



# 8. A united body

Age range: Primary

**Theme:** We gather together for collective worship that is **inspiring, invitational and inclusive**, reflecting the fact that we are a part of a diverse school family and the wider church community, serving the needs of our unique school contexts. As human beings, we have storytelling in our DNA, and so for this final term of the school year, we offer some stories from across the world that help us to think about **'ourselves, others, beauty and/or beyond'**, and wonder together at the power of a story to help connect us and change us. We intentionally use **language from our Diocesan spirituality offer** throughout these resources and hope that this will help to build schools' understanding of the role of collective worship as part of spiritual flourishing. This week, we continue our series of 'Stories that help us to grow', picking up a story from Ancient Greek fable-writer Aesop in the 6<sup>th</sup> C BCE, which has some striking resonance with some words from the Bible written by St. Paul some 600 years later. Not much is certain about the writer of the fables attributed to Aesop, but it's believed that he was a slave who earned his freedom – maybe through telling stories?! You can find the Bible verses here: [1 Corinthians 12:14-21](#) We bring this to life using a familiar figure from Toy Story fame....Mr Potato-head!!! If you have one of these toys in school – or can borrow one – do consider using the words and doing the illustration live with his body parts!



### How does this link to your school's Christian vision & values?

The class reflection materials for this term follow the same pattern as previous terms – think, talk and do – but also (where possible) relate to questions about **ourselves, others, beauty and beyond**. This week, the focus is on some words from the Bible about the Christian community being like a body working well together...we will apply these words to your school community to draw some similarities with Paul's words about relationships with one another. Your school values will help!

### Resources:

- The PowerPoint slides are numbered with a point in the script so you can find your way, and the parts in **bold** show you where to click on to activate the next slide or animation.
- **You will need:** a Mr Potato-head figure for the story, if you have one and want to do the story live rather than use the slides. If you have more than one Mr Potato-Head, then it will mean you have more body parts!
- **Opening challenge:** *either* Challenge 1. you will need to set up a quiz based on body parts, and where they are, which can be differentiated according to age of pupils e.g. simple names like 'knee-cap' for KS1 and maybe more complex for older pupils, e.g. 'patella'. There is a labelled skeleton for you to refer to on slide 30 *or* Challenge 2. Sing the song 'Heads, shoulders, knees and toes' together, leaving out a body part each time.
- The story for today can be found here: <https://classictales.co.uk/fables/divided-body> You can download the very short script, or use the audio track.
- There are two different prayer options and some extra reflective activities.
- **Reflective areas:** You will need a simple puzzle which children can easily assemble whilst thinking/talking.

### Gathering:

#### Slide 1: Heart-beat trace stilling exercise

Use the stilling slide if desired: the suggested words should be spoken slowly, leaving pauses inbetween to create a sense of stillness.

As you sit quietly, look at image on the screen and think about what it might be showing..... [PAUSE]

Now practise slower breathing.....in.....and out.....in.....and out.....as you watch....[PAUSE]

You maybe notice that you are feeling calmer and more relaxed....[PAUSE]

As you breathe, think about yourself and what you bring into this time today..... [PAUSE]

We come into this special / sacred space and time to be still....to think deeply.....to be together as a school community.....

In our time together today, we will have a **challenge, share 2 stories, and then think together.**

But first, let's welcome one another as we begin....

- **Slide 2:** Use our new gathering words for this term, or your usual greeting if you prefer. These greetings may change slightly each week to reflect the **spiritual elements** that we will be exploring in each week's materials.

**Leader:** As we gather to share our story today....

**All:** **May we grow in our understanding of ourselves and of others.**

Here are BSL actions for some of the words:

**Leader's words:**

Gather: <https://www.signbsl.com/sign/gather> (1st video); Story: <https://www.signbsl.com/sign/story> (1st video)

**Response words:**



## Engaging:



- **Slide 3:** We were watching a video of one of these as we settled into our time together today – does anyone know what it shows? *[ask some children]*  
Seeing this on a heart monitor is a good sign – it shows that the heart is working well. We all know how important the heart is in having a healthy and properly-functioning body! We're going to start our time together today with a challenge – using our bodies!
- **EITHER: Slide 4: Where in the body?** Set your challenges (see 'Resources' section) based on the location of body parts, with pupils pointing to where they think this is on their own body.
- **OR: Slide 5: Heads, shoulders, knees and toes....** Sing together. There is a simple video version (more suitable for KS1) here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RxVQeS1tr7A> but far better to just sing it yourself!
- **Slide 6: Stories to help us to grow**  
We've been thinking about some of Jesus' parables over the past few weeks, and searching together for the treasure in each, and in a few moments, we are going to be doing the same – with not one, but TWO stories: one written some 600 years *before* Jesus was telling parables and the second written by St. Paul to a church where some Christians were disagreeing with each other..... Nobody knows whether Aesop's story was known to St. Paul, but they have some striking similarities! *[NB The Bible-writer Paul was a well-educated Roman citizen, and a fluent Greek speaker and writer, so it is quite likely that these stories would have been familiar to him. In the education of ancient Greeks and Romans, fables were known as 'progymnasmata' (translated as 'fore-exercises') and were used for training students in the ancient skill of rhetoric (persuasive speaking/writing). For those of you who know the writings of St. Paul, this is significant!]*
- **Slide 7: Aesop**  
The Greek writer Aesop was born in roughly 620BCE and was probably a slave who won his freedom through the telling of the stories for which he is famous. He is known all over the world for these fables (which are a little bit like parables), and especially those that are about animals. We probably all know his most famous, the **Hare and the Tortoise** – which is not our story for today!  
Let's listen to his story 'The Divided Body' .... [\[https://classictales.co.uk/fables/divided-body\]](https://classictales.co.uk/fables/divided-body) You can download the very short script, or use the audio track. When you have listened, spend a few moments talking about the meaning of the story – that for a body to work well, all parts are important...or similar thinking!  
So, now let's hear the version by St. Paul now, written to the Early Church in Corinth, who were having some difficulties agreeing with one another.
- **Slide 8:** This version has been created with the help of a familiar friend, Mr Potato-Head (without his angry eyes!!) *[use script on p4 & slides 9-15]*
- **Slide 16:** So, thinking about both of these stories now – what are they both saying to us about working together or about **being part of a community**? *[you might like to allow some discussion time here]*  
The idea of the body parts arguing with themselves might seem a bit ridiculous – and I think both writers were using the humour to make a point with their audiences – but when we think about our own school community, there may be some serious lessons that we might learn from these funny stories!  
*You might want to talk through & push the logic of some of St. Paul's arguments here, in ways that support the ages of pupils e.g.*
  - *Why can't a foot be a hand, or an ear an eye?*
  - *What would happen if the whole body was an eye or an ear....or a hand?*
  - *What would happen if the feet or the hands went missing?*
  - *Thinking back to Aesop's fable, what happened when the arms and the legs stopped working to help the stomach?*



- *What messages do these stories have for us about working together? Or for the way we think about ourselves?*

**Slide 17: Responding (and words for worship)**

Let's stop to ask some wondering questions now which might help us to go deeper....

**...I wonder if we've ever felt like Mr Potato-Head's foot, wishing to be something we are not?...**

**...or maybe wanted to not be ourselves, but be someone else?...**

**Slide 18: ...I wonder whether we've ever said anything to someone else that has made them feel as if they don't matter?...**

**...or that we are more important than they are?...**

**Slide 19:** We heard St. Paul's words, which I'm going to read twice to help us to hear them well: *[read twice]*

**'...God put the parts in the body as he wanted them. He made a place for each one of them.'**

...each one of you is unique and your place in our school community matters....

**...I wonder how we show this within our school family?...**



We're going to draw this special time together today with a chance to pray if this is something you are comfortable with. There are some words you can join in with if you would like to....*[or there's an option to use Mr. Potato-Head to pray, later in the script!]*

**Slide 20:...we belong together.**

Or, if you prefer, just be still and quiet with your own thoughts....

**Slide 21:** In our classes.....**we belong together!**

**Slide 22:** Whatever we are good at.....**we belong together!**

**Slide 23:** Even if we're feeling like we don't quite fit!...**we belong together!**

**Slide 24:** In our school family.....**we belong together!**

**Slide 25: Amen**

**Slide 26: Optional prayer opportunity, based on reflective activity (p6), using Mr Potato-Head's body parts!**

*As you add his body parts, use these words:*

**Legs:**...may our legs take us to places where we can help others this week.

**Hands:**...may we use our hands to serve others this week.

**Eyes:**...may we see opportunities to love others this week.

**Ears:**...may we really listen when others speak to us this week.

**Nose:** Mr Potato-Head's nose is in the centre of his face...may our actions put others at the centre of all we do.

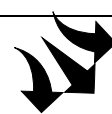
**Mouth:** ...may we speak well of others this week.

Now put his hat on and say **(Slide 27) Amen!**

**Sending: Slide 28**

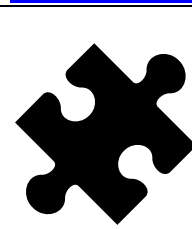
**Leader:** As we leave this place and time and go into the day ahead...

**All:** **May we be willing to share!**



**To sing / listen to:**

[Big Family of God](#) (NBD) ([with actions](#)) or [Together](#) (BBC) or [All together as a family](#) (BBC)



**Slide 29: Reflective areas**

*You will need a simple jigsaw*

**Do:** Pick up a piece of jigsaw puzzle and think about how it has a special place. You have a special place as part of our school family.

**Think:** Think about times when you feel you really belong at our school.

**Talk:** As you build the puzzle together, talk about ways we can value everyone in our school community.

**Extra spiritual reflection material:**

There are some extra resources that you could use during the week – or at other times – if it helps you!:

- **Page 6:** Reflective / prayer activity using Mr. Potato-Head
- **Page 7:** Body 'chat mat', could be used with pairs of children



# I Corinthians 12:14-21

*[from the ICB translation, adapted for Mr Potato-Head!]*

**Slide 9:** A person's body has more than one part. It has many parts. *Let's name them.....[identify parts of the body with age-appropriate vocabulary]*

**Slide 10:** The foot might say, "**I don't matter!** I am not a hand. So, I am not part of the body." But saying this would not stop the foot from being a part of the body.

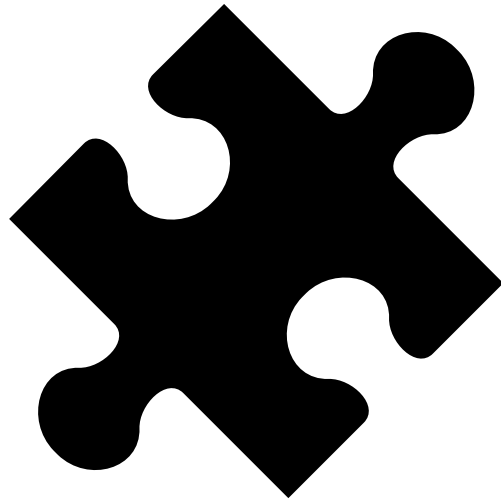
**Slide 11:** The ear might say, "**I don't matter!** I am not an eye. So, I am not part of the body." But saying this would not make the ear stop being a part of the body.

**Slide 12:** If the whole body were an eye, the body would not be able to hear.

**Slide 13:** If the whole body were an ear, the body would not be able to smell anything.

**Slide 14:** If each part of the body were the same part, there would be no body....

**Slide 15:** The eye cannot say to the hand, "**I don't need you!**" because it's not true! And the head cannot say to the foot, "**I don't need you!**" because that's not true either! .....God put the parts in the body as he wanted them. **He made a place for each one of them.**



***Paul wrote: ‘...God put the parts in the body as he wanted them. He made a place for each one of them.’***



**Pick up a piece of jigsaw puzzle and think about how it has a special place. You have a special place as part of our school family.**



**Think about times when you feel you really belong at our school.**



**As you build the puzzle together, talk about ways we can value everyone in our school community.**



# Mr Potato-Head: We are one body

As you assemble Mr Potato-Head, find the 'body part', and use the ideas to help you to reflect or pray. If you want to make it more of a challenge, use a dice (a bit like a beetle-drive): when you throw the number, add the body part onto Mr. Potato-Head. Finally add the hat and say **Amen!**

No.	Body part	Reflect on or pray.....
1	legs	...that we will go out of our way to help others this week.
2	hands	...that we will serve others this week.
3	eyes	...that we will see opportunities to love others this week.
4	ears	...that we will really listen when others speak to us this week.
5	nose (in the centre of his face)	Mr Potato-Head's nose is in the centre of his face...that our actions put others at the centre of all we do.
6	mouth	...that we will speak well of each other this week.



Add features / clothes to the body as you chat together using the questions (?) and challenges (🚶)



Can you touch your nose with your tongue?



People sometimes call the church 'the body of Christ'. What do you think this means?



Is there one part of the body that's more important than any other?



Can you lick your elbow?



Can you clap with only one hand?



If we are all part of the same school family, how should we treat each other?



If you could be a part of the body, what would you choose, and why?



How long can you stand on only one leg?

