

ONE INTERCONNECTED BODY, MANY INVALUABLE PARTS

MODULE SIX

SESSION 1

In this session we will discuss how God has given everyone unique gifts, no matter who they are, what they look like, or where they come from, in order to fulfill God's mission.

KEY POINT: Though some gifts may be more noticeable, that does not make any particular gift better than another. God created each person equally, and we all receive gifts from God.

PREPARATION

30 MINUTES

LESSON

1 HOUR

Hyperlinks are set on URLs throughout the Justice Journey PDF.
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Session #

Every Person Is Vital

KEY WORDS

VITAL: Absolutely necessary or important; essential.

SOLIDARITY: Unity or agreement of feeling or action, especially among individuals with a common interest; mutual support within a group.

SUPPLIES

For this lesson you will need

- White board
- Dry erase markers
- Drawing paper
- Crayons/markers
- Two small buckets or large bowls for each team of five or more children
- Five tennis balls (or similar item) for each team
- One paper plate for each team

PREPARATION

Write prompting question on the board: "What is your favorite team sport or activity?" Mark Bible passages.

Welcome

As students come into the classroom, allow them to get settled. Ask about their week. What was great? What was hard? When did they feel closest to God or furthest away from God?

Give students time to answer the prompting question, "What is your favorite team sport or activity?" Ask them to explain their answers.

PRAYER

Gather children in a circle for opening prayer. Explain we are entering a special time with God. Encourage children to hold their palms up as a sign we are ready to receive what God shares with us today. You may want to light a candle as a sign that God will show us how to light our way in love when we find ourselves in a dark or difficult place.

PRAY: God you love each of us and you purposely made all of us different. Because of your love for us, you offer each of us eternal life through your son Jesus and fill us with your Spirit so we may be guided by you. We look forward to what we will learn from you today and how it will help us to love others in the same way you love us.

Opening Activity

SUPPLIES: Two small buckets or large bowls for each team of five or more children, five tennis balls (or similar item) for each team, one paper plate for each team

NO "I" IN TEAM

EXPLAIN: We are going to play a game called Bucketball Relay. This is not a competition. It's a game to see how well you can work together.

Create teams of five people each. Assign a role to each player: retriever, handler, over-the-head, bouncer, spinner. (Some positions can be duplicated if you have a large group. For example, you may choose to add extra overhead or bouncer positions, or if you have fewer than five children they can double up positions.)

Ask the students to line up. Place a bucket or bowl at the end of each line. Space out the bouncers and spinners approximately six feet apart from the players on either side of them. Place a paper plate between the retriever and the handler.

PLAYING THE GAME

1. Place all the balls in the bucket at the front of the line.
2. The retriever removes one ball at a time from the bucket (or bowl) and places it on the paper plate held by the handler.
3. The handler passes the plate to the over-the-head player, who picks up the ball from the plate. If the ball rolls off before the over-the-head player removes it, the retriever must take it back to the bucket, then remove it, and place it on the plate again.
4. The over-the-head player tosses the ball backward over their head to the next person in line, who is positioned approximately six feet away. If the ball is dropped, it must be returned to the retriever who puts it in the bucket and starts over.
5. The bouncer receives the toss from the over-the-head player and bounces it to the spinner, who is approximately six feet away.
6. The spinner receives the bounced ball and spins around three times before putting the ball in the bucket at the end of the line. If the ball is dropped either from the bounce or fails to get into the bucket, the ball must be sent back to the retriever to start over.

ASK:

- What was the importance or function of each player's role on the team?
- What was hard? What was easy?
- How were teammates encouraged/discouraged?
- What would happen if any of the positions were missing from the team? How would it affect the ability of the team to complete the relay?

EXPLAIN: Sometimes when we play a game, the person who scores gets the most attention. But a person can't score by themselves. There is no "I" in team, because you need everybody to win.

Today we are going to read about a church that needed a reminder about what it means to work together. In this

passage, the apostle Paul reminds them that everybody in the church has different gifts, and each person is needed to accomplish the mission.

Bible Time

The city of Corinth was a major trade hub during the time of this letter. The population was made up of freed slaves, retired military, and people who would have been considered among the elite upper-class at the time. The people who made up the church in Corinth were not necessarily used to power, authority, or some of the responsibilities that came along with leadership in the early church.

The result was that people began to assign levels of importance to spiritual gifts, even though that was not God's intention. God gave gifts to all people to help spread the gospel, and every gift and every person is equally important in God's eyes. So it did not please God that people who were preachers and teachers began to act as if they were better than people who had different gifts. Paul, an apostle who had helped start the church, heard about what was happening. He wrote the letter we call 1 Corinthians in response to what was happening. Paul was an important person to the church in Corinth. So, if they would listen to anybody, it would be him. It was very important for Paul to correct this behavior early. The mission of God in the world was too vital for it to be stopped by people being unfair.

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 12:14-26.

ASK: What are some gifts the Holy Spirit gives, and what do you think they are used for? What are some gifts God has blessed you with? (Or, what skills do you have that could be used to help others experience the love of Jesus?)

EXPLAIN: None of us is exactly the same. God has given every person gifts and talents, and every person is equally important to God. But sometimes we are tempted to seek a place of superiority over others, believing we are better.

As followers of Christ, we seek to become examples of Jesus in the world around us. That means not acting as though we are better than others and speaking up when we see people being put down or treated unfairly. As this passage says, we cannot say "we have no need of you."

Every person is equally needed no matter what their gifts or abilities are or what they look like.

ASK:

- Have you ever experienced being treated unfairly?
- Do you think God likes it when we act like we are better than others? Why not?
- What do you think Jesus would want us to do when someone makes fun of another race?

Application Activity

SUPPLIES: Drawing paper, crayons or markers

Draw or act out some ways we can help when we see someone be treating unfairly.

ASK:

- Why might it be hard to speak up or befriend someone who is being treated unjustly?
- How can we gain the strength to speak up and to act?
- How can we live into our commitment to treat others equally?

Application Activity

SUPPLIES: Buckets/bowls, balls, paper plates

Bucketball Relay Revisited

EXPLAIN: Now we are going to play the game two more times.

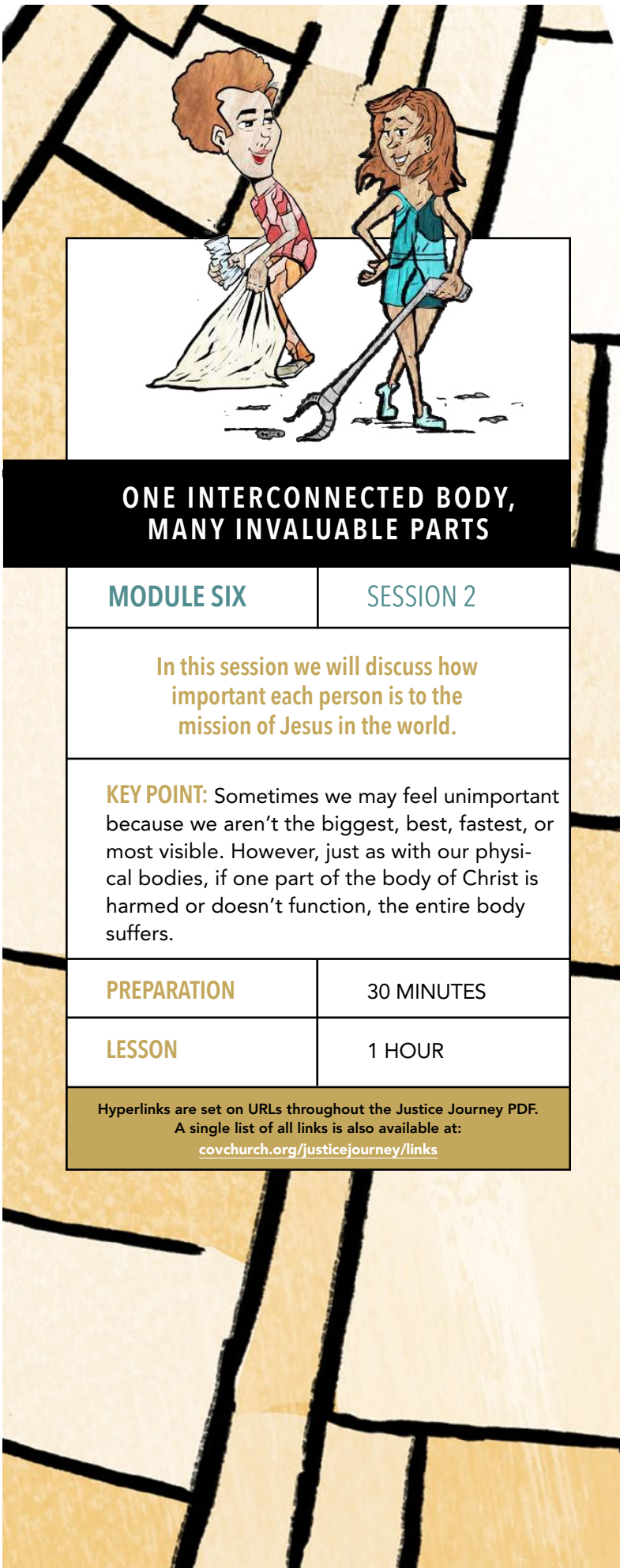
The first time we will play in silence.

Now play it one last time and tell the children they can speak, encourage and help one another.

Closing Activity

DISCUSS

- What did you experience by playing the game these two different ways?
- Where you able to encourage each other even in the silence? How?
- How did you feel when you could speak up and encourage one another?
- When we see others who are left out or treated



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MODULE SIX

SESSION 2

In this session we will discuss how important each person is to the mission of Jesus in the world.

KEY POINT: Sometimes we may feel unimportant because we aren't the biggest, best, fastest, or most visible. However, just as with our physical bodies, if one part of the body of Christ is harmed or doesn't function, the entire body suffers.

PREPARATION

30 MINUTES

LESSON

1 HOUR

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Session #

Every Part Is Vital

KEY WORDS

VITAL: Absolutely necessary or important; essential.

SOLIDARITY: Unity or agreement of feeling or action, especially among individuals with a common interest; mutual support within a group.

SUPPLIES

- White board
- Playdough
- Plastic cups
- Paper towels
- Paper
- The book *When God Made You* by Matthew Paul Turner
- Puzzle (Don't choose a puzzle with too many pieces. You'll want students to finish within 10 minutes.)
- Dry erase marker
- Open floor space
- Water
- Blue painter's tape
- Marbles

PREPARATION

- Write the key words for the lesson on the board or somewhere visible that can be seen easily by the students.
- Read through this week's Bible passages.

Welcome

SUPPLIES: Puzzle

Greet the students and encourage them to build a puzzle(s) together. (Be sure to remove a few pieces so the puzzle(s) cannot be completed.)

DISCUSS

ASK:

- What did you enjoy about building the puzzle?
- How did you feel about doing this as a group?
- Were you satisfied with the finished product? Why or why not?

EXPLAIN: Today we are going to explore the different members of the church body. Just as with the puzzles we built, we will discover how vital each part of the body is and how disappointing it can be when some pieces are missing.

PRAYER

Gather children in a circle for opening prayer. Explain we are entering a special time with God. Encourage children to hold their palms up as a sign we are ready to receive what God shares with us today. You may want to light a candle as a sign that God will show us how to light our way in love when we find ourselves in a dark or difficult place.

PRAY: God you love each of us and you purposely made all of us different. Because of your love for us, you offer each of us eternal life through your son Jesus and fill us with your Spirit so we may be guided by you. We look forward to what we will learn from you today and how it will help us to love others in the same way you love us.

Application Activity

NO OPPOSABLE THUMB

SUPPLIES: Plastic cups, blue painter's tape, water

1. Pair up the students, and ask one person in each pair to wrap tape around their partner's hand so the thumb is taped to the hand and can't be used. Now ask the student whose thumb is taped to try to pick up a plastic cup and drink from it. (Make sure to have paper towels available.)
2. Now switch places, so the other student's thumb is taped down. Ask them to try to drink from the plastic cup.

DISCUSS

Why was it difficult to accomplish this task? Talk about how important the thumb is to the function of a hand, even though it is the smallest part.

EXPLAIN: Just as every body part is important, so every person is equally important to the body of Christ and to God. Even though some parts are smaller or unnoticed, if one piece is missing, the body cannot function the way it was meant to.

Bible Time

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 12:12-13 AND 20-21.

EXPLAIN: The body is the church together. We are one family.

DISCUSS

- Each one of us is invited to be a part of the body, (the church). Do you think each part is equally important to the mission of Jesus Christ in the world?
- Is it okay to say to someone "I have no need of you" because they are different from you? Why?

READ MATTHEW 28:19 AND JOHN 13:34-35.

ASK: What does this passage say we are to do as the family or body of Christ?

EXPLAIN: This is our mission.

ASK:

- Have you ever been treated differently because you look or act unlike the people around you?
- Have you ever seen someone else being treated unfairly? How did that make you feel? How did you respond?
- How do you think it makes other people feel to be treated differently or unfairly?
- What ways can you stand together with people who are experiencing unfair treatment or injustice?

Application Activity

SUPPLIES: *When God Made You* by Matthew Paul Turner

Read *When God Made You* by Matthew Paul Turner.

ASK:

- What is your favorite part of this book?
- Would you like to be friends with this girl?
- How does God feel about the girl in this story?
- What does this say about God?
- How do you think God wants us to see each other?
- How important is each person to God?
- How can we extend God's love to those who are different from us?

Closing Activity

SUPPLIES: Paper, marbles, playdough

EXPLAIN: Use the playdough to show ways we live our mission to love others and share Jesus's love and story with others.

SETUP: Fold a piece of paper lengthwise two times to make a trough for each person in your group.

This is not a race or a competition, even though large groups may need to be broken down into smaller groups.

HOW TO PLAY: Ask students to line up holding their paper troughs in front of them. Drop a marble into the first trough. The first student tips their trough to roll the marble into the next student's trough and so on. The object is to move the marble through the troughs to get it to the other side of the room. Once a student has passed the marble off, they move to the end of the line to catch the marble again. So the team keeps moving while passing the marble from trough to trough until the marble crosses the finish line.

DISCUSS

ASK: What was hard about this game? What was easy? How did you encourage one another? Why couldn't you do this by yourself? How does this game illustrate the importance of each person?

EXPLAIN: In this activity we see how important every part of the body is. We all bring different gifts to the body, and if any part is broken or missing.

Jesus's plan is that all people should equally be a part of the body/church. This is not just true of individuals but among people groups as well. We are all equally loved by God no matter our race, our culture, our gender, our ability, the language we speak, or the country we are from.

God loves us all and wants us to love each other as well.

ASK: What are some things Jesus is asking us to do? What are some things we might say or do when we see someone put down, left out, or treated unfairly? (*You can do this in pairs or small groups and then share.*)

CLOSE IN PRAYER

Heavenly Father, thank you for making us a part of your body. We are so grateful that each one of us is important to you. Help us to be aware when other parts of the body are hurting, and give us the courage to help. Help us become like you, Jesus, and speak up for others who are treated differently. Help us to stand up to those who treat people unfairly. And help us to invite, encourage, and support each other so we can work together to share your love. Amen



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MODULE SIX

SESSION 3

In this session we will discuss how important it is to see every human being as a brother and sister in Christ and for that understanding to shape how we care for people, especially people who are different from us.

KEY POINT: In sessions 1 and 2, we explored how we are one body, each created differently but each equally important. In this session we will encourage students to take an active part in caring for people who are different.

PREPARATION

30 MINUTES

LESSON

1 HOUR

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Session #

3

The Loving Neighbor

KEY WORDS

SAMARITAN: ⁽¹⁾The Samaritans were a group of people who lived in Samaria, an area north of Jerusalem. When Assyria captured the northern kingdom of Israel in 721 B.C., some Israelites were taken in captivity while others were left behind. The Samaritans had their own unique system of worship. At the time of Jesus, the Jews and the Samaritans did not have any contact with one another. Jesus, however, ministered to the people of Samaria, preaching the good news to them. ⁽²⁾A charitable or helpful person (with reference to Luke 10:33).

INJUSTICE: When something is unfair, resulting from privilege or the sin of selfishness or oppression.

OPPRESSION: When people are harmed by injustice and hurt by unfair systems and laws.

PARABLE: A story told by Jesus to explain a moral or spiritual lesson.

SOLIDARITY: Unity or agreement of feeling or action, especially among individuals with a common interest; mutual support within a group.

SUPPLIES

For this lesson you will need

- White board
- Dry erase markers
- Paper
- Markers/Crayons
- Pipe cleaners
- Playdough
- Open floor space (for reenactment)
- Clothespins and material to turn pins into people

PREPARATION

Write the key words for the lesson on the board or somewhere visible that can be seen easily by the students. Write the welcome prompt on the board: "Name or draw a time when you needed help." Mark Bible passages.

Welcome

SUPPLIES: Paper, markers/crayons

Greet the students, and allow them to get settled. Make sure each student has paper and something with which to write or draw. Invite students to answer the prompt, "Name or draw a time when you needed help." Share drawings or answers and follow up by asking, "Did you get the help you needed?" Allow students to talk about how it felt to either receive the help they needed, or not to receive it.

PRAYER

Gather children in a circle for opening prayer. Explain we are entering a special time with God. Encourage children to hold their palms up as a sign we are ready to receive what God shares with us today. You may want to light a candle as a sign that God will show us how to light our way in love when we find ourselves in a dark or difficult place.

Pray: God you love each of us and you purposely made all of us different. Because of your love for us, you offer each of us eternal life through your son Jesus and fill us with your Spirit so we may be guided by you. We look forward to what we will learn from you today and how it will help us to love others in the same way you love us.

Bible Time

READ LUKE 10:25-37.

Application Activity

SUPPLIES: Optional clothes pin puppets

ACT IT OUT

Ask for several volunteers. You will need a narrator, an expert in the law, Jesus, a priest, a Levite, a Samaritan, two robbers, someone to play the victim, and an innkeeper. *(Children can play more than one role, or if you have a lot of students, consider adding a few extra robbers, priests, or Levites. You may also choose to make clothespin puppets and act out the story that way.)*

ASK: What did you see in this story? What stood out to you the most?

ACT OUT THE STORY A SECOND TIME.

ASK:

- Did you see anything new when the story was acted out again?
- Why do you think the priest and the Levite didn't stop to help?
- What would it feel like to be the person on the road that no one would help?
- Have you or someone you know ever needed help and no one responded? How did this make you feel?
- How do you think God wants us to respond when someone is in need?

EXPLAIN:

- Jesus often told parables or stories to teach difficult truths.
- We may only think of the people who live in our neighborhood or who live close to us as our neighbors. We may think that only people who look like us or come from families that look like our own are our neighbors, but Jesus teaches us that everyone is our neighbor.

ASK: What does it mean to you that everyone is your neighbor?

- Sometimes it is easy to be neighborly, loving, and kind to people who look and act like us. Yet this story illustrates God's call to love and care for people who are different from us.

- Sometimes people suffer from unfair treatment, injustice, and oppression.

ASK: How do you think God feels about this? Why?

- As people who love Jesus, we are called to consider every person as equal and important.
- The Samaritan was a neighbor in this passage. Instead of ignoring the Jewish man on the road, he put their differences aside to offer help. In other words, he stood in solidarity with the man who was hurt.

Application Activity

SUPPLIES: Playdough or markers

With playdough or markers show a time when you were left out or ignored, and another when you were invited to something.

SHARE AND DEBRIEF: Have children share their drawings or playdough scenes and explain how they felt.

After everyone has shared, ask how they think God felt about your being left out or invited?

How do you think God wants us to respond when we see someone who is left out?

(If someone is having a particularly difficult time with this, it might be a good time to have the children gather around and pray for this child.)

Assure the children that God loves them and delights in them.

EXPLAIN: Let's talk about what it means to stand in solidarity with someone. This means we are being united together or mutually supporting each other.

ASK: How did the Samaritan stand in solidarity with, or support, the man who was beaten?

REFLECT

SUPPLIES: Pipe cleaners

What are some ways you can stand in solidarity with people who need help?

Ask students to think about this question by taking a few minutes to draw or fashion pipe cleaners of situations where someone was in need and then discuss solutions.

Closing Activity

- Ask students to reflect on how they can personally and collectively be good neighbors.
- Charades: Invite students to silently act out ways of standing in solidarity with others. Ask the rest of the class to guess what their classmates are acting out.

DISCUSS

Encourage each student to choose a personal action they can take to help someone this week. Maybe it's standing up to a bully on someone else's behalf, watching out for someone in need, or going for help. *(Explain that going for help is also a way of standing in solidarity.)*

Discuss ways we can respond on our own and when it's best to go for help.

Discuss how we can follow up when we see someone who is being put down or hurt because they are different.

As a class, or maybe as an entire children's ministry, pick a project or activity that can help the students fully live into the idea of being a loving neighbor.

CLOSE IN PRAYER

Lord Jesus, thank you for making us a part of your body. We are so thankful that we are important to you. Help us to be aware when others are hurting, and give us the courage to help. Show us how to be neighbors to everyone you have created. Please give us the courage to speak up when we see wrong and to help those in need. Help us to become like Christ, standing up for those who experience injustice in our world and challenging the unfair treatment of those who treat people unfairly. Amen

JUSTICE JOURNEY

for kids

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LOVE MERCY DO JUSTICE
MAKE & DEEPEN DISCIPLES