



Faith Adventures for Children Together



Free to use – please acknowledge when using beyond local church children's and youth work so others can find and use the resource themselves.

*Committed to URC Children Together:
enabling everyone to grow more like Jesus
together in the home, church and beyond.*

For guidance on the purpose of the resource and how to use it as a launch pad for your engagement with children and families, please use this link: www.bit.ly/FACT-how-to-sheet

Title: Romans 12: 4–5

Theme: What does it mean to belong?

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Introduction: What would be helpful to know in my planning?

Welcome to our final session exploring traditions in the Church. This week we will be looking at 'Membership'.

Membership can look different in different denominations – Roman Catholics and Anglicans see membership as meaning they are part of the whole denomination, while in the United Reformed Church you become members of a local church. Of course, this doesn't mean you can't visit or worship at another church but, if you were to intend to do so regularly, you might be expected to become a member there instead.

The concept of membership in the URC has been a hot topic of discussion for URC Youth, which continues to challenge the wider Church to think about what membership might look like in the future.

If you are under 11 (or a parent of an u11 child, or a children's worker) you are a member of URC Children – even if you're not a member of a United Reformed Church – and the same is true of 11-25-year-olds who are members of URC Youth.

The passage we are using to explore the theme today, from the letter to the Romans, reminds us that we are all members of the Body of Christ – whatever our age or ability. The very first statement of the URC's 'Towards A Charter For Children In The Church' says that we must remember that 'Children are equal partners with adults in the life of the church' – but what does that actually mean?

There are some groups of which we are members because we have no choice, and some to which we choose to belong. Membership comes with both benefits and cost. Does church membership outweigh the cost? Where do we fit? And where do we belong? Let's explore...

Be aware of any children who might have lived experience of feeling that they don't belong (e.g. cared for, or adopted) and those who may have body-image issues or are differently abled.

Together – prayer and games

How do I help my group to come together and get started with the theme?

Gathering prayer

Jesus, our friend,

(use alternate index fingers to point and tap the middle of opposite palms)

Be with us today

(two hands, palms up in front of you, move up and down twice)

As we share together,

(two hands, palms up in front of you, move one forward and one back and alternate twice)

Pray together,

(hands together, palm against palm, as though praying)

Play together,

(hands to each side, palms up, make two small circles outwards)

And get to know you better

(point up with one hand)

As children together in your family.

(one hand out, palm down in front of you, move it sideways and up in three 'steps' as though to indicate children of three different heights)

AMEN

(Two thumbs up, and bring fists slowly together to meet in front of you)

OR

Thank you, God, for bringing us together today.

Help us to grow closer to you in all we do.

**Help us to speak and to listen, to learn and to grow together,
adventuring together with you wherever we may go.**

Amen

Active game – Clumps: 'We also belong to each other.'

What you do. Invite your group to mill around the space. At random times, call out a number (which is less than the overall number of the participants) and players must get into groups of that number by linking arms with each other.

For the final 'shout out', match the number to the number of players so that you all end up with one big group – 'We also belong to each other.'

Quieter game – Match made

This game links to the idea of things matching – finding that which is the same as you. Putting things together that are meant to be together.

You will need any card games that are about matching symbols, such as Dobble, Snap, or the memory game of Pairs.

Experience – Bible story and songs

Hear, watch and sing the Bible story

For this story we recommend using the New International Version

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans%2012%3A4-5&version=NIV>

Where can I find the story online?

Under-fives: We all belong, by Loop Show – a sung version of the Bible passage with images

<https://youtu.be/8RqBJYdQP3g?si=Opl4LGFm52VV1Mlc>

Five-to-elevens: A short explanation of Romans 12, by Bethel KidsCorner

https://youtu.be/abHyNz_4BhI?si=ICJ0LZVnI5AQXIK1

Songs to support the story

Under-fives: Big family of God, by Worship for Everyone

<https://youtu.be/UEvJzOxm6zs?si=e8MFO1Tf9x-LwGEq>

Five-to-elevens: Father God I wonder (Ian Smale), by Tangy Crayfish

<https://youtu.be/gLue1fy9BPk?si=3Sz7T0mX3ekfZo8V>

Explore – ways into the theme

Ideas and activities to explore this week's Bible passage together

A new way to explore the theme

Begin by sharing the Bible reading together and explain that we are going to explore what it means to belong to the Church as the body of Christ.

Begin by playing a fun game of Body Beetle drive.

You will need an explanation sheet, paper, pens and dice for each child or small team.

What you do: children play against each other, racing to roll their dice and be the first to complete their body picture.

For each number on the dice you draw the corresponding body part.

Explain that you need to roll a 4 first to draw the body before you can add the head, legs and arms.

Dice Rolls are:

One – Leg (need to roll it twice to get each leg)

Two – Arms (need to roll it twice to get each arm)

Three – Head

Four – Body (this is the starter shape)

Five – Hat

Six – Feet (need to roll it twice to get two feet)

Once the game is complete use the questions below to begin to think about the passage and what it means to be part of the body of Christ (Church)

Why do you think this game is linked to today's Bible reading?

What did you notice in the game? For example, did you find it frustrating when you needed a certain number and so had a body part missing? Was there any point in the game when you thought your body was complete enough to stop the game early?

I wonder how this is like the Church, or the body of Christ?

I wonder who is missing from our church?

Use the questions in the session plan to go further.

Conclusion

Draw round somebody in the group on a large piece of paper and encourage the group to draw and write in the body outline their own names, draw themselves, and say what they enjoy about being part of the church and what they think their 'role' is.

This session is a good opportunity to gather comments to feed back into the church about how we welcome children as equal partners in the body of Christ. What are we doing well and what could we do better?

Modern parables

Jesus used stories to help people understand the things of God, even though they weren't necessarily overtly Christian stories. Lots of children's books can be used in a similar way as a conversation starter on the week's theme. Examples are shared here but you may think of others too. If you are to use the modern parable, consider buying a copy or borrowing it from the library so children see the actual book and can explore the illustrations more (and support the author).



The day the crayons quit by Drey Daywalt. Published by Harper Collins 2016.

A Funny Picture Book About Expressing Feelings and Emotions. The crayons work to find a way to live together despite their differences.

- What helps you feel like you 'belong'

Talking together: How might we talk about the Bible story together?

- If you were a part of the body, which part of the body would you be?
- Which part of the body can we do without and still have everything we need (be complete). What difference does it make to not have that part? (*Be aware of those with body dysphoria and those who differently abled*)
- Which part of the body is Jesus?

Wondering: ways to reflect on the theme

- Would you rather have toes as long as fingers or fingers as long as toes?
- What are you a member of? What does it mean to be a member?
- Where do you feel you fit in and why?

What's in the box (for under fives)

Use the special box or bag and sing, "What's in the box/bag? What's in the box/bag? Let's see, let's see, what's in the box/bag" (to the tune of The Farmer's in the Dell). Pull out the things one by one and then let the children play with them, talking about the theme or the story in simple terms.

This week's box could include:

- A membership certificate or a picture of the URC Children badge – talk to the children about URC children and that we are all part of the URC. We are all members.
- A doll or images of parts of the body – we are all joined together as part of the church, like a body fits together.
- A set of family figures – talk to the children about what our families might look like, and how they can all be different, but we are still members of that family. (Be aware of children who are looked after or whose families are separated.)
- A small jigsaw – talk about groups where we are members, (e.g. junior church, crèche, play group, toddler group). We all fit together as members of those groups.
- A tactile cross of wood or fabric (a cross shape reminds us of Jesus. Jesus/God loves us and it's always in the box because Jesus/God always loves us!).
- A set of play people to act out the story or random shapes/bits you can move around to make pictures from the story as you tell it (e.g. stones, felt, twigs etc).

Express – prayer and creative activities

Praying together: enabling your group to respond spiritually

Prayerful activity – We all fit together

This jigsaw is to show how we all fit together in Jesus. If any one of us was missing, the jigsaw would be incomplete.

You will need:

- jigsaw template
- pictures of your family



What you do:

Draw some pictures of your church family or use some photos and stick them onto a piece of card. Then cut it into pieces. Each take a piece and all pray for the piece you are holding. Then recreate the puzzle, perhaps with reflective music. Finish by saying, 'Thank you Lord that we all belong to your family. Amen'

Spoken prayer

Under-fives

Dear God,
(put hands together)

Thank you for our bodies.
(point to yourself)

With hands to help,
(wiggle fingers)

And feet to go,
(stomp feet gently)

We are all different,
(shake head "no")

But we belong together,
(hold hands with someone or hug yourself)

Like one big family.
(make a big circle with arms)

Help us love each other
(arms out wide)

And work together today.
(clap hands once)

Amen.
(put hands together again)

Five-to-eleven

Dear God,

Thank you that you made each of us special,

With different gifts and things we can do.

Some of us help,

Some of us lead,

Some of us care,

And some of us create.

Thank you that we all belong together,

Like one big body, working as one.

Help us to use our gifts today,

To love, help, and include everyone.

Amen.

Responding together

Here are some suggested crafts and activities, and there is a colouring sheet at the end of this resource. You could also use small play toys and/or have a basket of resources available so children can choose their own way to respond.

With an online group, plan whether to deliver any resources in advance or how you will encourage them to use what they've got to hand in their response.

However you do it, it is good for the adults to engage in the response too, and all chat together.

Junk modelling

Have some fun using junk modelling to create either a church or something of the group's choosing. The aim of the activity is for all people to have created a part of the whole.



Everyday with Jesus – Walking the Way

What could we do this week to carry on what we've learned? Maybe members of the group could come up with a suggestion. If not, get them to choose from these two challenges:

- Talk to someone older or younger than you and ask them, Where do you belong and why?
- Invite someone to go with you to a group you attend e.g. church, club.

We hope you enjoyed exploring the story of the **One body** with us.

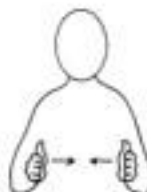
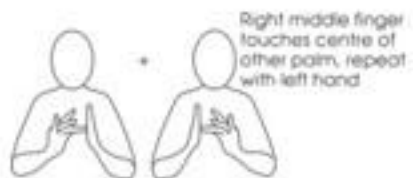
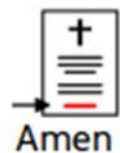
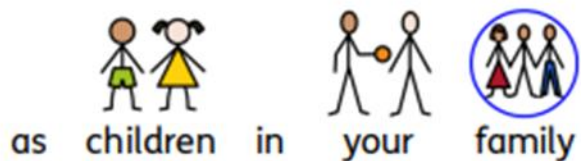
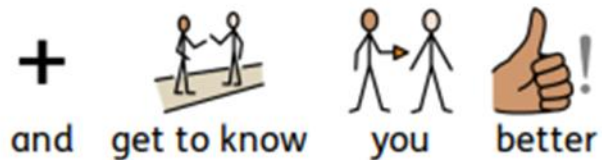
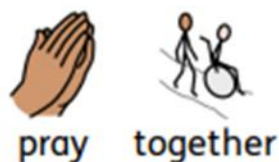
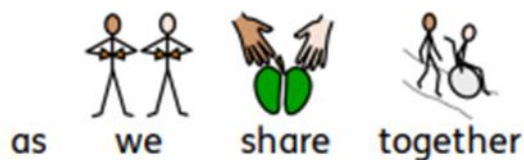
Please let us know what you liked or what you would find useful by emailing

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Please join the Faith Adventures Facebook Group **bit.ly/FACT_FB**

Why not have a look at next week's resource on **Fruits of the Spirit**






The Lord's Prayer

 Our  Father,  who art  in  heaven,  hallowed be  thy  name.

 Thy  kingdom  come,  thy  will  be done





 on  earth  as it is  in  heaven.

 Give  us  this day  our  daily  bread

 and  forgive  us  our  sins  As  we  forgive  those  who  sin  against  us

 Lead  us  not  into  temptation  but  deliver  us  from  evil

 For  thine  is the  kingdom,  the  power  and  the  glory

 For ever  and  ever  Amen

