

*Get Ready!*

## God's Church Today: the Body of Christ



By: Jennifer Wetzel

### Text

“The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body--whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free--and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. Now the body is not made up of one part but of many. If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? But in fact God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. If they were all one part, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, but one body...Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. And in the church God has appointed first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, also those having gifts of healing, those able to help others, those with gifts of administration, and those speaking in different kinds of tongues.” 1 Corinthians 12:12-20; 27-28 (NIV)

### Key Quest Verse

“So in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.”  
Romans 12:5 (NIV)

### Bible Background

During the lifetime of Paul, Corinth was the chief city in Greece with a population of about 250,000 free persons and 400,000 slaves. Due to its location on the Corinthian isthmus, this commercial city was an industrial and seafaring metropolis that possessed great wealth and luxury. Its location made it a crossroads of trading and drew crowds of visitors from both the East and the West. As a typical Greek city, Corinth was steeped in culture, arts, and a pursuit for wisdom, as evidenced by its schools of philosophy and religious temples dedicated to various Greek gods. Unfortunately, these gods were gods of pleasure and lust. A carnal and wicked city, Corinth was a center of immorality.

In the midst of this impure setting, Paul established the church at Corinth. By reading Acts, chapter 18, one can see that Paul founded the church at Corinth while working as a tentmaker and preaching to both Jew and Gentiles before continuing to Ephesus to preach. God had blessed the new church with gifts of the Spirit to aid in the strengthening of the church and spreading of the Gospel. Though the church was talented, members had begun to use their gifts to gratify their pride and factions were setting in the church membership. In a corrupt city such as Corinth, it is easy to see why the immature church was experiencing problems.

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While in Ephesus, Paul received words of the many problems occurring at the church in Corinth through visitors from Corinth. In addition, the church wrote to Paul, seeking counsel on their problems. This letter to the Corinthians is Paul's advice to the church regarding many subjects. In chapter 12, he addresses the use of spiritual gifts and factions spreading in the church. His response clearly shows that every gift from God is to be used to spread the gospel and glorify his name. In addition, no gift or church member is greater than the other. Instead, each member forms an important part of the church, which is the body of Christ. The diverse gifts of its members compose a whole that can accomplish God's purpose. In Christ, there is no distinction between individual members or characteristics, for all are important to the body of Christ.

### Lesson Quest

#### What I want my students to:

- Know:** Everyone is a member of the body of Christ, despite their talents or characteristics, and all can contribute to the church
- Feel:** Confidence in their abilities to work for the body of Christ and gratitude for the diverse gifts of other church members
- Do:** Demonstrate how to use their talents for the growth of the church and spreading of the gospel

### Leader's Devotion

When I was hired as a library media specialist in August 2001, the school year began with 12 new high school staff members, including myself. What a diverse group we were! Though many of us were first-year educators, our number also included a few teaching veterans. In addition, the characteristics of our teaching styles, personalities, and backgrounds composed a unique collection. My southern Illinois colloquialisms blended into the northeast Ohio setting, as did the accent of the new math teacher from Romania. Our monthly meetings as first-year teachers were never dull as we learned more about one another.

In the first meeting sessions, I was slightly envious of the talents of the other new teachers. Some were dynamic and outgoing, others humorous, while others were talented coaches and band directors. As a quiet people-pleaser, I felt like I was on the fringes of the circle. How could I compare to the talents of the other new teachers or ever win students to the library? Throughout the first half of the school year, I felt self-consciousness at each meeting, constantly comparing myself to the others and never seeming to measure up to their talents.

*Get Ready!***Leader's Devotion Cont.**

As the school year wore on, each of us assumed roles in our circle of first-year teachers. While some brought laughs to our new teaching experiences, others brought in empathy from other teaching experiences. And, as our roles emerged, I became the listener, the one in which others confided. As it turned out, my quietness was never a deficit. Instead, it was a gift that God had given to me that was perfect for our situation. As I looked around at each meeting, I could see that God had blessed each of us with unique talents specially fitted for our meetings and experiences in teaching. Our diverse personalities and talents allowed us to become a cohesive whole, supporting and encouraging one another. From my group of other first-year teachers, I had learned an important lesson. It does not matter what my talents are or what talents that others possess. Instead, what matters is that we use our individual talents to work together as a team.

*Get Set!***Option A****The Kleenex Church**

**Materials:** A box of facial tissues

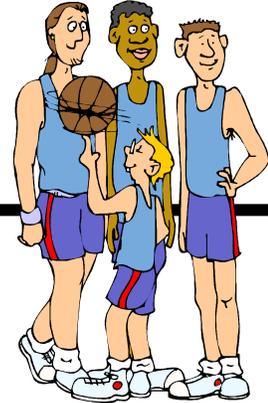
**Procedure:** As you speak, remove one tissue at a time, in order to illustrate what you are discussing. **Churches today are like a box of Kleenex. In a box of Kleenex, one tissue always stands ready, waiting for the call to carry out its job. It uses its assigned characteristics, such as softness and scent, to perform its role. As you use a box of Kleenex, it seems as if you will never run out and that there are always more to come. However, as the tissue on top waits to perform its job, there are others on the bottom of the box that support the top tissue and lift it up. Have you ever thought about the tissues in the bottom of the box? They wait patiently for their turn to work and are never jealous of the tissues on top. Instead, they are content to support the others as they do their job. That's the way a church is.**

**This box of Kleenex teaches us what our church should be like. We should each be like this Kleenex floating at the top of the box. It is waiting to do its job. We should always be ready and waiting to use our talents for the church. We never know when our talents and gifts may be needed to bring comfort, to show praise, or to assist the church. And, it seems that as we look around our church, we will never run out of gifts or talents! (Name some of the talents of your students and other church members). Everyone has a gift that will help our church and spread the Word of God. And, we're a lot like the bottom tissues. There are times when we cannot see what talents we may have or how we can contribute to the church. Instead, we have to wait patiently for the Lord to use us. As we wait, we need to support and encourage others as they serve the church right now. We are all part of the same group and work towards the same goal. Thus, we must forget about ourselves as individuals, and be willing to help our fellow church members. Someday, we too, will be the top Kleenex, ready to work for the body of Christ.**

**GO TO THE BIBLE STORY**

Get Set!

**Option B**



**Be A Team Player**

**Materials:** Video of a sports team, television, VCR

**Procedure:** Before class, videotape a 5-7 minute clip of a sports team, not a single athlete, in action. Make sure that the clip shows the players working together to meet a goal, such as a football team making a touchdown or a basketball team shooting a basket.

At the beginning of class, tell the students that they will be watching footage of a sports team. Instruct them to watch how the athletes play the game. Do they try to single-handedly win the game or do they work together? For instance, do they make passes to each other? Have them count how many people are involved in making one play. Show the video clip to the class.

**What did you notice most about this team? The item that stood out to me is that they all had to work together to accomplish a goal. In this team, there are no individual stars. Did you count how many people had to participate to make that play? No one did it by himself or herself. Instead, it was a team effort! Each of these athletes possesses strengths and weaknesses. Despite their athletic abilities, none of them could play the game by themselves. They all come together and use their individual characteristics to form a strong team.**

**That is how our church is. We are each a member of God’s team! As a church, we all have a common goal to work toward, which is spreading the good news. And, though we each have individual talents, none of them by themselves will win everyone to Christ. Instead, we have to work together to put our talents to use. We each contribute our talents to the church to become a strong team working for God. That is how our church must operate—as a team! Romans 12:5 says, ‘So in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others’. This verse means that we all must work together and be accountable to one another. This week, let’s remember to play hard for God’s team!**

**GO TO THE BIBLE STORY**

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**Get Set!**

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**Bible Story**

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**Teacher Tip:** Provide markers for students to highlight portions of the story in their Bibles

Have students read the lesson text aloud as a class. Then, the teacher will read the Key Quest Verse to the students. Last, the students will repeat the Key Quest Verse back to the teacher.

**“The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. Now the body is not made up of one part but of many. If the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. And if the ear should say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? But in fact God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. If they were all one part, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, but one body...Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. And in the church God has appointed first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, also those having gifts of healing, those able to help others, those with gifts of administration, and those speaking in different kinds of tongues.” 1 Corinthians 12:12-20; 27-28 (NIV)**

**Go!****The Church Body****ARTS AND CRAFTS**

**Materials:** Butcher paper, pens or pencils, scissors, tape

**Quest Connection**

In the lesson text and key verse, students learn that every Christian is a member of the body of Christ. In addition, they learn that all church members form a body. Everyone's individual talents work together to form a team. In this activity, they will recognize and list manners in which all church members contribute to the church body. In addition, they will brainstorm ideas on how they can add to the church body with their own unique talents.

**Procedure:** Cut a piece of butcher paper longer than the length of the child. Then, assist them in tracing their body or drawing a body on the butcher paper. Have them cut out the life-sized bodies. Then, students will write the Key Quest Verse across the torso of the body. Next, have the students brainstorm how each part of the body could be used to glorify God or how that part of the body represents talents in your church. Have them write those things on the appropriate body part. For example, the fingers could be someone who plays the piano or types the church bulletin, the feet could belong to someone who collects offering, and the mouth represents someone who teaches or sings. As students work to brainstorm how each part could work towards the good of the whole body, discuss how each body part is important. Not everyone can teach or sing, but we can all do something for the church and for God. After students are done brainstorming, have them draw a heart on their bodies. Then, in the heart, have students list ways that they help the church.

**Close**

Have the students display their bodies on the wall of the classroom or the hallway, so that others can see what they have been learning. Ask a student to close with prayer.

**Go!****Church Leaders****GUEST QUEST**

**Materials:** Invite a member of your church that was one of the first members to start attending or had a family member/friend that was involved in starting your church

**Quest Connection**

In the lesson of the church body, Paul instructed the Corinthian church in how they all formed one body in Christ. Instead of being jealous of one another's talents, they were to recognize that we can each contribute to the body of Christ. In addition, he speaks about how God has appointed different roles throughout the church. Church leaders all have different roles to fulfill. Today, students will learn more about leadership roles in the church body.

**Procedure:** Before class, tell your guests the lesson text and Key Quest Verse that your students have been studying. In addition, give them a copy of the following questions so that they have time to prepare for the class. In class, ask your guests to share the following information (also allow time for students to ask their own questions):

1. **How did you become interested in becoming a pastor (deacon/trustee/elder)?**
2. **Is there someone who inspired you to become involved in the church?**
3. **How did you assume this position (appointed/voted/etc)?**
4. **What do you do in your leadership role?**
5. **How do the things that you do help the church body meet its goals?**
6. **What is your favorite thing about your role in the church?**
7. **What are ways kids can become involved in the church body?**
8. **Do you have a favorite Bible story or verse you would like to share with us?**
9. **What advice would you give to someone who wanted to become involved in the church body?**

**Close**

Have the class recite the memory verse for the guest. Then, ask one of the guests to close with prayer.

**Go!**

### Three-Legged Race

#### GAME

**Materials:** Area to run, rope



### Quest Connection

In Paul's letter to the Corinthians, we learn that we are all members of the body of Christ. Despite being many individual members, we all work together to form one unit. In this activity, students will experience the importance of working together to form a single unit. In order to succeed in this activity, they have to work together and adapt to one another's characteristics.

**Procedure:** Before class, clear an area in the classroom or another room for the students to run. Mark off the starting point and the finish line. When students arrive, have each of them pick a partner. If you have an odd number of students, you could complete this activity twice, allowing everyone an opportunity to run a three-legged race. Explain to the students that they will be running a three-legged race. Their leg will be tied to the leg of their partner. Together, the two of them must run from the starting point to the finish line. In order to avoid falling or running into other teams, they will have to find a way to work together to run across the room. After explaining the three-legged race to the students, tie their legs together. For instance, one partner will have their right leg tied to their partner's left leg.

When all students are ready, allow them to run the three-legged race to see how well they can do. The first time, many of the students will have difficulty trying to work together to run with three legs. Allow them several opportunities to run the three-legged race, with their partners and with new partners. After the students have had an opportunity to run the three-legged race successfully, have them review what they learned.

**Go!**

**Was it hard to run a three-legged race? Why or why not?**

**Was the first time the most difficult?**

**What strategies did you learn from your first run together?**

**How did you keep from falling in the other races?**

**After you ran with your first partner, was it hard to run successfully with new people?**

**Why or why not?**

**What did you learn about teamwork from this game?**

**What does Paul say in his letter to the Corinthians about working together?**

**Is it important to have teamwork in our church body? Why or why not?**

**What could happen if we did not work as a unit in the church?**

**What happens when we have teamwork in our church body?**

**What are ways we can help the church “run the race” successfully?**

**Close**

Allow the students to summarize what they learned from running the three-legged races. Mention the importance of teamwork. Then, close with prayer.

**Go!****Job Shadowing****CHRISTIAN LIVING****Materials:** Students, church members**Quest Connection**

Students have been learning about teamwork in the church. In addition, they have discussed different roles in the church body. Now, they will have an opportunity to experience what it feels like to participate in a helping role for the church body. They will learn about the importance of every member and their contributions.

**Procedure:** Before class, recruit a church member willing to volunteer time working with students from your Sunday School class. Explain the lesson text and that you have been discussing the roles in a church body. You would like your students to see all of the talents and work that goes into forming the church into a cohesive unit. Try to get one church volunteer per student. Have these volunteers come to your Sunday School class on the designated day.

When students arrive, introduce the volunteers. Explain to the students that they will be job shadowing this person. During Sunday School class, the volunteer is going to take them around the church to demonstrate and explain what job they do for the church and how they do it. The students will get to experience firsthand what it is like to work for the church body. For example, a choir member could take a student around to show them how they prepare for the worship service and what they do during the worship service. An usher might show the students how he greets people and assists them in finding a spot in church. Other volunteers could include a deacon for sharing information on serving communion, the pastor to share how he prepares his sermon, a deaconess showing how she prepares the communion, or a secretary showing how she prepares the bulletin and church reports. Pair the students with a volunteer that matches their interests. Then, allow the students the majority of class time to job shadow that person.

**Close**

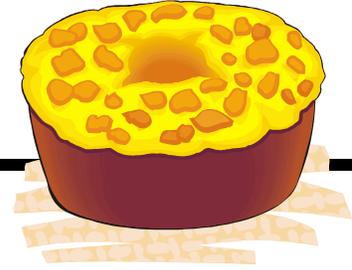
Have the students return to class. Allow them to share information about the job that they shadowed and how it contributes to the church body. Then, review the Key Quest Verse with the students. **“Heavenly Father, thank You for all of the people who give their time and talents to our church. All of our individual strengths and gifts help make our church a strong body in Christ. Please help us find our way to serve in the church body. In Jesus’ name, Amen.”**

Go!

## Importance of Everyone

## FOOD

**Materials:** Two cake mixes, water, eggs, oil, two bowls, spoons, mixer, two cake pans, oven, kitchen, forks, aprons



## Quest Connection

Students have learned that the church body is composed of many members. Each of these members are important to the church body. In this lesson, they will see that even everyone is important to the church body, despite its characteristics.

**Procedure:** Before class, prepare the church kitchen for this lesson. The students will be working on two groups, so lay out the ingredients in two areas for the students to work at. Preheat the oven to the designated temperature on the cake mix box.

When students arrive in class, explain that today they will be making cakes! Divide the students into two groups and take them to the church kitchen. Explain that the first group will be using all of the ingredients. The second group will be using all of the ingredients except for the eggs. Explain that you just don't see the importance of eggs in a cake. **"They're runny and gross looking, so you don't want them in your cake. What could it hurt? A cake will still taste good without the eggs, right?"** Have each group mix their cake according to the directions on the box and put their cakes in the oven.

While the cakes are baking, have the students complete one of the worksheets or the journal page. After the cakes are finished baking, have the students remove them from the oven. Let each student take a bite out of each cake. **The second cake, the one without eggs, doesn't look or taste good! The eggs help hold the ingredients together.** Explain to the students how eggs hold the cake together and play an important role in baking a cake, even if they don't seem too important. Compare this to our roles in the church body. **Even though we may not see the importance of our actions or abilities, we are still members of the church body. What we do is important to the church and can help it immensely.**

## Close

Ask each teen to share one way that they currently help the church. Then, have the students recite the key quest verse together.

**Go!****Spin the Light****REVIEW GAME**

**Materials:** Flashlight, index cards, markers, space to sit in a circle, Teacher Resource Page “Review Questions”

**Quest Connection**

As students have been learning about God’s church, they learn about the individual talents of many and how we can all form one body. This activity allows them to review what they have learned throughout the unit.

**Procedure:** Before class, write the following review questions (or your own review questions) on the index cards. After beginning class, students sit in a circle on the floor. Darken the room, if possible. After turning on the flashlight, place it in the middle of the circle. The first student will choose an index card and read the review question aloud to the class. Then, the student spins the flashlight. When the flashlight stops, the student closest to the beam must answer the review question. The student who answered the question then repeats the strategy, reading a question aloud from an index card and spinning the flashlight. Repeat the game until time permits or until running out of questions. *Use questions from the Teacher Resource page.*

**Close**

Have the students sing a song about the church as a unit, such as “*The Family of God.*” Then, close with prayer. **“Heavenly Father, help us to remember that we are all unique. And, help us to use our individual talents to help our church body and the body of Christ. Let us always remember that we form one body in you. In Jesus’ name, Amen.”**

# **REVIEW QUESTIONS**

**Recite the key quest verse.**

**What is the body of Christ?**

**What kinds of roles or jobs are there in the church?**

**Who is head of the body?**

**Can we be a “church” all by ourselves?**

**Name two jobs that you now have in the body of Christ.**

**Are we each expected to do everything in the church?**

**Are we supposed to be jealous of other members and their talents?**

**What is a member?**

**Who appointed the jobs in a church?**

**What are some of the jobs and gifts that God assigned to the church?**

**Who arranges the members of the body?**

**If a body was made all of arms, what are some things it could not do?**

**What would happen to the church, if we were all alike?**

**How should you feel when a fellow member is happy?**

# One Out of Many

**Directions:** Use the lesson text and Key Quest Verse to find the answers that complete each of the following statements. After answering each question, place the first letter of each answer on the blanks below. You will find what each Christian belongs to!

We are all \_\_\_\_\_ by one Spirit into one body.  
(1 Corinthians 12:13)

In Christ, we form \_\_\_\_\_ body. (1 Corinthians 12:12)

We were all given the one Spirit to \_\_\_\_\_. (1 Corinthians 12:13)

Now, \_\_\_\_\_ are the body of Christ. (1 Corinthians 12:27)

Each member belongs to the \_\_\_\_\_. (Romans 12:5)

In Christ, we \_\_\_\_\_ one body. (1 Corinthians 12:12)

God has appointed different roles in the \_\_\_\_\_.  
(1 Corinthians 12:28)

If the whole body was an eye, where would the sense of \_\_\_\_\_ be?  
(1 Corinthians 12:17)

The key quest verse is in chapter twelve of \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_ Christ, we form one body. (Romans 12:5)

Some are given the gift of \_\_\_\_\_.  
(1 Corinthians 12:28)

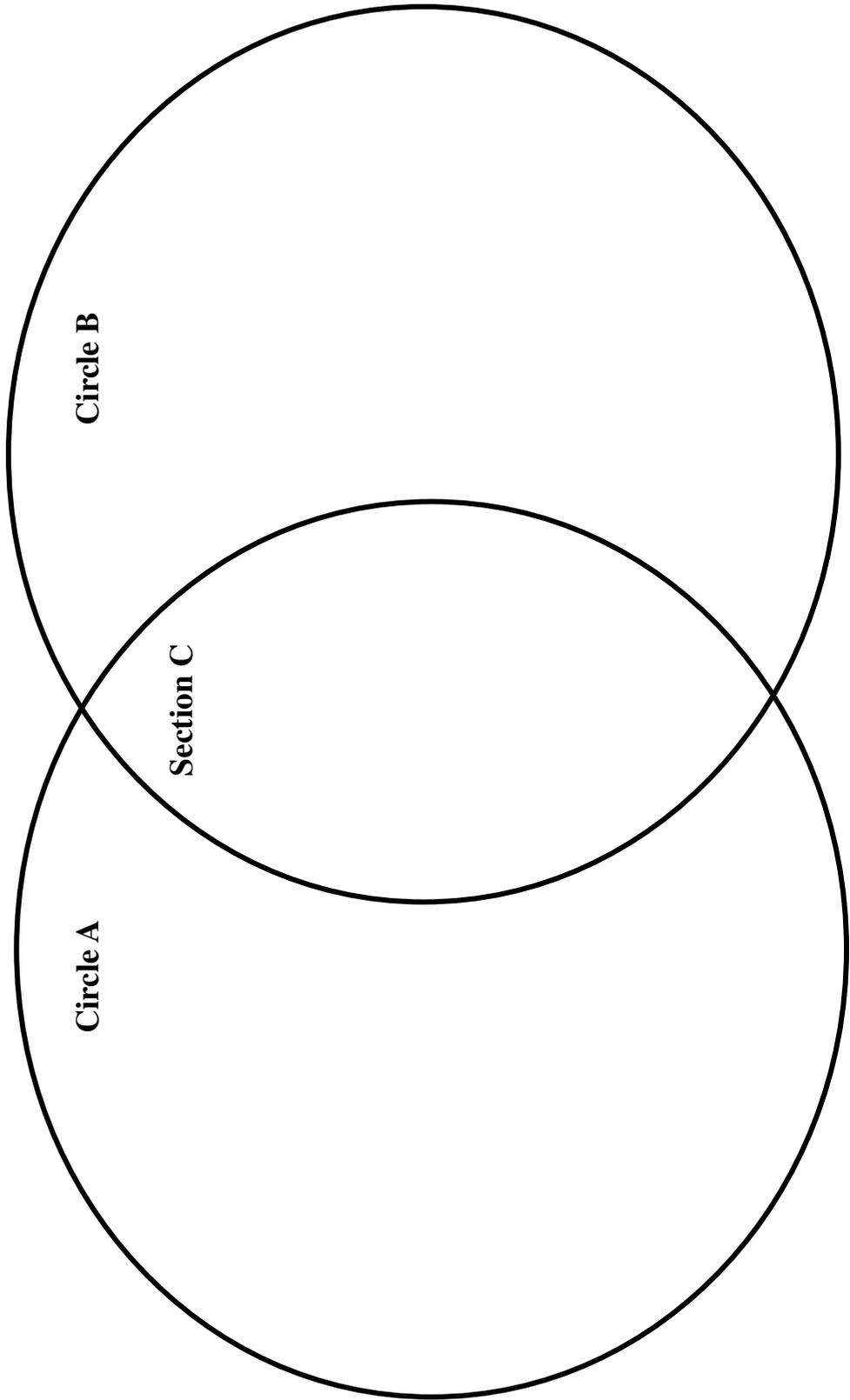
God has appointed apostles, prophets, and \_\_\_\_\_.  
(1 Corinthians 12:28)

Out of many members, Christians form the...

\_\_\_\_\_

### Venn Diagram

Directions: In Circle A below, write or draw talents that you possess. List those talents or gifts that you can use for the church. In Circle B, write or draw talents that other church members have but that you do not have. In the Section C, where the two circles overlap, write or draw items that all church members can do to help the church.



# My Journal Page

Think about talents and gifts that you possess. Then, choose two of them and how you could use them to contribute to your church. In what ways can you become an active member of your church body?



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2.

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