



Collegiate Quarterly

Teacher's Guide

The Key to Unity

Surveying the Source

Eph. 1:3–14; 2:11–22; 4:1–6, 11, 12; 5:15–6:9

Plotting the Course

The students will:

- ▶ Discuss God's purpose for humans to live in harmony with one another.
- ▶ Examine the attributes of Christian unity.

- ▶ Analyze the traits of Bible characters who practiced cooperation.

Preparing to Lead

TEAM can be an acronym for “Together Everyone Achieves More.” Who among us has not experienced the power of togetherness? Parents who practice TEAM nurture a happier and close-knit family. Teachers who believe in TEAM utilize primarily cooperative learning that promotes greater student achievement. Workplaces that foster TEAM tend to have smoother human re-

lationships and greater productivity. Societies that embrace TEAM enjoy more peace and security.

Jesus promoted unity among His disciples and prayed for the same among His followers to come. As Jesus' followers, we are called to be “positive deviants” in a world dominated by competition and power struggle.

Materials

Bibles, pens/pencils, Reproducible Activity

Getting Started

A. Ask the class what is common among these phenomena in nature? (a) ant colonies; (b) bird flocking; (c) animal herding; and (d) fish schooling. The amazing similarity is group behavior. Sticking together (even for a period of time) is made possible through following certain simple rules including steering towards the average position. Boids are simulations of cooperative movements of such groups, especially originated from the studies related to flocks of birds. If birds and fish work cooperatively, how much more should we work together for a central purpose of glorifying God?

B. Share the statement—“The Lord God said, ‘It is not good for the man to be alone’” (Gen. 2:18, NIV). This verse points to companionship through marriage. A greater reason why humans should not live alone has to do with the purpose for their creation—to reflect God's image. Humans need each other to reflect God's image. If this greater purpose for community living were understood, we would do everything to do a good job. We will maintain a caring and loving relationship with one another. Discuss how this would also mean surpassing barriers of gender, race, ethnicity, socio-economic status, nationality, or language.

Delving Into the Word

A. Explain that the call for unity needs to be qualified, as all unity does not bring good results. When Paul and Silas sang within the prison walls, it was good unity; when Herod and Pilate agreed to allow Jesus to be scorned, it was bad unity. The unity that Jesus promoted is attributed by “its source, its views, its affections, and its aims” (*That is Christian Unity*, John Piper, June 2, 2015).

Read: Ephesians 4:3 to find the source of unity (the Holy Spirit). Discuss the difference between the unity brought about by the Spirit and other sources. *Read* Ephesians 4:13 to find the views of good unity (the unity in the truth). *Discuss* how shared truth brings unity. The truth based on Jesus Christ (Rom. 15:5) and revealed in His Word results in the “same mind” (Phil. 4:2). Now read Galatians 6:10; Romans 12:10; and 1 Peter 1:22. Endearment within the family of Christ is important. Finally, the goal of unity is to witness to the world and glorify God. Read John 13:34, 35 and Romans 15:5–7 to affirm these two aims of Christian unity and review the four attributes of Christian unity.

B. Ask participants to describe what cooperation looks like. The good news is that cooperation can be described in practical ways. Distribute the Reproducible Activity and pens/pencils. Have the participants read eight of the practical ways listed there, of practicing cooperation. Have them find Bible examples corresponding to the items. Encourage them to complete as many of the items as possible. Have a sharing time.

Discussing the Ideas

1. What makes working cooperatively with others satisfying?
2. How have you overcome challenges in collaborative efforts?
3. Which attributes in one’s character enhance cooperative work?
4. How can you enhance greater harmony at home, school, workplace or/and

church?

5. What other analogies for unity come to your mind than human body parts working together?

6. What take away can you share from a Bible character that exemplified Christian community spirit?

Closing the Activity

Ellen White says, “We are coming to a time when, more than ever before, we shall need to press together, to labor unitedly. In union there is strength. In discord and disunion there is only weakness...In our separation from one another we are separated from Christ” (*Selected Messag-*

es, Vol. 2, p. 374). Affirm (a) the need for us to seek God’s Spirit to build the unity that Jesus prayed for; (b) that unity in diversity is possible; and (c) that together everyone achieves more to glorify God. Then close with prayer.

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HOW TO BE A COOPERATIVE PERSON

Below are some of the practical ways of being a cooperative person. Find a Bible example for each item.

1. LISTEN carefully to others and be sure you understand what they are saying.

Bible Example:

2. SHARE when you have something that others need to hear.

Bible Example:

3. TAKE TURNS when there is something that nobody wants to do, or when more than one person wants to do the same thing.

Bible Example:

4. DO YOUR PART to your best ability. This will inspire others to do the same.

Bible Example:

5. SHOW APPRECIATION to people for what they contribute.

Bible Example:

6. ENCOURAGE PEOPLE to do their best.

Bible Example:

7. MAKE PEOPLE FEEL NEEDED. Working together is a lot more fun that way.

Bible Example:

8. DON'T ISOLATE OR EXCLUDE ANYONE. Everybody has something valuable to offer, and nobody likes being left out.

Bible Example: