



Collegiate Quarterly

Teacher's Guide

Unity and Broken Relationships

Surveying the Source

1 Cor. 12:1–11; Rom. 5:8–11; Luke 23:31–34; 2 Cor. 5:20, 21; Eph. 4:26; Matt. 18:15–17

Plotting the Course

The students will:

► Apply biblical principles in order to resolve conflict and reconcile hurt/broken relationships.

► Study the example of Jesus when it comes to His forgiveness and love for all people.

► Explore the spiritual gifts of other members in the body of Christ and the need for all parts working together in order to become most effective in our work of bringing the gospel to all people.

Preparing to Lead

It is often a lack of unity that becomes the largest detriment to us as Seventh-day Adventists working to spread the gospel. If we cannot experience unity and get along with people we can see and talk to, how do we expect to experience unity

and get along with God, who we cannot see or talk to in the same way? It is important to realize that as humans, we will have conflict and it is necessary to learn the principles of resolving it in a healthy way.

Getting Started

A. Begin class by asking members to share of a time when they successfully resolved a conflict or broken relationship with someone. Ask them for specific principles or strategies they used in order to foster healing in the relationship and write those points on the chalkboard/whiteboard. Ask if anyone has any Bible verses that come to mind that talk about how we can deal with conflict and write those on the board as well (e.g. Prov. 15:1, 23; Eccl. 3:7; 4:9, 10; Eph. 4:26; Col.4:6).

B. Begin by having class members get into pairs and create a scenario of positive conflict management versus negative conflict management. Depending on your class size and time available for the activity, have a few groups role play and demonstrate what a positive versus negative conversation could look like. Have other members discuss what some key principles are that they noticed in the scenario that allowed for broken relationships and conflict to be resolved.

Materials

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

Delving Into the Word

A. Oftentimes when we are wrongfully accused, it is easy to want to take revenge and yet Jesus did not portray that example—instead He chose to forgive; our carnal nature looks to find ways to get back at people who have hurt us. Look at Jesus' example of forgiveness in the Bible, specifically in Luke 23:31–34.

Lead class members in a discussion of some key points that can be taken from this passage. Then ask class members to take a few minutes of reflection and consider why Jesus was able to forgive people after being wrongly accused and what gaps they notice in their life that they need Jesus to fill in order to experience full forgiveness. Ask them to jot down the gaps that they are noticing and the people in their life they need to forgive and to keep that list in their Bible in order that they might pray over it to have opportunities to extend forgiveness.

B. Read aloud Romans 5:8–11 and 2 Corinthians 5:20, 21. Have class members discuss the concept of being ambassadors for Christ and what we can learn from Jesus' example of forgiving us while we were sinners. Then pass out the Reproducible Activity and have class members independently read the spiritual gifts found in 1 Corinthians 12:1–11. Have everyone fill out the Reproducible Activity and think of five individuals in their current or previous church whom they had a difficult time getting along with and writing down their spiritual gift and something positive about each person. Have each person keep this list and pray over each individual that God may bring reconciliation into that relationship. Allow class members to share what this exercise has done in their attitude towards that person.

Discussing the Ideas

1. What are some ways that we can show others that we are ambassadors for Christ?
2. What are some things we can do within our church to foster conflict resolution?
3. What have you noticed typically stops us from healing broken relationships within the church?
4. What are some lies that the enemy distracts us with to cause us to remain dis-united as a body of Christ?
5. How can we, as the church, become more effective in our witness to nonbelievers using the example of our relationships?
6. What are some differences between those who are proud and those who are humble when it comes to their conversation?
7. Why do you feel that unity is something Jesus prayed so much for His followers to have?

Closing the Activity

As the body of Christ, we will constantly be tempted to stray from unity and have long-lasting conflicts with individuals who we often see on a weekly basis. When we fail to experience unity, we become much less effective in our work. It is easy to let this take over our mental

capacity and distract us from our gospel commission and purpose as Seventh-day Adventists. Encourage class members to choose one individual they are in conflict with or have a broken relationship with, pray for that individual, and look for ways to encourage the rebuilding of trust.

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Oftentimes, when we have been/are in conflict with someone, we are inclined to look at the individual in a negative light. Read 1 Corinthians 12:1–11 and think of five individuals in your current or previous church with whom you had difficulty getting along. Write down one of their spiritual gifts and a positive characteristic they possess.

Individual	Spiritual Gift	Positive Trait