to work together, as one unit called the church, or the Body of Christ. This is because each Christian has different gifts that can be used for the glory of God.

CHALLENGE THE STUDENTS

- Encourage students as they go about the weekend to think about how different parts of their body function, and how difficult it would be to function normally without a certain part of the body.
- Encourage them to also think about what gifts they might have to bring to the Body of Christ (the church).
- Tell them to be prepared at the next session to share one of these thoughts with the rest of the group. Explain that this weekend can be a life-changing experience if they let God work in their lives.
- Re-emphasize that the Body of Christ, although made up of many parts, should function as a single unit.

Did You Know?

The lens of the eye continues to grow throughout a person's life.

PRAY

Ask the students if they have any prayer concerns. Take down these concerns on a piece of paper and lead the students in a brief time of prayer. Remember these requests throughout the retreat and ask for updates. Make sure and give the students the opportunity to pray if they feel led to do so. Close the time by asking for the Lord's guidance throughout the weekend and that each person would learn what their role in the Body of Christ is before the end of the event.

SESSION 2

This is the second time for your small group to be together and it is important that you remember each other's names. Take some time at the start of this session to recap the last session's lesson and see how the students are doing.

OPENERS

"The Pirate's Life for Me!"

Required: Large bunch of keys and blindfold

How-To: Choose one player to be the pirate. That player will be required to sit in the middle of the circle, blindfolded with his/her legs crossed. All the other players will circle the pirate while sitting with their legs crossed. Place several different rings of keys on the floor in front of the pirate. A player is nominated to slowly creep up, attempt to take a ring of keys and then return to their place without the pirate hearing them. The Pirate has three tries to point to where he/she thinks the thief is. If the thief succeeds, he/she becomes the new Pirate.

"Shuffle the Deck"

How-To: Hand everyone a playing card as they come in. Call out different combinations that they have to form a group with. Example: four of a kind, a flush, two pairs, etc.

Option: Once they get in their group, have them answer a pre-planned ice-breaker question. It could be something fun and related or unrelated to the discussion that session.

After your group has successfully played one or both of these ice-breaker games, tell them a little bit about yourself and what you all will be studying in this session.

TRANSITION

Remind the students of the theme verse for these sessions. **(I Corinthians 12:12)**

Ask them what their thoughts were about the body. What part of the body did they think about in the last session? Did something said in worship make them think about the Body of Christ? What gifts do the students feel they bring to the Body of Christ?

TODAY'S VERSES

(Isaiah 59:15-21) This entire chapter of Isaiah speaks of the Lord's dissatisfaction with the sinful nature of the people. The Lord has looked down and sees that many things are lacking in the lives of the people, including justice, mercy, righteousness, and truth. God says in a round-about-way that "If nobody else is going to fix the problem, I will." It's a little scary when God gets to this point. Have you ever been frustrated with a group of people and decided to take a task upon yourself because of their incompetence? Since nobody else was going to

(Session 2 continued)

bring righteousness, justice or mercy into the land, God decided to bring it. Notice the armor that God puts on...

(Ephesians 6:10-17) Believe it or not, this passage (which is often taken out of context), is Paul's conclusion to a letter telling people how to treat one another in the church- *it's about relationships*. The spiritual warfare language is only a small part of the bigger picture. We are to be truthful with each other, live righteously among our peers and families, always being ready to share the Gospel... the list goes on. Paul gets the entire idea of the Armor of God from the Isaiah 59 passage, so this isn't some arbitrary list of armor pieces. It's actually God's armor! This means several things: Putting on the *actual* armor of God can only be done in strength of the Lord. Furthermore, this is actually God's way of bringing Godliness into the world; the Lord's prescription for not only what the Body of Christ should *do*, but how it should clothe itself.



DISCUSSION 25

- How does this perspective on the Armor of God (which is for the Body) change the way you think about the Body of Christ?
- What does it mean to be truthful, righteous, and ready to share the Gospel in our relationships? How does this relate to being a part of the Body of Christ?
- How do you really put on the Armor of God?
- Is it a defensive armor or an offensive armor? Expound.

WHAT'S THE POINT?

Being a part of the Body of Christ entails a lot of things. It doesn't just mean teaching a Sunday School class, helping with Youth Sunday, or wearing a Christian t-shirt. Being a part of the Body of Christ actually means *being* Godly. In the context of the above Bible passages, we are to be Godly in our relationships with one another. We can't truly put on God's armor without relying on the Lord for strength. Armor is heavy. Especially God's armor. The armor also protects the body.

Did You Know?

The strongest bone in the human body, the thigh bone, is hollow. Ounce for ounce it has a greater pressure tolerance and bearing strength than a rod of equivalent size cast in solid steel.

CHALLENGE THE STUDENTS

Challenge the students to not take Bible passages (like Ephesians 6) at face value. Ask the students to consider how they might take on God's armor, and what that might look like in their lives.

PRAY

Take down prayer requests and pray that God will help students apply this lesson to their lives. If appropriate, follow up on prayer concerns mentioned by the students last time.

Session 3

Ask how the students are doing. Continue getting to know them.

OPENER

“Slap Circle”

How-To: Everyone lies face down in a circle (their heads should form the inside of the circle and feet should point to the outside of the circle.) Everyone raises up to brace themselves on their elbows and overlaps their arms with the people on either side of them. Place palms flat on the floor. The goal is to go around the circle clockwise with everyone consecutively slapping their palm on the floor. If someone slaps the floor twice the slapping switches directions, moving counter-clockwise. If you slap out of order or forget to slap, the offending arm is out. Once you mess up with both hands you're out and members of the circle close up the circle to continue playing. Try to get it going fast!

TRANSITION

Ask students what their thoughts were from **Session 2** about the Armor of God. Did anything happen throughout the day that reminded them of these verses? Did they make any attempt throughout the day to ask God for strength in putting on His armor?

Tell the students that ***this game ties into this lesson*** and then ***introduce this scenario...*** It's Sunday at 1:30p. You and your family just stuffed your faces at the local Italian restaurant and you are FULL to the brim. You waddle to your car and begin to feel very sleepy and lethargic. As soon as you get to your house you put some comfy PJ's on and take a nice long nap. There's nothing better on a Sunday afternoon. Know the feeling? So what exactly does this have to do with the Body of Christ? Time for today's verses...

TODAY'S VERSES

(Romans 12:15) This verse tells Christians to invest their time and energy into others. When someone is happy- be happy with and for them! When someone is mourning, put aside what you're doing to let them know that you care and that you're mourning alongside them. *Connection to scenario:* When we eat food, our bodies know to send blood and energy from various body parts to our digestive system because that is the part of the body that needs attention. The other parts of our body don't mind giving up some energy for the good of the body. They may feel “sleepy” from the temporary decrease in energy, but it is worth it. When someone in the body of Christ is joyful or mourning, we are to invest our time and energy into their lives. Although it may leave us feeling “sleepy” for a time, it is worth it.

(Philippians 2:1-4) Ask students to point out all of the synonyms they can find in this verse for unity... (*fellowship, like-minded, same, being one*) As one body, we are to have the same goal, purpose, and mindset. Our actions and attitudes will reflect this one-ness as we humbly look for ways to put others' interests above our own. This does not mean neglecting

(Session 3 continued)

our jobs and duties in the Body of Christ. It does mean being willing to sacrifice our own desires for the good of others.



DISCUSSION 25

- Give some examples of times when you have had to pour your energy into someone else and how it made you feel. Tired/Good/Inadequate? Was it worth it? If so, why?
- What would have happened if Jesus decided to put His interests/desires above the needs of the world and not die on the cross for our sins? What would be the implications? He is the ultimate example of how to live (and die) for others' good.
- Name some ways in which our bodies send energy to specific places to complete specific jobs (i.e., healing process, digestion, pain sensory, adrenaline). How does this apply to the Body of Christ? What would happen if a body ignored its needs?

WHAT'S THE POINT?

Remember the saying "All for one and one for all"? Jesus was the One for all the world, and the Body of Christ is to be the All for Him. Being "for" something means having that as our purpose and motive. If we all have the same goal of living like Jesus, we will invest our time in treating people the way Jesus did- selflessly, humbly and sacrificially.

Did You Know?

What are the 3 things that the body absorbs almost immediately?
(Water, pure honey and fruit sugars.)

CHALLENGE THE STUDENTS

Challenge the students to be more alert to the needs of others around them. Whether it's to be happy with someone, or cry with a friend, challenge them to put aside their "selfish ambitions and vain conceit" for the betterment of the Body.

Did You Know?

The liver is a gland,
not an organ.

PRAY

Take down prayer requests and then pray that God will empower all of us to invest our lives into the lives of others like Jesus did, even though it means making a sacrifice.

SESSION 4

Ask students how their experience at this event has been going so far. Help them process the fun that they are having, but also what God may be teaching them.

OPENER

“Communication Challenge”

How-To: Give everyone a piece of paper with a different number on it. They have to arrange themselves in numerical order by communicating with each other **without** speaking or holding up fingers. They will have to make up their own sub-language or sign-language and it is often pretty amusing. For Round Two, have people arrange themselves in order of birth or in calendar months.

TRANSITION

Tell the students that ***this game ties into the lesson*** and then ***introduce this scenario...*** It's Saturday at 2:30p. Bob had a late breakfast of Fruit Loops and a hearty lunch at Chic-Fil-A. But he's hungry. At least he ***thinks*** he's hungry. So Bob strolls to the freezer and finds an enticing carton of chocolate ice cream. He plops onto the couch in front of the TV and before he knows it he has eaten all of the ice cream. Bob's body feels miserable. He wasn't really hungry to begin with. Really, he was just bored. So what exactly does this have to do with the Body of Christ? Time for today's verses...

TODAY'S VERSES

There are several ways that Christians can and should communicate with one another for the health of the Body. After reading each passage, ask the students to identify the ways in which we are to communicate with other parts of the Body.

- (Hebrews 10:24-25)** Encourage one another to love and do good; physically meet together.
- (James 5:13-16)** Pray for each other; confess our sins to each other.
- (Psalm 34:1-3)** Worship the Lord corporately.
- (Colossians 3:12-17)** This verse describes the kind of clothes that the Body of Christ should wear- clothes that communicate with one another in compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience, forgiveness, peacefulness... Teach and admonish one another.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What was the game we played earlier all about? (Communication)
- What was the story about Bob about? Why did Bob ignore the fact that his body was not communicating literal hunger to him? What was the consequence?

(Session 4 continued)

- What would happen if our bodies did not communicate with us? Explain that there are people whose bodies do not feel physical pain. Talk about the implications of this in a young child (scratching eyeballs, biting the tongue as if it's a toy, not knowing when bones are broken or infections have set in...)
- What happens when members of Christ's Body do not communicate effectively with each other? Name a time when you inappropriately communicated with or responded to a fellow Christian. What happened to your friendship?
- How can the Body of Christ prevent miscommunication between its members? (Answers from Bible verses)

Did You Know?

All stomachs do not look the same. Nobody knows why. Shapes include a half-moon, an S or J shape.

WHAT'S THE POINT?

A healthy body will communicate effectively. There are things that all Christians can and should do to keep the Body whole and healthy. Are you doing your part by communicating in love and responding with care, or do you simply ignore problems and go on about your business?

CHALLENGE THE STUDENTS

Challenge the students to be honest in their relationships with one another and to respond to others appropriately and in love. Challenge them to always see the needs of those around them, and to always be in prayer that God would open their eyes to the struggles of others.

Did You Know?

The human brain is insensitive to pain. The suffering of a headache comes not from the organ itself but from the nerves and muscles lining it.

PRAY

Take down prayer requests and then pray that God will help us all meet the challenge laid out in this lesson. If appropriate, ask for updates on prayers from earlier in the weekend. Ask the students to name needs in the youth group, in their school, in their community, and in the world. Ask students to pray aloud for concerns that were mentioned that God leads them to pray for. Close the time of prayer by asking God to continue building unity in the group and compassion for those around us.

Session 5

OPENER

Ask each student to tell the group his/her favorite part about the last few days. What did they get out of worship and Bible study? What lessons did they learn? Which lessons will be the easiest/hardest to take home and apply?

TRANSITION

Ask, "When you hear the word 'fusion', what do you think of?" Let students respond for a minute. Then ask, "Have you ever thought that this word could apply to Christians?" Let's think about one of the dictionary definitions of "fusion"- 'a merging of diverse, distinct, or separate elements into a unified whole.' Read the definition again and ask students to discuss what that word could mean for the youth group and for the church.

TODAY'S VERSE

(Galatians 3:26-28) This verse captures the diversity among God's people, and how through Jesus Christ each distinct part fuses into a unified whole. We make up one Body even though we are many, distinct parts.



Discussion Questions

- In what ways are we diverse, distinct and separate elements?
- Why is this diversity important?
- What happens when one part of the body does not do its job?
- How are we, as separate elements, merged into a unified whole? (First by salvation through Jesus Christ- becoming brothers and sisters of the same Father; unity through God's Spirit; unity through effective communication [see Session 4])
- What word do you get when you switch the "f" in "unify" with a "t"?
- We are united through Jesus and He is the "glue" that truly holds us all together.

CHALLENGE THE STUDENTS

Challenge the students to think about this idea of "fusion" in the days and weeks to come as they discover their part in the Body of Christ.

PRAY

Pray for each student by name (have list ready) in the challenge set before them, and for their safety in returning home.