



Collegiate Quarterly

## Teacher's Guide

# Unity in Worship

## Surveying the Source

John 17:17–21; 1 Cor. 6:19, 20; Heb. 10:24, 25; Rev 14:1–14

## Plotting the Course

### The students will:

- ▶ Understand the scriptural basis for Christian unity.
- ▶ Sense a need to achieve unity.
- ▶ Formulate plans to overcome the obstacles to unity.

## Preparing to Lead

Consider a bicycle wheel, especially the relationship of the hub to the spokes. The closer the spokes are to the hub the closer they are to one another. The closer Christians are to the hub or center of faith, which is Christ, the closer they are to one another. Worship, meaning com-

plete surrender to Christ throughout every aspect of life, and not merely attendance at weekly gatherings, is that which draws us closer to the center of our faith, which is Christ. The closer we come to Christ, the closer we are to each other. This alone brings true unity.

## Getting Started

**A.** Bring a spoked bicycle wheel to class. *Ask:* “Where are the spokes closest to one another? Where are the spokes the farthest from one another? If Christ is the hub or center of our faith, how can we come closer to Him? If we are the spokes, what will happen to our closeness to one another as we draw nearer to the center of our faith? What role does worship have in drawing us closer to Christ, and thus closer to one another? What is worship?”

**B.** Distribute the Reproducible Activity and pencils or pens. Ask class members to make two lists: The first will be a list of things that participants think are currently unifying the church. The second list will be factors that they think are pulling the church apart. Make a combined list for the class by asking members to call out the things they have written. Discuss the role of worship and its relationship to the unifying factors. Next discuss how true worship might resolve the divisive elements.

## Materials

Bibles, laptop or iPad, video projector, pens/pencils, Reproducible Activity

## Delving Into the Word

**A.** Use an actual bicycle wheel or a drawing of a bicycle wheel as a visual guide to the discussion. Label five spokes following the outline presented in the “Logos” section of the study guide: (1) Unity in Worship, (2) Unity in the Everlasting Gospel, (3) Unity in Message, (4) Unity in Truth, and (5) Unity of Worshipers. *Read:* Acts 2:42.

Worship draws us into God’s presence and prayer is central to worship (Acts 2:42). Challenge your students to find verses that describe how prayer unified the early Christians. *Ask:* “Why does a cross-centered gospel of grace unify believers? Why does a behavior-focused false gospel divide members?” *Ask:* “How can doctrine unify or divide the church?” Explore how truth enabled the believers’ fellowship in the New Testament and discuss how that might be replicated in our day. Finally, discuss and define unity among worshippers. Does it mean uniformity or something else?

**B.** *Ask:* “Should differences of understanding and practice be tolerated? Is there room for dissension in a united church? What is the role of individual conscience?” In Acts 2:42 believers were unified through doctrine, fellowship, breaking of bread, and prayer. Divide the class into four groups and have them discuss these areas:

1. What does the gospel mean? Contrast the authentic gospel of grace with the false gospel of behaviorism. Can there be unity of belief but different expressions of practice?
2. Define what fellowship means scripturally. Discuss the interrelationship of doctrine (unity of mind) with fellowship (unity of heart). Why are both necessary?
3. Talk about how physically doing things together fostered unity in the early church and how that facilitates unity now.
4. Discuss the nature of prayer and identify stories in Scripture where it brought about unity.

## Discussing the Ideas

1. How can personal ego and pride of opinion lead to division?
2. How does the church strike a balance between dictating everything and tolerating anything?
3. How do believers counter the challenge of divisive people?
4. How can believers avoid discouragement and despair whenever division splits their congregation?
5. Why is prayer essential to creating unity among believers?
6. Why is prayer so often neglected and how can that trend be reversed?
7. Why must believers avoid a superficial unity devoid of substance?
8. Why must the integrity of the authentic gospel be protected and not compromised?

## Closing the Activity

When people consider marriage they often become self-focused, thinking only of how potential mates meet their criteria. Only mature people think about changes they may need to make to forge a successful partnership. Challenge the class to consider the personal sacrifices they may need to make to foster unity among be-

lievers. This may be done corporately by having them call out what they feel they must do and making a group list or privately by having them write out a personal list which they may then tuck into their Bible or write into the electronic device which houses their Bible.

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## CHURCH ANALYSIS

THINGS THAT UNIFY OUR CHURCH:

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THINGS THAT DIVIDE OUR CHURCH:

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Unity of Worship

Unity of the Everlasting Gospel

Unity of Message

Unity of Truth

Unity of Worshipers

