



Get set

There is a retelling of the Bible passages where Paul uses the image of the body in The Barnabas Children's Bible (story 344). There is also a reflective story outline on this same topic [here](#).

The Bible passages in question are: Romans 12:1-8, 1 Corinthians 12: 2-27 and Ephesians 4:1-13.

Go!

Storytelling idea

We are going to introduce our story today with a song! It involves heads, shoulders, knees, toes, ears, eyes, nose and mouth.

Heads, shoulders, knees and toes - knees and toes
Heads, shoulders, knees and toes - knees and toes
Eyes and ears and mouth and nose
Heads, shoulders, knees and toes - knees and toes

Touch each as you prepare, then sing and move! You can develop this nursery song further by leaving out some words each time and just touching the part of the body instead, until finally it is an almost silent song, just with the word 'and' every now and then!

We've just been singing a body song - but the church is like a body too. It's made up of many people who are its many parts. In the Bible, the writer St Paul describes a church like a human body that has different parts. And every part is important. Listen to this story that St Paul told about the church being the body of Christ.

Divide your group/congregation into two.

Invite everyone to stand and wiggle different parts of the body - hands, head, feet, toes, and so on.

The body of Christ has many parts just like our human bodies.

It's not just one part that's all the same, but it is made up of many parts that are all different.

Ask one half to wave a foot... and the other half to wave a hand.

A foot can't say, 'I'm not a hand, so I don't belong to the body.'

And a hand can't say, 'I'm not a foot, so I don't belong to the body.'

Ask one half to hold on to both ears... and the other half to point to both eyes and blink a lot.

The ears can't say, 'I'm not an eye, so I don't belong to the body.'

The eyes can't say, 'I'm not an ear, so I don't belong to the body.'

If our bodies were only eyes, then we couldn't hear or eat or run or play games.



If our bodies were only ears, then we couldn't smell or see or taste or dance.

God has put all the parts of the body together, writes St Paul, in the best way, so each part has a role to play. It is the same with the church, which is Christ's body on earth. Everyone in it has a part to play.

Ask everyone to 'hide' their hands up their sleeves or behind their backs.

Eyes can't do without our hands. How would we pick up what they see?

Ask everyone to kneel on the ground to hide their feet.

The hands can't do without the feet. How would they reach what they want to pick up?

Ask everyone to look embarrassed and coy.

And some of the less beautiful parts of the body are the most important and some of the less beautiful parts are vital! Just imagine not having a bottom!

Invite everyone to stand up and wave everything.

God has put together the body, wrote St Paul, so that every part needs every part. All the parts are valuable and important.

Invite everyone to hold their head as if they've got a headache.

If one part of the body hurts, it affects the whole body.

Invite everyone to do some star jumps.

What's good for one part of the body, is good for the whole body. It's the same with us, writes St Paul, in the church. Each one can be part of Christ's body and each one has a vital part to play.

- I wonder which part of the body you are or could be. I wonder what you're good at.
- Is it listening or speaking?
- Is it seeing what needs to be done or helping others or visiting?
- Is it doing something that no-one else notices?

Clear a space in the middle of your group/congregation - or invite everyone to move to a nearby open area.

Let's trace a huge body on the ground and then come and stand on the part of that imagined body where we think we might be in the body of the church.

Prayer idea

Returning to the theme of song you sang at the start of the outline, invite everyone to touch each of



the following body parts as you pray:

Heads: Thank you Father, for people with gifts of planning and organising.

Shoulders: Thank you Father, for people with gifts of taking responsibility and bearing other people's burdens.

Knees: Thank you Father, for people with the gifts of praying and getting down on their knees to pray with children.

Toes: Thank you Father, for people with the gifts of getting things started, being pioneers, pushing the church off on a journey of mission and helping it keep a balance between mission and ministry.

Eyes: Thank you Father, for people with the gifts of seeing what needs to be done and spotting those who are new and feeling lost.

Ears: Thank you Father, for people with the gifts of listening to what people are really saying and hearing what is not said.

Mouth: Thank you Father, for people with the gifts of telling stories and knowing the right things to say to make visitors feel welcomed and loved.

Nose: Thank you Father, for people with the gifts of creating tasty and appetising food that smells mouth-wateringly good.

Thank you Lord God, for giving each of us gifts to bless others in our teams, in our churches, in our communities and in our world.

We are the body of Christ and individually each members of it; we are all needed to be his hands and feet in this world.

Amen.