



## What's coming up in middle school @NCC:

- Vertical Edge • Tuesday, March 3 • Core Groups

Core group nights are all about community. Please check back here to see where your core group will be meeting (will be posted by Sunday, March 1st). If you do not know what core group you are in, please contact Pastor Dan!



## february 29/march 1 lesson

- Series:** The Empowered Church • Part 2 of 4
- Lesson:** Church Unity
- Scripture:** Various
- Key Concept:** The proper and effective use of all spiritual gifts within the church will always be an expression of godly love.



### Chew Time

- Read Luke 14:25-15:17



## A. Read **Acts 6:1- 7**

† *But as the believers rapidly multiplied, there were rumblings of discontent. The Greek- speaking believers complained about the Hebrew-speaking believers, saying that their widows were being discriminated against in the daily distribution of food.*

*<sup>2</sup> So the Twelve called a meeting of all the believers. They said, “We apostles should spend our time teaching the word of God, not running a food program. <sup>3</sup> And so, brothers, select seven men who are well respected and are full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will give them this responsibility. <sup>4</sup> Then we apostles can spend our time in prayer and teaching the word.”*

*<sup>5</sup> Everyone liked this idea, and they chose the following: Stephen (a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit), Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas of Antioch (an earlier convert to the Jewish faith). <sup>6</sup> These seven were presented to the apostles, who prayed for them as they laid their hands on them.*

*<sup>7</sup> So God’s message continued to spread. The number of believers greatly increased in Jerusalem, and many of the Jewish priests were converted, too.*

The very early church had two groups of Jews. There were those who came from a Greek (Hellenistic) background and those who were native born Hebrews. The Greek Jewish widows were being overlooked as food was being passed out to those widows in need.

- a) What is the problem before the church? (*People in need were being overlooked. There was a possible division starting to form based on race or culture. It had to be stopped, but the apostles could not stop their teaching to personally take care of the widows.*)
- b) How did the Twelve solve the problem? (*They chose seven men who were full of the Holy Spirit and full of wisdom. These men did not have their own agenda. The Twelve handed over the task of taking care of the widows to men they could trust. God gave these men a gift, wisdom, to carry out His plan. Note that all of them had Greek names. This would quiet any fears on the part of the Greek Jews.*)
- c) Read Acts 6:7; 5:42; 4:32-35; 2:42-47. How would you describe what has happened in Acts so far? (*The Word of God is spreading. People are finding Christ as their Lord and Savior. There is unity and caring for each other in the church.*)

Discuss how far we should try to live out **Acts 4:32** in our personal lives or how should the “church” live it out.

## B) **Story Time:**

### **Here is a story about selfless love**

Stevie was a special education student. As in many school districts, special needs students were being main-streamed into regular classrooms so that these students could experience the same social and educational experiences as other students. Unfortunately, these students are often the targets of teasing and cruel jokes. Such was Stevie’s experience, but he never seemed to mind. Everyday, as he walked home from school, his mother would look out the window to see him walking behind the other kids, all alone. The other school children were obviously uncomfortable around Stevie, so they ignored him.



One day after school, he burst into the kitchen and announced to his mom, “We’re having a Valentine’s party next week at school and our teacher said we could make valentines and give them to other kids in our class!”

Stevie’s mom felt a twinge of sadness as she realized it would be yet another occasion where Stevie would be left out. Stevie continued, “I’m going to make a Valentine for every kid in my class!”

Over the next week Stevie labored over his Valentine creations everyday after school. When the day of the party arrived, he was so excited he couldn’t eat his breakfast. But he was a little anxious, too. He told his mother, “I hope I didn’t forget anybody.”

Stevie’s mother felt that same twinge of sadness, knowing it would be Stevie who would be forgotten. She spent the day preparing herself to comfort her son when he arrived home from school. She even baked his favorite cookies because she knew how disappointed he would be with the response from the other kids in his class.

That afternoon she watched anxiously out the window. As she saw the usual group of kids approaching, she realized that Stevie was walking way behind them as usual, all alone. She could already feel the tears welling up in her eyes.

Surprisingly, Stevie burst through the door moments later with a big smile on his face. Confused, his mother asked, “Well, how did it go?”

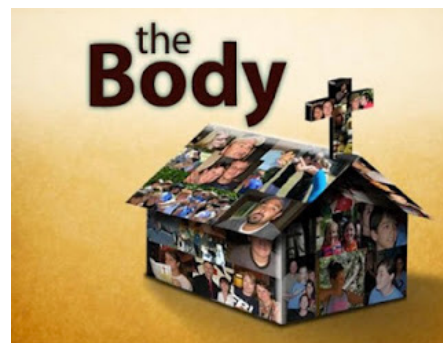
Proudly, Stevie announced, “Guess what, Mom? I didn’t forget a single kid!”

### **Lesson connection**

Stevie’s labor of love was truly one of selfless consideration. He was so concerned about the other kids in his class, he was oblivious to the fact that he was being left out. True love acts with no expectation of return or reward. Everything Jesus did, He did for the benefit of others. Think for a moment about the students you go to school with. Are there students like Stevie who seldom receive a kind word or loving action because they are different? What would Jesus have you do about that?

### **C) Read Romans 12:4-8**

† *4 Just as our bodies have many parts and each part has a special function, 5 so it is with Christ’s body. We are many parts of one body, and we all belong to each other. 6 In his grace, God has given us different gifts for doing certain things well. So if God has given you the ability to prophesy, speak out with as much faith as God has given you. 7 If your gift is serving others, serve them well. If you are a teacher, teach well. 8 If your gift is to encourage others, be encouraging. If it is giving, give generously. If God has given you leadership ability, take the responsibility seriously. And if you have a gift for showing kindness to others, do it gladly.*



What are some lessons that you think Paul wants us to learn from this passage? Do you tend to use and appreciate the talents God has given you, or do you tend to wish you had different gifts and talents? Why do you think this is?

**D) Read 1 Corinthians 12:12-21**

**One Body with Many Parts**

† *12 The human body has many parts, but the many parts make up one whole body. So it is with the body of Christ. 13 Some of us are Jews, some are Gentiles, some are slaves, and some are free. But we have all been baptized into one body by one Spirit, and we all share the same Spirit.*

*14 Yes, the body has many different parts, not just one part. 15 If the foot says, "I am not a part of the body because I am not a hand," that does not make it any less a part of the body. 16 And if the ear says, "I am not part of the body because I am not an eye," would that make it any less a part of the body? 17 If the whole body were an eye, how would you hear? Or if your whole body were an ear, how would you smell anything?*

*18 But our bodies have many parts, and God has put each part just where he wants it. 19 How strange a body would be if it had only one part! 20 Yes, there are many parts, but only one body. 21 The eye can never say to the hand, "I don't need you." The head can't say to the feet, "I don't need you."*

Have you ever stubbed your toe really bad? How does your body react? Your face winces. Your hands grab your foot. You scream kind and gentle words of thanksgiving :-). You then proceed to limp around for a day or two.

Your whole body is affected by an injury to a tiny little toe! Your body knows that every part counts. When one part is hurt, the other parts know it. The other parts pitch in to help the wounded part heal. If you break your wrist, your other hand works twice as hard during the healing process. If you hurt your foot, your whole body limps to keep pressure off the damaged foot.

The same principles apply in the church. Those who are hurting need extra support.

How do people see you? Do you have the reputation as someone who shows kindness and compassion, and goes out of your way to reach out to those who are "weaker?"

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---