

To the Teacher

The information below is to help you in teaching the lesson. DO NOT read this page to the students. Instead, teach the information in your own words. Be sure to finish the student's lesson as well. The Scripture references in parentheses are for additional study, to round out the information given in the lesson. Become familiar with these passages as well, to provide additional Scriptures to your students.

Lesson 23 – One Body, Many Parts (Teacher's Lesson)

Opening: There are 206 different bones in the human body. Explain that each one has a specific purpose and this without considering the other parts of the human body, all of which work together. The Bible uses the image of the human body to demonstrate the intimate connection within the Church, the Body of Christ.

Study Notes:

1 Corinthians 12:12-27

Verses 12-13 – The body is one.

Verses 14-17 – The body is made up of many members.

How many of the members actually belong to the body? All.

Paul is talking about the human body and uses it as an example of how the church should function. In this first part of the passage, Paul speaks of the common situation of people who do not see themselves as important, because they do not have the authority nor capacity of someone else in the church. Explain that each person is important and, in fact, necessary in the church. Even if you do not see yourself as essential to the proper functioning of the church, you are special.

Verses 18-20 – Who placed the members in the body? God placed each member of the body just as He wanted them.

Verse 21 – Which members of the body are unnecessary? None of them.

Verses 24-25 – Why did God give more honor to the parts that lacked it? So that there would be no division in the body.

Verses 26-27 – If one member suffers, each member suffers. If one member receives honor, each member rejoices with him.

In this section, Paul talks about the opposite side of the same problem. Sometimes people do not see others as important because their authority or ability is more visible. Again, every person is necessary for the proper functioning of the church. Also explain that it is God, and not ourselves, who chooses our role in the church. It is our responsibility to discern the function to which God is calling us.

When Paul writes, “you are the body of Christ,” to whom is he writing? To the Christians in the local church in Corinth.

This question is here to remind students that Paul is writing to people who have already accepted Christ as Lord. People who have not made this decision to follow Christ can help in the church (sometimes this can be a good way to reach people – Jesus asked the woman at the well for a cup of water), but they should not be placed in leadership positions.

Application:

Help students identify some general characteristics of your church population. Some considerations may be: race and ethnicity, income level, family size, etc. Help them to see how God often brings people to the church to provide a need in the church or community so that more people can come to know Christ. He also sometimes brings people to the church because they have needs that the church can meet. Help students identify these as well.

Lesson 23 – One Body, Many Parts

Members are members

How many bones are there in the human body?

The Perfect Fit

An image that the Bible uses for the church is the Body of Christ. This is found in 1 Corinthians 12:12-20. Read these verses and answer the questions below:

Verses 12-13 – The body is _____.

Verses 14-17 – The body is made up of _____.

How many of the members actually belong to the body?

Verses 18-20 - Who placed the members in the body?

The church is a unit, but it is made up of many different members, whom God has placed as He thought best. This has a very practical application. This means that every person who comes to your church is there because God put them there. We cannot discount a single person. Read 1 Corinthians 12:21-27 and answer the questions below:

Verse 21 – What members of the church are unnecessary?

Verses 24-25 – Why did God give more honor to the parts that lacked it?

Verses 26-27 – If one member _____, each member _____.

If one member _____, each member _____ with him.

When Paul writes, “you are the body of Christ,” to whom is he writing?

Who Does God Use?

As we have seen above, the church is a unit made up of individuals whom God has specifically placed together for His purposes. He has a reason for each person that He brings to your church. Take a moment and think about the people God has brought to your church recently. In the space below, note some characteristics of the individuals God has brought to your church. For example, have you had an influx of single adults? Families? People with musical talent or other abilities?

Looking at the characteristics above, what are some specific things your church can do to meet the needs of these people? How does God want these people to be used as the body of Christ in your area? Note some specific ideas that you have and discuss them together.

Scripture to Memorize:

Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.

1 Corinthians 12:27