

Every Piece Matters

Elementary ages • about 30 minutes. A lesson that teaches kids inclusion and acceptance — and how to be a great friend to Shine kids, whose abilities may look different from their own.



THE BIG IDEA

God made every one of us different **on purpose** — like puzzle pieces. Every piece is a different shape and color, and not one of them is wrong. The picture isn't complete unless **every single piece** is in it.

"The body is not made up of one part but of many... you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it." — 1 Corinthians 12:14, 27

5 min

1. Puzzle piece hand-out

Give every child one piece from the same jigsaw puzzle. Ask: *Are any two pieces the same? Is a piece wrong or bad for being a different shape? What happens to the picture if we leave even one piece out?*

Say: "Every piece is different — and every piece matters. That's exactly how God made people. Different isn't wrong. Different is how the picture gets finished!"

5 min

2. Talk about our Shine friends

In kid language, explain what they might notice — and that it's all okay:

- Some friends talk with their hands, a device, or sounds instead of words.
- Some friends flap, rock, or bounce when they're happy or excited — that's them celebrating!
- Some friends use headphones or fidgets because their ears and bodies work extra hard.
- Some friends use wheelchairs or walkers to get around.

Say: "None of that is weird or scary — it's just a different puzzle-piece shape. And every friend wants the same things you do: to play, to be included, and to have a friend at church."

3. How to be a great friend (practice these together!)

- **Say hi** and use their name — every week.
- **Invite them** to sit with you, play, and join your game.
- **Be patient** — give your friend extra time to answer.
- **It's okay** if they don't look at you — they're still listening.
- **Ask first** — don't grab fidgets or headphones; those are helpers, not toys.
- **Treat them like a friend** your own age — not like a baby.
- **Stick up for them.** Friends don't laugh at friends.
- **Not sure what to do?** Ask a grown-up — asking is kind.

10 min

4. Craft: Our class puzzle

Give each child one blank puzzle piece (cut from cardstock) to decorate however they like — colors, stickers, their name. Assemble all the pieces on a poster board titled **"Our church isn't complete without YOU!"** and hang it where the kids (and parents) can see it.

5 min

5. Wrap-up & prayer

Ask each child to name one way they'll be a good friend this week. Pray together: *"Thank You, God, for making every one of us different on purpose. Help us to be the kind of friends who make room for everybody, so everyone gets to shine. Amen."*