

The Most Convincing Proof



Collegiate Quarterly

Teacher's Guide

Surveying the Source

Luke 22:24; John 17:20–23; Acts 2:46; Rom. 14:1–6; 2 Cor. 5:17–21; Eph. 1:7–10; Phil. 2:1–3

Plotting the Course

The students will:

- ▶ Identify what it means to be united in Christ.
- ▶ Explore how unity develops among Christians.
- ▶ Contrast individuality and Christian unity.

Preparing to Lead

Have you ever had a family member or friend make a 180 degree turn-around change in their life? Maybe they went from acting negative, depressed, and frustrated to making a difference in their community and cheerfully leading others to get involved too. Seeing a huge positive change in someone is amazing and inspiring!

The Holy Spirit can work powerfully like that in our Christian lives! This type of noteworthy, exciting change happens to Christians by the power of the Holy Spirit, and is the best witness to non-believers of our relationship with Christ. Do you believe that is true?

Materials

Bibles, Reproducible Activity; pens/pencils; paper; flipchart; markers

Getting Started

A. What did you think of the story in Sabbath's lesson about the adult wildebeests guarding the vulnerable, young wildebeest from the hyenas? Unity is useful in a variety of aspects—protection, peace, strength. *Ask:* "What are some other positive aspects of unity? What are some negative results of disunity?" Use the white board to take notes.

Read and discuss Luke 22:24. Unity is something that has to be cultivated; it does not just happen. Ask a volunteer to read Acts 2:46. Give each person a paper. Ask them to brain storm and write down ideas for improving unity in your church.

B. Social media has created an atmosphere where people spend much time interacting digitally. It is not uncommon to see three college students sitting on a bench looking down at a hand-held device. They could even be texting each other on that bench. *Say:* "Being confident as an individual, having good self-esteem, and enjoying some alone time are important, but we should also socialize and interact directly with people in meaningful ways. We should seek unity, learn from each other's testimonies, and spend time studying the Bible together."

Delving Into the Word

A. Before we can experience Christian unity, we must form a connection with Christ—be united with Him. *Read:* John 17:20–23. *Ask:* “How does Jesus’ prayer for unity reach from His day all the way to this present time?” *Read:* Ephesians 1:7–10. Explore the concept of being united with Christ, which is the foundation every Christian’s faith is built upon. Take turns reading and discussing John 15:1–17 verse-by-verse.

Being connected with Christ is important, but God’s plan for our Christian life only begins with us as individuals. He wants believers who are united together in serving, worshiping, studying, and experiencing the abundant life as a group of people. *Say:* “The burdens of life are lightened greatly when we share them with others. The victories of life are sweetest when celebrated together. This is God’s design; He made us to live in community with others.” Read and discuss Romans 14:1–6; Philippians 2:1–3.

B. To understand how Christian unity is possible, we have to zoom out and look at the big picture of our Christian faith. Jesus lived a perfect life, died to pay off our debt of sin, and then rose from the dead in victory over evil! All who believe in Jesus and claim Him as Savior are united by this precious, life-changing gospel. The gospel is that Jesus reunites us with God after sin separated us. As individuals, this unity with Christ becomes evident in the way we live, serve, and interact with others.

Just as a runner works on their own strength and training for a marathon, we must maintain our connection with Jesus. Then, at the race, all the runners pursue the same goal. Likewise, we unite to serve and honor God. Unity is only possible as individuals pursue Christ, serve with love, and have the same goal. Explore the process we go through to experience unity with Christ and with others by completing the Reproducible Activity.

Discussing the Ideas

1. Define unity.
2. How can diverse groups of people from different places, different backgrounds, and with different talents experience unity?
3. Does everyone have to always agree to be united? Why or why not?
4. The gospel message can be made to seem complicated at times, how can we maintain a united message as Christians?
5. Why would the devil try to disrupt and break unity in our churches?
6. Why is being part of a group important to the Christian experience?
7. How does our unity become an expression of the reconciliation to God that Jesus offers to us?
8. Why does our Christian unity serve as one of the most effective forms of witnessing to non-believers?

Closing the Activity

Others will join our churches because they see the love and peace they want in their own lives. John writes the words of Jesus who said that Christians are loving people. Read John 13:34, 35. Christ’s love for us, our love for Him, and our love for each other fuel the abundant life

we can have together. True unity is only possible through God’s love. Our ultimate goal will be reached as the lost get found by Christians who are united with Christ to serve, worship, and grow together.

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Our Unity in Christ

Study the following verses and prepare to discuss your answers with the group.

Read 2 Corinthians 5:14-21

Summary: _____

How and why does God's love compel us? _____

What does it mean to be a new in Christ? _____

Describe how being reconciled to God makes you feel? _____

Read 2 Corinthians 6

Summary: _____

What should be our attitude towards issues we face and towards other Christians? _____

God calls us to live our lives differently from the ways of the world, how do you see this concept in your own life? _____
