

Big Idea: We're always better together.

Primary Scripture: 1 Corinthians 12:12-27

CAPTURE (Why should students pay attention to and care about your message?)

- Have you ever noticed how much we love it when superheroes team up?
- We have the ***Avengers***, ***Guardians of the Galaxy***, the ***Justice League***, the ***X-Men***, and the ***Fantastic Four***... but there's no need to stop there!
- You also have the ***Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles***, the ***Teen Titans***, and technically (for our fantasy nerds... we see you!) the ***Fellowship of the Ring!***
- Of course, you'd also have to include the ***Power Rangers***... and if you want to go old school, you should probably include ***Voltron***, which was basically the ***Power Rangers*** before there were ***Power Rangers*** (no, seriously, look it up, they're almost the EXACT same thing).
- But, for me, there's one superhero team that has managed to stand above the rest (and DEFINITELY deserves their own movie)... yes, I'm talking about...
- ***Captain Planet and the Planeteers!***
 - Check out these opening credits in all of their 1990s glory...
- Before you judge, you have to know that ***Captain Planet and the Planeteers*** was on the air for **SIX** years in the 90s.
- For elementary schoolers of the time, it **DOMINATED** Saturday morning television, often ranking as the #1 show in its timeslot.
- ***Captain Planet and the Planeteers*** was really ahead of its time.
- It covered topics that you wouldn't have expected for a kids' TV show in the early 90s.
- Obviously, the underlying message was environmental, so it tackled topics like pollution, deforestation, hazardous waste, overconsumption, and protecting wildlife.
- It also had full episodes that addressed topics like drug addiction, bullying, war, and even HIV/AIDS awareness.
- No matter which of these superhero team-ups you like best, there's usually one key moment in every movie, book, or episode when

someone (or sometimes everyone!) from the team tries to solve a problem on their own, without the help of their team.

- And every single time it goes... poorly.
- It's only when the team works together that they succeed and realize they're actually stronger together than they could ever be on their own.
- Today wrapping up our series called **Wired**, and last week we discovered our "superpowers" (aka our *spiritual gifts*).
- This week, we're figuring out how to use those powers for good, and my bet is, just like the Planetears, we'll find out that we are *always* better when we work together.

SCRIPTURE (What does God's Word say?)

- Last week, we read a passage from 1 Corinthians where the Apostle Paul challenged us to lean into our uniqueness and the gifts God has specifically chosen to give each of us.
- He doesn't stop there.

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. (1 Corinthians 12:12-13 – NLT)

- Even two thousand years ago, the Apostle Paul wanted his readers to understand that in Christ, we're all connected as one body.
- The things that divide people—background, ethnicity, social status—don't disqualify anyone.
- In God's family, there's no "in" group or "out" group. We all belong, and we all share the same Spirit.
- Just because we're all part of the same body, that doesn't mean that we're all the same.

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." (1 Corinthians 12:14-21 – NLT)

- Paul has some fun with it. What if the whole body was just one giant eyeball? Or a thousand eyeballs?
- Our bodies only work when each part does its job. Eyes have to be eyes. Ears have to be ears. Hearts have to be hearts. Brains have to be brains. And feet have to be feet.

²⁵ This makes for harmony among the members, so that all the members care for each other. ²⁶ If one part suffers, all the parts suffer with it, and if one part is honored, all the parts are glad. ²⁷ All of you together are Christ's body, and each of you is a part of it. (1 Corinthians 12:25-27 – NLT)

- Because of how God wired you, you have the potential to do amazing things in this world, but when we work together, we become more than we could have ever imagined.
- When describing what it was like for all of us to use our gifts together, Paul literally called it **Christ's body**.
- Paul realized that Jesus' work on earth wasn't finished when He went to Heaven. In fact, it was just getting started.
- So how would Jesus continue His work on earth? Through us. Through His church. Through people like you and me who are willing to use our God-given gifts to serve others.
- When Jesus was physically here, He could only be in one place at one time. He could heal one person, teach one crowd, or comfort one family at a time.
- Now through each of us using our unique gifts, the work of Jesus can literally happen everywhere at the same time.
- When the church works together, we don't just help people. We give them a glimpse of Jesus Himself.

INSIGHTS (What might this Scripture mean?)

1. Using our gifts introduces Jesus to the world around us.

- Every single time we use the gifts God has given us, we're giving the world a chance to meet Jesus *through* us.
- Your encouragement, your serving, your teaching—it's not just you doing something good—it's God's way of introducing Himself to people who might never meet Him any other way.
- This doesn't happen by you trying to be someone else. It happens when you're just being yourself and living out who God made you to be.

2. We need each other.

- Many of us have been taught for our whole lives that we should be able to **take care of ourselves** or that when a problem shows up, we should **handle it on our own**.
- Paul said the opposite:

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." (1 Corinthians 12:14 – NLT)

- When we try to navigate life, school stress, family drama, or friendship issues completely on our own, we end up missing out on the strength, wisdom, and perspective that God wants to give us through others.
- God never intended for any of us to carry everything by ourselves. He created you to need others—and for others to need you.

ACTION (How could we live this out?)

1. Find your team.

- This week, look around our youth group and find 2-3 people whose gifts complement yours.
- Your small group is a great place to start and don't just pick your closest friends (though they might end up being part of your team).
- Look for people whose gifts are different from yours.
- Think about it like putting together a puzzle... you want pieces that fit together, not pieces that are identical.
- If you missed last week and didn't get a chance to take the **Spiritual Gifts Quiz**, your small group leader will have a link that they can

share with you. It's only 10 questions, so it should only take a few minutes to complete.

2. Start small.

- This week, you and your team find one simple way you can serve someone *together*.
- Choose an opportunity that lets each person use their unique gifts.
- The goal isn't to do something huge or overwhelming, but to take a small step that brings all your strengths to the table.
- Here are a few ideas to get you started:
 - Maybe you encourage someone who is going through a difficult time. One of you writes a note, another organizes a care package, and someone else delivers it personally.
 - Maybe you help a classmate study for a big test—one person explains the concepts, another makes flashcards or study guides, and someone else brings snacks and moral support.
- The key is to pick something that genuinely requires different people doing different things to accomplish one goal.
- When you see how much more you can accomplish together than any of you could do alone, you'll start to understand what Paul meant when he said we're all part of one body.
- Don't be discouraged if things don't go exactly as planned, or if you start to wonder whether your ***Spiritual Gifts Quiz*** results might have missed the mark.
- When things feel a little off, the best thing you can do is see it as a chance to learn, adjust, and keep moving forward.

3. Dream big.

- Over the next few weeks, take what worked, and scale it up into something bigger.
- Ask yourselves: what clicked when we worked together? What felt natural and effective about working as a team? What actually made a difference? What did you discover about how your gifts complement each other?
- Now ask how we can take those same strengths and apply them to something that impacts your wider community or creates a longer-lasting difference?

- You don't have to start from scratch—just expand on what God's already proven you can do well together.