

The body of the Church

MEETING AIM

To help people understand how all are important to and have a part to play in the body of the Church.

BIBLE PASSAGE

1 Corinthians 12:12-31

BACKGROUND

Society can often seem to be a hierarchy where some can struggle to find their place. Sadly, churches can appear to be the same. Some in the church in Corinth thought themselves better than others, but Paul writes to set them straight. All are important in the body of Christ, *all* have a part to play. This service tries to help people of all ages understand their value and the role they can play.

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WELCOME ACTIVITIES

OPTION ONE: Fingerprints

You will need: poster paint; large sheets of paper; clean-up equipment; marker pens

As people arrive (or at stations around your meeting area at the start of the service), ask people to make a finger, thumb or palm print by dipping their fingers or hand into the paint and pressing it onto the paper.

When they have cleaned their hands, invite them to write their name next to their print. Comment on the uniqueness of each print.

OPTION TWO: Web of connection

You will need: string or wool

Ask people to get into small circles of people and give one person in the group a small ball of string or wool. They should pass the ball to another in the circle, while keeping the end of the string or wool. They should say what part they play in church or what gifts God has given them as they do so. This continues until everyone is holding part of the string and a web of connection has been made in the middle of the group.

If people would like to do this alone, they could make a cat's cradle style web between their fingers or between three or four chairs.

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BIBLE STORY

You will need: tennis balls; two buckets

Ask for five volunteers and invite them to the front. Explain that you're going to create a 'machine' out of your volunteers, in order to move tennis balls from one side of your stage area to the other. Stand the volunteers in a line, with a bucket full of balls at one end and an empty bucket at the other.

Give each volunteer a role to play in the machine. For example, the person standing next to the balls should bend down, pick a ball up and turn 180° to face the next person in the line. This person should crouch down with hands out ready to catch the ball; the first person should drop the ball into their hands. Continue in the same vein until the ball reaches the final volunteer and they can drop it into the bucket.

Get your machine to practise this and then challenge them to move all the balls from one bucket to the other as quickly as they can. Read 1 Corinthians 12:12-21. This talks about one part of the body dropping out because it is not like another. Ask the middle person in your 'machine' to drop out, because they don't do the same action as the first person in the line. Invite the volunteers to move the balls again; all the balls should end up stuck because the third person isn't there to pass them along.

These verses also talk about a body being just an eye or just an ear. Ask all your volunteers to gather around the bucket and perform the action done by the first person. You should end up with all the balls on the floor!

Comment that, just like your machine church only functions when everyone plays their part and everyone is able to contribute. Read verses 22 to 31. Ask the congregation: "What role do you have to play in church?"

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SMALL GROUPS

You will need: copies of the questions below; Bibles

Break into small groups – made up of one or two families, or different mixed-age groups – and give each group a copy of these questions and a Bible:

- What's your favourite part of the Bible passage?
- What was the church in Corinth like if Paul had to say these things to them?
- What role do you play in church?
- How can we involve those around us who don't get the chance to be part of the church?

Give the groups time to chat about these questions, referring to the Bible passage if they need to.

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REVIEW

You will need: roving mic (if needed)

Get some feedback from 'Small groups', using a microphone to hear people's contributions if your meeting space is large.

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RESPONSE ACTIVITIES

Set these three activities up in different parts of your meeting space. Explain what each one is and encourage people to go to the one that will help them process what they have discovered most effectively.

OPTION 1: Paper chains

You will need: strips of paper; pens; sticky tape

Encourage people to write down their names, together with the role they play in church or the gifts that God has given them, on a strip of paper. When everyone in the group is ready, ask them to share what they have written and why. As each person shares, connect the strips of paper together into a chain to symbolise the interconnected nature of the body of Christ. Hang the chains up for all to see.

OPTION 2: Discussion

Assign some volunteers to help guide a discussion about the story and what it might mean for the congregation today. How can we all take part in the body of Christ?

OPTION 3: Contemplation

You will need: paper; felt-tip pens

Give everyone a piece of paper and ask them to draw around their hand. On each digit, ask them to write something that they offer as part of the body of the church. Then, in the palm, invite them to write down what they will do to ensure they can take part.

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CLOSING

Bring everyone back together and ask if anyone would like to share what they did, thought about or discussed during the response time. Thank everyone for taking part and say an appropriate blessing to close the service.

ALEX TAYLOR

is resources editor for *Premier Youth and Children's Work*.

Alonso and the arrogant aberrations

"Alonso! Alonso! This way, mate!" Camera phones flashed and clicked as Alonso Jesus de Maria, Atletico Manchesterford's star striker, made his way into the stadium. A group of students from Manchesterford High School compared the photos they'd manage to take.

"Look at this one, man!" shouted Kofi.

"Mine's better," said Chelsea, shoving her phone in front of Kofi's face.

"No, man, this is the best," claimed Jayesh. He'd got a selfie with the Spanish striker, who was sticking out his tongue.

Leaving the crowd of young people outside, Alonso made his way down the corridors of the stadium to the chairman's office. He'd been the subject of quite a few negative stories in the *Manchesterford Gazette* recently, and he wondered if they were the reason he'd been summoned to see the boss. The stories weren't that bad, he thought, other players at other clubs had done worse. He knocked on the door and went in.

"Ah, Alonso, take a seat." Atletico's chairman, Colin Croesus, was sitting behind a large desk. Copies of the *Manchesterford Gazette* were piled up in front of him. He gave the footballer a hard stare, then read out some of the headlines. "Spanish striker on strike", 'Alonso allowed to run riot', 'High-flyer flies off on fancy foray'. It's too much, de Maria. Most of these stories are in breach of your contract. You've been out of control for too long. The club has no choice but to give you the sack. With immediate effect. Goodbye."

Colin Croesus turned away and looked at his phone. Alonso staggered outside. Sacked! What was he going to do? Suddenly he saw Brian the kit man coming down the corridor and he had an idea.

"Brian!" he shouted. "Have you got any spare shirts of mine? Could I have them?"

"Sure," said Brian, looking a bit confused. "Come this way."

A few moments later, Alonso burst out of the entrance to the stadium. He was soon surrounded by students from Manchesterford High School. He handed out shirts to Kofi, Jayesh and the others, signing them and posing for endless selfies. If he could get enough good press now, then surely another club would welcome him with open arms.

"This way, Alonso!" The Spanish footballer grinned as Chelsea grabbed a selfie with her soon to be ex-favourite footballer.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What kind of a person is Alonso? What might he have done wrong?
- Was the chairman right to sack Alonso? Why? Why not?
- Why might another club sign Alonso to play for them? Will Alonso's plan work? Why? Why not?
- What will Chelsea do when she realises her favourite player is leaving the club?
- What might happen next?

This story is based on Luke 16:1-15. Read this passage to the group and compare Jesus' story and words with this one. Discuss what Jesus might have been saying through his parable, encouraging the group to think about it in a new way.

ALEX TAYLOR

is resources editor for *Premier Youth and Children's Work*.

Word for the year

A really helpful practice is to prayerfully choose one word or a very short phrase or scripture to define and guide us into, and through the coming year. On one level this can be a way of identifying where your head is at and a generalisation of your expectations and hopes going forward from this point. However, I find that often it is more than that. God can inspire a 'now' word in us that gives us an idea of his heart for us, priorities he might have placed in our spirit or even specific goals or missions to dedicate ourselves to in 2020. Think in terms of your character, your faith journey, your education and career, interaction with others, discipleship, mission, worship...What phrase might guide you through the coming twelve months as a mentor? What is the 'now' word for your mentoring itself? Try it with your mentee:

WHAT WORD OR FEELING WILL ACCOMPANY YOU IN 2020?

- Has 2019 been defined by something in particular for you? What follows that?
- Do you have significant events / challenges / milestones to face this year?
- What is the foremost concern in your heart and your soul that feels like it's not going away in a hurry? What is the antidote to this?
- What do you visualise when you daydream about the future?
- What would other people say this year is about for you?
- If this year was an emotion what would it be?
- Imagine looking back in December 2020; if this year was recognisable primarily by one of the nine fruits of the Spirit which would it be?
- If this year had a logo of an animal or living thing what would it be and why?
- What scripture could or will, define the coming year for you?

WHAT'S THE CURRENT REALITY AROUND YOUR 2020 WORD?

- Have you already been on a journey with this word? Have you already made progress to get you to this point?
- What did you do that brought you this far already?
- Has anyone else been involved?
- On a scale of one to ten, will this sentiment fade easily (one) or will it stay with you throughout the year (ten)?
- What is likely to get in the way, interrupt or distract your relationship with this word this year?
- What would God say to you about where you are now?
- What do you hope he'll say in December?

WHAT MIGHT HELP YOU JOURNEY WITH THIS WORD?

- What things could you do to encourage this word to be alive and active as you move forward? List as many as possible then highlight the best few.
- Who needs to help you? How will you get their help?

WHAT ARE YOUR PRACTICAL ACTIONS GOING TO BE?

- How will you keep this word fresh all through the months?
- How will you express it to others?
- What creative actions will you do to keep it close and active?
- Go through all twelve months – how will this word feature in each month?

Make sure you pray together and give it all to God.

JOEL TOOMBS

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Up-front games



Nothing beats an up-front challenge game! (OK, I might be overstating that somewhat, but they are good.) Invite some volunteers the front of your room to compete in a challenge; get the rest of your group to cheer for the competitors as they play.

You might like to play the same game over a few weeks and keep a leaderboard of scores to see who is the best! Change the challenge game every so often so that children or young people have the chance to try something new.

THE BEAN AND CHOPSTICK GAME

You will need: dried beans; chopsticks; bowls; stopwatch

Give each player two bowls – one full of beans and one empty – and a pair of chopsticks. They have to move the beans one at a time from the full bowl to the empty one. The person with the most beans in their once-empty dish after a minute is the winner. Larger beans, such as butter beans, will be easier to get hold of with the chopsticks; smaller beans, such as haricot beans, will make for a more difficult game!

A variation of this is to use straws (paper ones, of course) and small round sweets. Players have to move the sweets using the straw – they suck a sweet onto the end of the straw. Lighter sweets such as Maltesers will be easier to move than heavier ones like Skittles.

Another game with a similar concept is to put petroleum jelly (or similar) onto the noses of the players. They then have to stick their face into a bowlful of cotton-wool balls in order to stick one to their nose. They then shake it off into an empty bowl.

THE CEREAL BOX GAME

You will need: empty cereal boxes (the same size); scissors

Put a cereal box in front of each player. The players have to bend over and pick the box up with their teeth. Only their feet can touch the ground (they can't put their hand or knee down). Once everyone has done that, cut a section off the top of each box (the same amount for each box) and challenge the players to pick up the box again. If a player can't do so, they are out. Keep cutting the boxes down until only one player is left. It might be worthwhile marking out the sections on each cereal box before the session, so that the game is fair. If you're keeping a scoreboard, make a note of how many sections a player completes.

Alternatively, cut the cereal boxes into the same number of horizontal sections. Mix the sections up and stack them up one on top of the other. The players have to stack the sections back in the right order using only their teeth. Time the game so that each player can have an entry on the leaderboard, if you're keeping one.

THE PANTS GAME

You will need: pairs of very large underpants (one for each player); stopwatch

Give each player a pair of underpants and line them up at the front of your space. Challenge the players to put on and take off the underpants as many times as they can in one minute. The contestants should put the pants on over their own clothes (obviously). They have to pull them right up and then take them right off for it to count. You might want to have some adjudicators watching to make sure the players are obeying the rules! The winner is the person to have put the pants on and taken them off the most times.

THE AFTER-EIGHT GAME

You will need: After-Eight mints (or a non-branded alternative); stopwatch

A stone-cold classic. Give each player a mint. Ask them to lean their head back and place the mint on their forehead. Using only their facial muscles (and with a little help from gravity), they have to move the mint from their forehead to their mouths. If the mint falls off their face they have to start again (if the mint falls on the floor, give them a new one). The winner is the first person to get the mint into their mouth. If you're keeping a scoreboard, time the game so that each player can have an entry on the leaderboard.

If you have any children with food allergies, make sure you have an alternative so that everyone who wants to can take part.

THE PING-PONG SHAKER GAME

You will need: empty tissue boxes; ping-pong balls; long strips of cloth; needle and thread; stopwatch

Before the session, attach the back of the tissue box to the middle of a long strip of material using the needle and thread (a few simple stitches should do it). You should then be able to tie the tissue box around your waist using the strip of cloth. Make as many 'tissue-box belts' as you need – one for each player. Fill each tissue box with the same number of ping-pong balls.

Tie a tissue-box belt around the waist of each player, making sure none of the balls fall out before the game starts. On the signal to start, the players should move around to try and shake all the ping-pong balls out of the box. The one to do so first is the winner. If you're keeping a scoreboard, time the game so that each player can have an entry on the leaderboard

Armour of God

The passage Paul writes in Ephesians about the armour of God has so much that we can explore in creative ways. These craft ideas will help to bring out themes of protection, God's strength and power and the concept of standing firm when things are trying to knock you down.



TOWERS OF STRENGTH

You will need: two sheets of A4 paper per child; sticky tape, cardboard tubes; mugs or books; scissors

Give all of the children a sheet of paper each and get them to experiment with building something that will hold a book or mug in the air. They will almost certainly find this impossible! Now show them how to wrap the paper tightly around a cardboard tube and tape the eTees to make a paper tube covering the card tube. Carefully take the paper tube off the cardboard tube and show that it will actually hold the book or mug off the ground without collapsing. Get children to have a go with their second piece of paper. Use this craft to talk about how we sometimes can't do something on our own, but, just as the tube helped the paper to stand upright with strength, so God's armour and his power can help us to stand strong in a way we might not have been able to do before.



HOMEMADE WEEBLES

You will need: permanent markers; plastic Easter eggs that can be opened up; Blu Tack; marbles; small decorative stickers

An important attribute of the armour of God is that it helps us to stand our ground and to stand firm against the things that might try to upset us and throw us off course. These 'weebles' might wobble, but they will stand their ground and not fall over! Open up a plastic Easter egg and put a blob of Blu Tack on the inside, at the bottom. WeTe a marble on top of the Blu Tack so that it stays in place. Close the Easter egg and decorate it with the permanent markers and stickers to reflect your personality. Try to knock the egg over. It will wobble, but always come back upright because of its weighted bottom. Use this as a starting point to talk about God's power to keep us protected and stable when things are trying to knock us down.



ARMoured ORANGES

You will need: oranges or tangerines (or similar); permanent markers; a tall, clear jug or vase

This is another craft that needs a bit of demonstration beforehand! Peel an orange or tangerine and put it into the water. It will sink to the bottom of the jug. Then put an orange with the peel left on into the water. It will float. The peel is actually like armour, keeping the orange safe from sinking. Link this to the protective armour of God over our hearts and minds. Ask children to write or draw on their oranges things that they would like protection from in life – maybe things that scare them. Float the decorated oranges in the water as a celebration of the protection and strength God can give.



JUNK MODELLING ARMOUR

You will need: cardboard; foil; string; glue; sticky tape; scissors; stapler; items from the recycling bin; felt-tip pens

Read the passage with the children; unpack and discuss the various parts of the armour. Let the children have free reign with the junk modelling items to create either one of the pieces of armour or a model of something that the passage has made them think about. Use the creative time to chat about their responses to the passage and remember to leave time so that they can share what they have made if they want to.



GET SMART (12)

CLIP: 00:17:19 – 00:21:38

SYNOPSIS

American Maxwell Smart works for a Government spy agency in an administrative capacity. When the agency's head office is attacked, the Chief decides to assign Maxwell as a spy and partners him with expert Agent 99, much to her annoyance. Maxwell and 99 must take on their archenemy, the terrorist organization KAOS, led by a man known only as Siegfried who has plans to detonate a nuclear weapon. Unbeknown to the agency, one of their best agents is secretly working for the terrorists. Maxwell and 99 have to learn to work together to discover who the agent is and save the world.

Your young people probably haven't heard of the 2008 film *Get Smart*, let alone the original TV show it was based upon. But thanks to the magic of Netflix, the film is available once more to a whole new generation. *Get Smart* stars Steve Carell and a surprisingly stellar cast including Dwayne 'the Rock' Johnson, Anne Hathaway, Alan Arkin and even a cameo from Bill Murray. And while it may not be a classic, *Get Smart* has just enough to get your group interested and laughing.

The clip that this session focuses on is a scene in the aftermath of a KAOS attack on CONTROL. After learning the identity of all CONTROL agents, KAOS has been hunting them down and eliminating them. This means that the only agents remaining are the ones attending the emergency meeting. This inadvertently means that Maxwell, an analyst who has long dreamt of being an agent, is finally promoted into that role. Out of the tragedy Maxwell has finally achieved his dream and is understandably excited about the prospect of getting out into the field and experiencing action. To celebrate Maxwell requests the 'cone of silence' without realising that it doesn't work and his colleagues can hear his words of excitement.

DISCUSS

After showing the clips as a stimulus, break into small discussion groups (you may wish to have a designated discussion leader in each group) and discuss the following questions:

- Have you ever dreamt of achieving something for a long time before finally achieving it?
- Is Maxwell wrong to be happy about his achievement due to the tragedy that leads to it?
- Do you think that Maxwell will make a good secret agent?
- If you had a 'cone of silence', what would you use it to say?

After discussing these questions read Philippians 4:4-13 together. Once this has been completed, return to your smaller groups and discuss the following questions:

- How would you summarise this passage in five words?
- How might our lives be different if we put verse 6 into action?
- Is it possible to be content no matter the circumstances?
- What do you think the meaning behind verse 13 is?

Get Smart is now available to stream on Netflix. If your group are interested, arrange a time when you can watch the whole film together..

TOM WADE

is the head of philosophy and theology at Haileybury and Imperial Service College.



JESUS IS KING

ARTIST: Kanye West | SUITABLE FOR: Over-13s

INTRODUCTION

This album is a gift crying out to be played and discussed in your youth group. The global rap star has, amidst criticism and wariness, very publicly announced that he has given his life to Jesus and this latest release was completely transformed from the original album he had planned to become an all-out worship song. This session is not designed to try to make judgements about the sincerity or motivation of the singer, neither is it aiming to view him as a hero for his faith, but rather to explore the transformation Jesus can make.

Begin the session by asking the group to think about what it means to be a Christian or a follower of Jesus. What does that look like? How do you see it in others? What difference has it made to your own life, if at all? Who do they look to as a follower of Jesus?

LISTEN AND DISCUSS

Introduce the track 'Selah', checking that the group are all familiar with the transformation that has occurred in this singer's life and how this album has changed to reflect that. Explain that this particular song really explores that theme as it was planned to be on the original album and was completely rewritten to reflect the changes that had occurred in Kanye West's life.

Play the track, providing copies of the lyrics for the young people to follow. As a group, discuss:

- What strikes you most about this song?
- What does it tell you about the way Jesus changes lives?
- What questions does it raise for you?

Draw your young people's attention to the lyrics: "Everybody wanted *Yandhi*, then Jesus Christ did the laundry." These words describe the transformation, or 'making clean' that Jesus performed in his life. Critics have all noticed that for the first time, this album contains no expletives and this very song was 'cleaned up' from its original version.

As a group, look at the following questions, perhaps discussing them as appropriate or alternatively using them as a tool for reflection:

- What does it mean to you for Jesus to transform your life?
- What difference does or would that mean to you?
- How do or would people see the difference in you?

Turn to the Bible and read 2 Corinthians 5:17. As a group, discuss what it means to be 'in Christ', and how he alone can completely transform a person's life. As appropriate, share this further with your group, offering to talk further and pray with individuals to accept this invitation to a new life.

As you draw to a close, invite the young people to take a look at some of the other tracks and lyrics, perhaps to look at them further in another session. Pray for your young people and for all those Christians in the public eye, that God would strengthen them as they keep their eyes on him.

BECKY MAY

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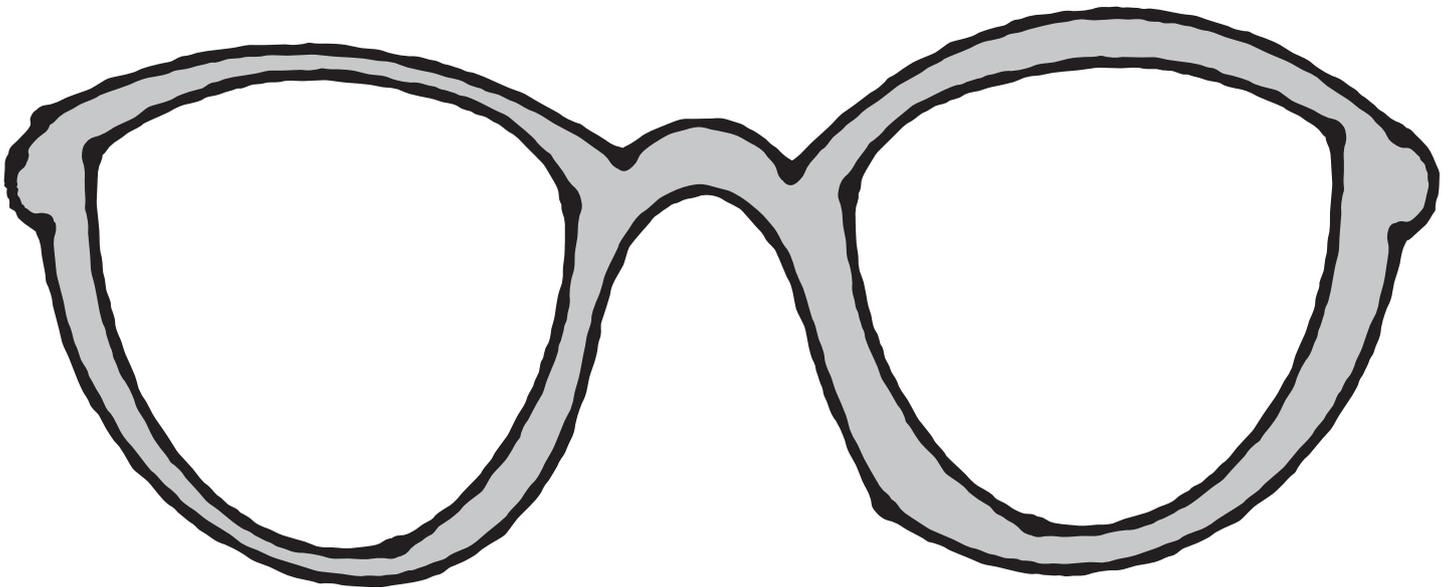
20/20 VISION

*20/20 vision is a term people use to talk about perfect eyesight.
If you don't have 20/20 vision, things might be blurry and you will probably need glasses.
The Bible talks a lot about how we "see" the world. The psalm writer says to God:*

"OPEN MY EYES THAT I MAY SEE WONDERFUL THINGS" (PSALM 119:18).

*When you look at the year coming up, what do you see?
What events in your life can you see coming up?
How do you feel when you look ahead to these things?*

Write these things in the glasses.



*Now ask God to help you see those things through his eyes.
What do you think God feels about your coming year?
Be still and listen to God. Write these things underneath the glasses.*

"LOOK UP, AND BE ALERT TO WHAT IS GOING ON AROUND CHRIST...

SEE THINGS FROM HIS PERSPECTIVE."

(COLOSSIANS 3:2, THE MESSAGE)