

Think About ...

“THE BODY OF CHRIST”

LEADER GUIDE



Bible Study

Read each of the Scripture passages and discuss the questions together to learn what it means to be part of body of Christ.

For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast (Eph. 2:8-9).

1. What is grace?

God's gift to us.

2. What is faith?

The trust relationship that clings to what God gives us.

For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body — Jews or Greeks, slaves or free — and all were made to drink of one Spirit (1 Cor.12:12-13).

1. When we are saved what does God do with us?

In our baptism God places us in the body of Christ.

2. What are the three items that are referred to with the concept of “one.”

One body, one Spirit, one Baptism.

For the body does not consist of one member but of many. If the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of the body. And if the ear should say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would be the sense of hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell? (1 Cor. 12:14-17).

1. What seems to be the focus of these verses?

There are many members of the body and they are all different.

2. What are the senses and what do they do for the body?

Sight, hearing, taste, touch and smell. They help connect the individual with things and people outside himself/herself.

3. What other things does the body do? Think of your physical body.

Walk, run, eat, play, rake leaves, etc.

But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. If all were a single member, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, yet one body (1 Cor. 12:18-20).

1. Who designed and created all things?

God, this is why we are not believers of evolution.

2. Why did God make the body with so many systems, functions and purposes?

So that the individual might do many varied things.

The eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you," nor again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you." On the contrary, the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and on those parts of the body that we think less honorable we bestow the greater honor, and our unpresentable parts are treated with greater modesty, which our more presentable parts do not require. But God has so composed the body, giving greater honor to the part that lacked it, that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another (1 Cor. 12:21-25).

1. What is our natural, instinctive reaction when confronted with someone or something different?

We shy away, prefer the known to the unknown, the familiar to the different.

2. What is our natural, instinctive reaction when confronted with someone or something that is embarrassing to us?

We tend to pull away, cover it up and/or ignore it.

3. What would God want us to do and not do when someone is an embarrassment to us?

God does not want us to ignore or hide them but rather face and work with the person.

If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together. Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it (1 Cor. 12:26-27).

1. Have you ever experienced a time or situation when someone with a disability has a success, against all odds? Please tell what happened.

Answers will vary.

2. After reading these verses what can and should the Church's view and response be to someone who has a disability?

We should look for ways to rejoice with the person. Help he/she to identify his/her purpose. Help him/her to identify his/her unique gift for His body, the Church.

And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. And all who believed were together and had all things in common. And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts (Acts 2:42-46).

1. What is God urging his people to do?

Gather to hear his word and receive the Sacraments.

2. What takes place in worship?

We receive gifts from God and give him our praise and thanks.

I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship (Rom. 12:1).

1. What is another aspect of worship according to this verse?

We offer our body, no matter its shape, to God for His use.

2. Where and when does this take place?

Everyday, everywhere.

3. What can the Church or your congregation do to help people with disabilities fulfill Rom. 12:1?

We can encourage, support and step out of their way.

For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them (Eph. 2:10).

1. As God's people what is the purpose of our life prior to heaven?

To do good works.

2. How does this happen for a person with a disability?

He or she does what he or she can, according to his or her ability, at a minimum to witness and tell about God's love.

And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ (Eph. 4:11-13).

1. Who is responsible for equipping and training God's people?

Professional church workers.

2. What are we equipped or trained to do?

To do the good works God has prepared for us to do such as outreach, evangelism, acts of mercy and kindness.

3. Why do we do this?

So the world around us can see the light of Christ in and through us.

Notes:

Models of Interaction with People with Disabilities

Look at the various models of interaction currently used and discuss the pros and cons for your specific situation or context.

> Medical Model

This is good for a first-line approach toward people who have just faced a physical loss. Modern medical technology continues to make great advances very quickly and this can provide medical assistance that wasn't previously available.

Pros: Makes the most of current medical technology; Works well with those recently facing physical disability

Cons: Views people as broken, incomplete and inadequate; Does very little to help the mental, emotional, social and spiritual needs

> Rehab Model

This model works at rehabilitating a person so that he or she may be reintegrated into society, especially into employment. It assumes that all people are able to work if given the proper training and the right tools.

Pros: Prepares those who are capable with skills and abilities to become employed and self supporting

Cons: Assumes everyone is capable with the right training and tools; Ignores the economic context that currently requires high levels of performance; Unemployment among the disabled is extremely high because so much depends on employers' willingness to accommodate the needs of people with disabilities.

> Custodial Model

This model views people with disabilities as incapable and severely limited in employment abilities, life skills, personal care and, usually, all aspects of life.

Pros: Those with severe disabilities benefit greatly from this.

Cons: The majority of society views all disabled in this category; Motivation for this model usually comes from pity, guilt and/or a need to control; The disabled themselves view this model as bad.

> Hero Model

This model views people with disabilities as capable of doing almost anything.

Pros: Promotes the "independent and capable" spirit for those who can; Can provide a platform for awareness

Cons: Those who "can" are usually the exception to the rule; Prevents proper assessments of abilities; Creates separation of those who can from those who can't; Those who "can't" see themselves as failures.

> Homogeneous Model

This model sees people with disabilities as wanting and needing to be together. It creates a separate environment for them. It believes that being together they will understand one another, their needs and be more able to meet their needs.

Pros: Establishes an environment of equality and interaction; Curriculum is unique for the specific disability context.

Cons: Creates isolation and prevents normal socialization; Promotes feelings of superiority or inferiority; Assumes people with disabilities want and need to be together

> Inclusive Model

This model acknowledges that people with disabilities have abilities and skills that can and should contribute to the whole of the community. It seeks to permit openings, outlets or areas in which people may enter the community and contribute.

Pros: Provides community awareness of beneficial skills and gifts those with disabilities have; Opportunities for contribution are desired and made available

Cons: Limited opportunities; Concern for the individual is minimal as focus is on the community; Expects the individual to be proactive

> Holistic or Empowering Model

This model sees all people as important members of society and the kingdom of God, with or without disabilities.

Pros: Uses the best from all other models; Focus is on the individual's gifts and skills; Provides opportunities to contribute

Cons: Leadership must be shared by people with and without disabilities; Process for identifying gifts, skills and talents must be in place; Responsibilities must be delegated equally.