

JESUS THROUGH THE EYES OF THE CHURCH:

THE HEAD OF THE BODY

THEME

During the Season After Pentecost, we focus on the Church-the people who, along with us, make up the Body of Christ-and our life in Christ as we grow both physically and spiritually. With Christ as the Head of the Body, we, as its members, each have our own special part to play in its growth.

BACKGROUND

The Day of Pentecost, which is celebrated fifty days after Easter, marks the beginning of Church history. As described in Acts 2, it was on this day that the Holy Spirit descended upon the Apostles like a “rush of wind,” settling on each of them like “tongues of fire.” From this event they went out into the world and, empowered by the Holy Spirit, began what we now know as Christianity.

Up to this point in the Church year, beginning with Advent, we have followed the life of Christ-His birth, ministry, resurrection, and ascension. His parting gift to us was His promise to send the Holy Spirit, enabling Him to be with us “to the end of the age” and enabling us to live Christian lives, spreading His Gospel to all men. Now in this Season After Pentecost, we concentrate on our lives in this world as Christians. Though Christ is no longer with us physically, He works in us through the Spirit. We look for His Second Coming as we again approach Advent-a season that focuses on this event as well as on His birth.

The Season After Pentecost is the longest part of the Church year, lasting from sometime in either May or June (depending on the date of Easter) until usually the Sunday after Thanksgiving.

Green, the liturgical color during this time, symbolizes growth. Just as this six-month period is one of growing and harvesting crops, it is also the time we look to our spiritual growth as Christians.

As a part of that Body, we each have our own particular ministries to perform. We see

Christ, as the Head, directing us. As Paul says in I Corinthians 12:12-31, we are all under the one Head, but we are not all meant to be hands, feet, or eyes. All the parts are necessary for the whole Body to function perfectly, but no one part is any more important than another; it is just different. God, through the Holy Spirit, gives the growth to our particular gift or ministry; we are His agents.

BIBLICAL REFERENCES

Acts 2:1-42	Day of Pentecost
John 14:25	Jesus' promise to send the Holy Spirit
I Cor. 12:12-31	Christ, the Head of the Body

SUGGESTED HYMNS

<u>HYMNAL</u>	<u>1940</u>	<u>1982</u>
The Church's One Foundation	396	525
Christ for the World We Sing	537	537
Christ Is the World's True Light	258	542
Take My Life and Let It Be	408	707
In Christ There Is No East or West	263	529
Christ Is Made the Sure Foundation	780	518

PRAYERS

Use one of the Collects for the Day of Pentecost in
The Book of Common Prayer, pages 175 or 227 or the following:

O God, You have made us all different. Help us each to do our part in making Christ's Body, the Church, grow. In His Name we pray, Amen.

SOURCES

Bradner, John. Symbols of Church Seasons & Days. Wilton, CT: Morehouse-Barlow, 1977.

Buckland, Patricia. Advent to Pentecost: A History of the Church Year. Wilton, CT: Morehouse-Barlow 1979.

Downey, Mary. Plant-a-Seed. Peterborough, Ontario, Canada: St.Barnabas' Church, n.d.

Education for Mission and Ministry. The Prayer Book Guide to Christian Education. New York: Seabury Press, 1983.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this lesson is to teach students facts about the Season After Pentecost and how we see Christ as Head of the Body, the Church.

THE CHURCH SEES JESUS

Since this is the first Sunday of the Church School year, it will be a good idea to spend more time on getting acquainted by games and activities than on discussion. The games and crafts used for getting acquainted may also be used to achieve the objective of the lesson.

First, talk briefly about the season. It is the longest season of the church year. Its color is green-that is why we have a green cloth hanging on the front of the altar and why the priest wears a green stole. Explain that the color green makes us think of things growing, like plants and grass.

Talk about what the Church is. Ask students what they think of when they think of the "Church." Give them time to answer and then explain that the Church is really not the building, but the people who come to worship God there.

Another way that we talk about the Church is to call it the Body of Christ. Using the analogy of a person's head sending out signals for what the hands, arms, legs, eyes, ears, etc. are to do, describe us as members of the Church with Christ as our "Head," directing us in what to do.

Explain that all of us have things that we like to do and that we do better than other things.

There are things we do better than other people do them, and there are also things that other people do better than we do them. This is all right. We are not all meant to be just alike. If everybody were a doctor, there wouldn't be anybody to put out fires, and if everybody were a fireman, there would not be anybody to make people well. It is the same way in the Church. The Church needs all of us and needs us to do what we feel we like to do and are best at doing. No person is more important than another.

Talk about growing and how the Church has grown since the days of Jesus and the Apostles. Discuss different ways of growing. One way the Church has grown is in numbers. From those first Christians long ago, there are now millions of Christians all over the world. But there are other ways of growing. Ask the class:

- In what ways have you been growing?
(Bodies)
- What makes our bodies grow?
(Food, water, sleep, exercise, etc.)
- How else can you grow?
(Knowledge-we can learn to do new things-and spiritually-we can learn to trust God)
- Who or what makes you grow?
(God)

One way that we will grow this year at church is by learning about Jesus and by seeing through our own eyes how Jesus shows us how He wants us to live.

PRESCHOOL ACTIVITIES

NAME TAGS

Using FISH PATTERN included with this lesson, cut out from construction paper or poster board one fish for each child. Punch two holes-one at the head and one at the tail-and secure yarn in both holes, leaving the length of yarn long enough to get over the head.

As the children arrive and register, put each child's name on a fish. When you have finished the discussion part of your lesson, explain that the fish was a sign the early Christians used to show that they were Christian.

Pass out the fish and have the children draw on their own fish something that they like to do (play ball, swim, etc.).

MATERIALS NEEDED

- poster board or construction paper
- crayons or markers
- scissors
- yarn

GROUP CRAFT

On a piece of poster board, draw the simple outline of a body. Put the title WE ARE THE CHURCH at the top and write the word JESUS in the head. Take Polaroid pictures of each child and let them place their own pictures somewhere on the body, securing them with a little paste or glue.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- poster board
- marker
- Polaroid camera and film
- paste or glue

GAME

Gather the children into a circle, with the teacher in the center. The teacher begins by saying something like, "I see someone with a red dress on" (or curly hair or blue eyes, etc.). Anyone who thinks the teacher is talking about him or her says, "You see me."

If right, this child can go to the center and say, "I see somebody"

If no one guesses right, give another hint. If a child doesn't want a turn, just casually go on to someone else.

The teacher should stay in the center to whisper suggestions and give support to the one who is "it."

This game is adapted from a game found in Arlene B. Strandberg's Ideas Games, published in 1986 by Rainbow Division of Success with Youth Publications, Inc. of San Diego, California.

COLOR SHEET

Have each child complete the drawing that represents the church, I AM A CHILD OF GOD; I AM A PART OF THE CHURCH, by drawing his or her face in the center of the group of faces. Then, they may color as they choose.

ELEMENTARY ACTIVITIES

NAME TAGS

Using FISH PATTERN included with this lesson, cut out one fish for each child from construction paper or poster board. Punch two holes-one at the head and one at the tail-and tie a piece of yarn to the holes of a length large enough to get over their heads.

As the children arrive and register, give them each a fish and tell them to write their names on their fish.

After you have done the discussion part of the lesson, explain that the fish was a sign that the early Christians used to show that they were Christian.

Have the children write their names on their own fish and draw objects or pictures that show something that they like to do (swim, play ball, etc.).

After all the pictures are finished, have each one tell about the activity, maybe adding some other information about himself or herself such as school, number of brothers or sisters, favorite color, favorite food, etc.

If you have extra time, have children use the back of the fish name tags to make a stained glass designs by drawing random lines and coloring different colors in each segment.

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- crayons or markers
- scissors
- yarn

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GROUP CRAFT

Make a permanent door decoration by drawing the outline of a body on a piece of poster board. At the top of the drawing, put the heading **WE ARE THE CHURCH-CHRIST IS THE HEAD** and have each child write his or her name on the body.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- poster board
- marker
- tape or tacks to attach to door
- paste or glue

MIDDLE SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

NAME TAGS

Give each student a piece of construction paper or poster board and use FISH PATTERN included with this lesson to make a name tag. Or you may prefer to cut out the fish before class.

Punch two holes-one at the head and one at the tail-of the fish and tie yarn to each hole, leaving the length so that it will go over the head.

After you have finished the discussion part of the lesson, explain that the fish was a sign that the early Christians used to show that they were Christian.

Have the students write their names on their own fish and draw objects or pictures that show things they like to do (play ball, swim, etc.).

If time permits, go around the class and have each student talk about the things he or she has put on the name tag, adding other information such as school, favorite food, etc.

Then go around the class again and have each person tell one thing about the person on his or her left, learned from the first time around.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- poster board or construction paper
- markers
- scissors
- yarn
- hole punch

INDIVIDUAL WRITTEN ACTIVITY

Give each student a piece of paper and a pencil. Have each print his or her own name on the paper and put beside each letter of the name an adjective that describes something about the person. Then have them write the word CHURCH and describe the Church with adjectives in the same way. Share answers.

MATERIALS NEEDED

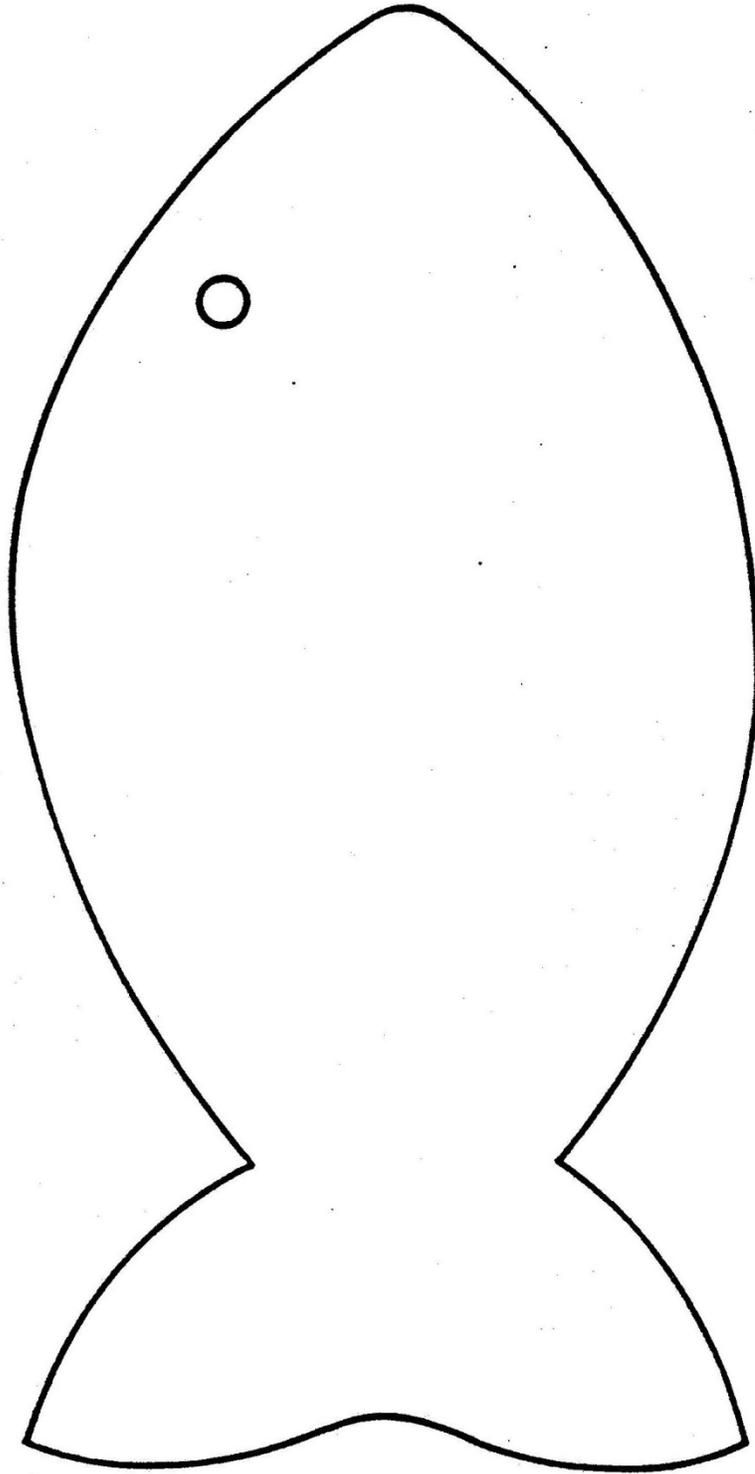
- Paper and pencils for each student

GROUP CRAFT

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FISH PATTERN



**I AM A CHILD OF GOD;
I AM A PART OF THE CHURCH**