



**WELCOMING
CHILDREN
in WORSHIP**

**THE CATHOLIC
UNIVERSITY
OF AMERICA**



One Body

May

Adaptive Activities for Children



**National Catholic
Partnership on Disability**

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Introduction

Welcome and thank you for your ministry that serves the liturgical formation of children for their participation in the Eucharist, the “source and summit of the Christian life.” This resource is provided by the Committee on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities of the National Catholic Partnership on Disability (NCPD). It aims to offer an adaptive catechetical opportunity for all who have a heart for disability ministry to reflect on the liturgical year. We welcome you to this virtual community and hope you find this resource beneficial.

Here you will find reflections to guide children with intellectual and developmental disabilities, or diverse learners, through the current liturgical season with adaptive catechesis to help them to participate fully. Each offering includes prayer, Scripture, activities and more that incorporate the senses and take into consideration the needs of all learners. We invite you to gather children around the table of the home or the table of the classroom as preparation for their participation at the sacred table of the Eucharist.

Each monthly edition incorporates the following:

- 1. Prayer**
- 2. Sacred Scripture**
- 3. Reflection**
- 4. Faith in Action**
- 5. Activities**
- 6. Saint**
- 7. Resources/Bibliography**

Prayer

Prayer leader reads the prayer and has persons gathered repeat each of the sections that are indicated. If you have multiple people able to read, you can also split this prayer up into sections and have a different person read each invocation.

Leader: This month, we are focusing on how we are all part of one Body of Christ in the Church. As one body, we also each have talents and gifts given to us from God. As children of God, we need to use our gifts and talents for his greater glory. Romans 12:4-6 tells us that “For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us.” Below is a prayer that asks God to help us grow and use the gifts he has given us for his greater glory.

Sign of the Cross.

Leader: Father, creator of all things, we thank you

All: We thank you

Leader: For all the gifts you have given us. We thank you

All: We thank you

Leader: Especially for the individual talents and interests you have chosen to distribute to each one of us. We are grateful

All: We are grateful

Leader: For the gift of intelligence: that we are able to think, reason, and be thankful. Jesus, our brother and redeemer,

All: Jesus, our brother and redeemer,

Leader: Show us how to use the Father’s gifts wisely, just as you redeemed many people through your love and concern. Help us

All: Help us

Leader: To use our individual gifts to the fullest – always at the service of others. Encourage us

All: Encourage us



Image by Carlos Magno from Unsplash

Leader: To see the value in other people and to convince them of their own worth. Let us share

All: **Let us share**

Leader: In your redemptive work. Spirit of God, source of love,

All: **Spirit of God, source of love,**

Leader: Constantly remind us that the gifts we possess are meant for others, and that if we do not have love, these talents have no value. Start a fire of love within us

All: **Start a fire of love within us**

Leader: And convince us that we must not only use our talents, but we must lovingly desire to serve persons who do not share our own gifts. Without you,

All: **Without you,**

Leader: We cannot call God our Father. Without love,

All: **Without love,**

Leader: We cannot accomplish any lasting good.

All: **Amen.**

Sign of the Cross.

Source: All Hallows Catholic Church. Prayer For Proper Use Of Our Talents. <https://allhallows.com/stewardship/stewardship-prayers/>



Image by HenningW from Pixabay

Reading of Sacred Scripture

Matthew 28:16-20

The eleven disciples went to Galilee,
to the mountain to which Jesus had ordered them.
When they saw him, they worshiped, but they doubted.
Then Jesus approached and said to them,
“All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me.
Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations,
baptizing them in the name of the Father,
and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit,
teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.
And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age.”

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.



The Great Commission at Saint Patrick's Pro-Cathedral, Ireland
Andreas F. Borchert, CC BY-SA 3.0 DE, via Wikimedia Commons

Gospel Reflection

Before his ascension into heaven, Jesus commissioned his apostles to “go and make disciples of all nations,” (Matthew 28:19) and “go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation” (Mark 16:15). This command was called the Great Commission. The Great Commission is a command from our Lord to all disciples that emphasizes the importance of spreading the Gospel and forming new believers. It is fundamental to our Christian faith as it highlights the mission and work of Christ’s body in sharing the **salvific** message of Jesus. What does this mean to you?

The Work of Christ’s Body

Our bodies can do miraculous things. They are capable of a wide range of functions including physical tasks, cognitive thinking, and resilient action. Our bodies can also do more than we think possible. Our bodies are capable of memory, growth, defense, healing, and forgiveness. The same is true with Christ’s body. Christ’s body, as we know, is in the Eucharist. In John 6:35, Jesus says, “I am the bread of life,” and this point is repeated in Matthew 26:26, when Jesus, after blessing bread and sharing it, says, “Take, eat; this is my body.” Not only is the Eucharist a

remembrance of Christ, but a source of new life, protection, and grace.



Image by Priscilla Du Preez from Unsplash

However, Christ’s body is more than the Eucharist. Christ’s body is present in all believers. 2 Corinthians 13:5 reminds us of this truth. It says, “Do you not realize that Jesus Christ is in you?” Romans 12:3-8 echoes this as this Scripture verse is titled, ‘We are many parts in one body.’ This means that though we have different gifts, experiences, and cultures, we are one in Christ. What do you think this should look like?

For starters, the Body of Christ should be healthy. A healthy body maintains a sense of order, and the heart is not only strong but declares a healthy rhythm. Similarly, the lungs, along with the immune system, work together in an innate and natural way. As members of Christ’s body, our hearts should beat together, and our breath and voices should sound as one. Our prayers should be in unison for peace while our thoughts and actions should be pure and focused on truth, honor, and excellence.

Our bodies should serve. Our job as Christians is to share God's love with one another, specifically serving the unchurched, unbelieving, and inactive former Church members. This is what Jesus meant in his Great Commission. When you think about **commissioned** work, you might think about artwork. St. Therese of Lisieux said, "I am a little brush which Jesus has chosen in order to paint his own image in the souls entrusted to my care." We too are paintbrushes in God's masterpiece. Each of us used for a different purpose or detail. Christ paid the price for our beautiful lives. Do you make his love your mission? What does this look like in your life?

As we reflect on Christ's body this Easter season, and the commissioned work we've all been entrusted to do, let us reflect on the words of St. Teresa of Avila:

"Christ has no body but yours,
No hands, no feet on earth but yours,
Yours are the eyes with which he looks
with compassion on this world,
Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good,
Yours are the hands, with which he blesses all the
world."

May you be Christ to someone this day.



Beloved female saints, CC0, via Wikimedia Commons

Vocabulary

Salvific: of or relating to redemptive power.

Commissioned: the act of committing or entrusting a person, group, etc., with supervisory power or authority.

Source: Dictionary.com

Faith in Action

Our bodies are made up of individual parts that work together to help us move, eat, breathe, play, go to school, work, and pray. These parts work differently and all have a job to do. With your child, name some of the things that the different parts of our bodies can do. Ask them to show you how they use one of their body parts: blink their eyes, smile, stick out their tongue, make a sound with their voice, hop, stretch, etc. This can be adapted as needed based on the child.

Just like God created the parts of our bodies do different jobs and all work together for the good of the whole person, God created each person with special talents and a unique job that can help our families, communities, schools, and churches. The Church, especially, needs the gifts of each member of the Body of Christ working together. If one person is missing from the Church, it is not whole or complete. Some of our gifts might be easy to see, and some might be a little more “hidden” or trickier to spot. When we learn to recognize the gifts and talents that God has given us, we can learn to use them to help others.

Recognizing our Gifts:

- Ask each person: What are some things that you are extra good at? What kinds of gifts has God given you?
- To help prompt children who might have difficulty in naming their talents, Lisa Jones in *Identifying Our Gifts*, suggests passing a few small gift bags or wrapped boxes around for children to unwrap. Inside each gift have words or pictures to represent different gifts such as “honest,” “hard-working,” “strong,” “artistic,” etc. Discuss how God gives each of us different types of gifts and many different ways to use those gifts.



Image by Nathan Dumlao from unsplash

Celebrating our Gifts:

- Take turns sharing a special ability or talent with each other. Remember that there are all kinds of talents! It might be drawing a picture, cooking a meal, singing, or even something simple such as making a funny face and getting someone to laugh.

Using our Gifts:

- Make a list of roles in your family that are filled by different people, and who is good at each one: listening to others when they are sad, preparing a delicious meal, taking care of a pet, etc. Affirm the gifts that it takes to do each of these roles well.

“Dad is a great cook. We love when he makes us dinner!”

“Cindy is a good listener and makes me feel better when I’m feeling sad.”

“Mom is great at organizing and planning fun things for us to do.”

- Next, make a list of all the roles our Church needs for Mass on Sunday: a priest, musicians, lectors, greeters, someone to make the song sheets, people directing traffic. Help each person choose one role that fits well with their gifts and talents. Agree to try helping at Mass on an upcoming Sunday.



Image by Diocese of Spokane from Unsplash

Activities with Children

Let's Talk: Have a conversation with your child about how our bodies aren't just an afterthought—they are intentionally created by God for a purpose. Our bodies are a home for the Holy Spirit, which gives us a special way to honor God that is unique to us.

Why is this important: Help your child understand that God didn't create our bodies by accident or as something unimportant—he made them on purpose and called them good. Because our bodies are meant to be a home for the Holy Spirit, the way we treat them matters. This means caring for our bodies, making wise choices, and using them to show love, kindness, and respect. When we do that, we honor God in a special and meaningful way.



Image by Nathan Anderson from Unsplash

Discussion questions:

- Who made your body?
- Do you think God made you on purpose? Why?
- What are some ways you can take care of your body?
- What are good choices you can make with your body?
- How can you use your hands or feet to help others?
- What is something kind you can do for someone today?
- How do you show respect for your body?
- Why do you think your body is special?

Let's Read: This month we can read the holy Scripture about how special our bodies are! And it shows us that God made us with purpose and love!

- **1 Corinthians 6:19-20:** "Your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit... Therefore honor God with your bodies."

God lives within us, so our bodies are special.

- **Psalms 139:14:** "I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made."

God made you amazing on purpose!

- **Genesis 1:27:** "So God created mankind in his own image..."

We are made to be like God in a special way.

- **Genesis 1:31:** “God saw all that he had made, and it was very good.”
God says what he made—including you—is very good!
- **Romans 12:1:** “Offer your bodies as a living sacrifice... this is your true worship.”
We can use our bodies to do what pleases God.
- **1 Corinthians 10:31:** “Whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.”
Everything we do can honor God—even small things.
- **2 Timothy 1:7:** “God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power, love, and self-control.”
God helps us make good choices.

Let's Pray: This month, our prayer will focus on thanking God for making me with intent and special!

Dear God, thank you for making my body special and wonderful. Help me take care of my body, make good choices, and use it to love you and others. Thank you for sending the Holy Spirit to live in me and help me to honor you every day. Amen.

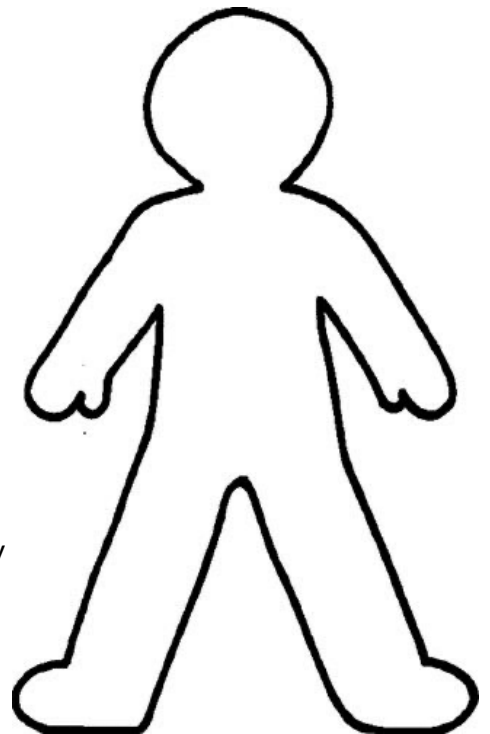
Let's Create: God Made Me Craft

Supplies:

- Full-body coloring sheet (can be a simple outline of a child's body)
- Crayons, markers, or colored pencils
- Stickers, glitter, or other decorations
- Optional: construction paper to glue the figure onto

Directions:

1. Give each child a full-body outline to color and decorate.
2. Ask them to think about each body part and how they can use it to honor God:
Hands → help, pray, hug
Feet → walk, run, share
Eyes → see beauty, look with kindness
Mouth → speak kindly, sing praises



3. Encourage kids to draw or write little symbols or words on each part showing what it can do.
4. Once decorated, they can glue it onto construction paper and add extra decorations, if desired.

Discussion While Crafting:

- “God made every part of your body special.”
- “Your body can be used to show love and kindness in many ways.”
- “The Holy Spirit helps us use our bodies to honor God every day.”

Let’s Cook: A tasty way to show that every part of the body is special by making healthy and fun snacks shaped like faces or body parts.

Ingredients:

- Sliced fruits and veggies (e.g., apples, bananas, strawberries, cucumbers, carrots)
- Cheese slices or sticks
- Crackers or small bread slices
- Nut butter or cream cheese (optional, for spreading)
- Raisins, blueberries, or chocolate chips for eyes/mouth
- Plates and child-safe utensils



Image by American Heritage Chocolate from Unsplash

Directions:

- Explain: “We’re going to make snacks that look like faces, just like God made our bodies special.”
- Let kids choose a base (cracker, slice of bread, or apple slice) for their “face.”
- Add eyes, nose, mouth, and hair using the fruits, veggies, and other toppings.
- Talk as you go:
“We use our hands to make this—God made our hands special!”
“Our eyes can see all the colors we’re using—God made our eyes for a reason!”
- Enjoy eating the creations together.

Discussion:

- “Just like every snack face is unique, God made your body unique and special.”
- “We can honor God by taking care of our bodies and making healthy choices.”

Sensory Play: God’s Creation Playdough Bodies

Materials:

- Playdough (store-bought or homemade)
- Small tools, cookie cutters, or safe utensils

Steps:

- Give each child some playdough.
- Ask them to make a body part (like hands, feet, or even a full person).
- While creating, talk about how God made each part on purpose.

Discussion:

- “God made your hands to help and your feet to walk.”
- “Each part is special and can do amazing things to honor God!”

Extension:

- Make a whole figure together and talk about how all the parts work together—just like God designed our bodies.



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Saint for May

St. Philip Neri

Patron Saint of Joy and Laughter

Feast Day: May 26th

“Cheerfulness strengthens the heart and helps us to persevere. A servant of God ought always to be in good spirits. Charity and cheerfulness, or charity and humility, should be our motto.” -St. Philip Neri

Philip Neri was born in Florence, Italy in 1515, and lived at the same time as St. Ignatius of Loyola. His family was wealthy and so Philip had a good education, and the promise of a future in the family business. As a boy, he was known by the nickname “Pippo Buono,” or “Good Little Phil,” since he was friendly and joyful. From a young age, Philip had a great love for the Lord and tried his best to please God through his words and actions. When Philip was 18 years old,



Sebastiano Conca, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

he was sent to live with a relative in another city, San Germano, to learn how to be a businessman. It didn't take long for Philip to realize that he didn't want to spend his time chasing wealth. Instead, he desired to go to Rome and spend his life serving Jesus by helping others. At the time, many of the people in Rome had turned away from God and weren't living Christian lives. Philip became known as “The Apostle of Rome” for his work to try to share the love of God with others.

During this time, Philip worked as a tutor, but also served the sick in hospitals, and fed the poor in the streets. He cared deeply for the young and persons in need. What was different about Philip is that he always greeted people with a smile, laughter, or even a joke. He became known for the joy and humility that was a part of his ministry and everything he did. He believed that holiness, laughter, and joy went together.

When people met Philip, they could feel his genuine joy, his love for the Lord, and they wanted to know how they could be joyful too.



Giovanni Battista Tiepolo, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

One day, Philip was praying at the grave of St. Sebastian for the Holy Spirit to fill him with an even greater love for Jesus. He saw a globe of fire in front of him, and then felt the warmth enter his heart. He said it felt like his heart might burst with love. For the rest of his life, that warmth stayed with Philip's heart, and others were even comforted by being near him and his heart that burned with love for Jesus. After Philip died, a physical examination of his body showed a heart so enlarged that it broke several of his ribs!

Philip was ordained as a priest in his 30's, and his lightheartedness and humor continued to attract people to the faith. Once, he attended a party with just half of his beard shaved! He also had a deep devotion to prayer and felt especially called to make the Sacrament of Reconciliation available to everyone as much as possible. As a result, he spent many hours hearing people's confessions. He believed that reconciliation was important not just for forgiveness of sins, but to grow in holiness and virtue as well. Philip encouraged people to receive the Eucharist often and visit the Blessed Sacrament in adoration.

Philip lived a long life and died on May 26th, 1595, on the Feast of Corpus Christi after spending all day hearing confessions. He was canonized a saint in 1622 by Pope Gregory XV. St. Philip Neri converted many people by encouraging them to grow in holiness through the sacraments, and by sharing the joy of the Lord with everyone that he met. We can imitate St. Philip Neri by seeking a closer relationship with Jesus and serving others with joy and humility, just as he did.

Activities with Children for the Feast Day of St. Philip Neri:

1. To celebrate St. Philip Neri's love of humor, spend the day telling jokes, playing games, singing silly songs, or thinking of harmless pranks to play on family members.

2. To honor St. Philip Neri's humble service to persons in need, help children think of random acts of kindness that they can do for others today. Organize a more formal opportunity to serve together by visiting a nursing home or making cards for the sick to bring them some joy.
3. To remember St. Philip Neri's heart burning with love for Jesus, create a heart craft together using tissue paper, popsicle sticks, and a paper plate or card stock. Full instructions can be found at Ministry to Children: <https://ministry-to-children.com/heart-craft-ideas/>

Source: Highly, Kristen. (2020, February 10). Heart Craft Ideas about the Love of Jesus. <https://ministry-to-children.com/heart-craft-ideas/>

Prayer:

"O holy St. Philip Neri,
Patron saint of joy,
Hear us as we pray:
In your compassion heal
Our worries and sorrows and
Lift the burdens from our hearts.
Amen."

Prayer from Archdiocese of Malta: Bekids.mt



Photo by Kristen Highley, Ministry to Children

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