



UNITED WE STAND

Disciples & Early Church • U6#2 1st-3rd Gr. • Dec.8, 2024

Concept

Christians are all ONE in Christ Jesus.

Goal

Students will learn that they are united with other believers in Christ and are to move toward each other in love.

Passage

Ephesians 2:4-6, 11-19

Key Verse: "Christ is our peace, who has made both groups into one, and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall," Ephesians 2:14

Planning Ahead

Lesson Supplies	Craft Supplies
<p>Learning Activity #1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>2 clear-glass dishes or jars</i> • Vegetable Oil, ¼ cup/CT class • Water, ¼ cup/CT class • Dish Soap (small bottle or 2 tbsp)/CT class • <i>Wire whisk</i> <p>Optional Activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>1 bed sheet</i> 	<p>Activity Stations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>2 balls</i> • <i>2 plastic buckets</i> • <i>Two 3' lengths of Velcro or gaffer's tape</i>

*TEACHERS PLEASE NOTE

For clarity, the italicized areas in the Planning Ahead section indicate supplies that are in—and should be returned to—your classroom SHARED SUPPLY bag.

Background Information (for the teacher)

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Because we are so fallen, it is very much within our nature, even as Christians, to compare ourselves with others for the purpose of building ourselves up. We begin very early in life to label each other. Titles such as ugly/pretty, athletic/clumsy, poor/rich or men/women, as well as differences in social status, color of skin and nationality, influence the way we view ourselves and others. That is why it is essential that children understand Paul's teaching regarding unity between the Christian Jews and Christian Gentiles in Ephesians 2. Christ brought about the reconciliation of Jew and Gentile to Himself and to each other when He died on the cross. At the cross He made the two, i.e., Jew and Gentile, into one, i.e., Christian. This is not two groups now made equal, but one new group that is greater than either of the two. "For He Himself is our peace, who made both groups into one, and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall... that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, thus establishing peace, and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross" (Eph. 2:14-16, NASB).

The issue in Ephesians 2 is between two races of people. Two thousand years later, we still have racial wars. Where but in the body of Christ is it possible to experience unity and love between people of very diverse backgrounds and interests?! A unified body of believers is an amazing witness to the world that Christ is real. "The purpose of Christ's work for man's salvation is not limited to the giving of new life to individual men and women, previously dead in sin... it goes beyond this... it involves the bringing of those individuals, whatever their race or background, into unity in the people of God... Not only can it be said that Christ brings peace. He is our peace. As men are brought to be in Him, and continue to live in Him, they find peace with God, and so also a meeting-place and concord with one another, whatever may have been their divisions of race, colour, class or creed before. He came for this purpose (Lk. 2:14), to be the Prince of peace... By His coming, and supremely by His cross, He has made both one. The Greek says literally that He has made both things into one thing... Divisions and distinctions no longer exist as far as the standing of any before God is concerned. God has made a way for the divided to become one." [1]

[1] Francis Foulkes, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, Ephesians, 1983, Inter-varsity Press, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Michigan, pp. 78, 81.

Set Up

Before class: Set the soap, oil, water, whisk and glass dishes/jars somewhere easily accessible.

Activity Stations:

- **Game**
- **Goal:** Students will experience prejudice through observation or experience.
 - **Instructions:** Divide students into 2 teams with the blonds on one team and all of the other students on the other team. Place one strip of Velcro 5' from one bucket and the other strip of Velcro 7' from the other bucket. Put the "blond" team at the 7' line. Each student stands at the line, shoots the ball into the basket, runs to retrieve it and runs it back to the next person in line. The object of the game is for the teams to make as many baskets as possible in a three-minute time period.

Debrief of Activity Stations

This game some of you just played was very hard for some of you. Would anyone like to tell me what you're thinking? (The blonds should have plenty to say. The other students may have noticed and may comment also. Give them time to air their grievances, which hopefully they will feel free to do. Don't comment; just listen.)

The game was to help you know what it feels and looks like when people are treated unfairly just because of the way they look. We know that people with blond hair are just as valuable as people with red hair, brown hair or black hair. We're all part of this class and every person is important.

The point is that we all tend to judge people by how they look or what others say about them. We are often unwilling to get to know someone if we don't like their looks or what we've heard about them. We often don't want to be with people who are different. We don't even spend the time to get to know them. Have any of you heard the word prejudice? We are prejudiced when we think wrongly about others because of the way they look, where they live or what we've heard about them. But the Bible tells us that Christians are to accept one another, just as Christ accepted us.

The Puppet Team is going to present a puppet show for us now. As you watch, think about how Brenda or George were prejudiced.

DRAMA - "All for One & One for All" puppet skit presented by Puppet Team.

Incorporation Lg. Group

Introduction Lg. Group

Transition

Learning Activity#1 Lg. Group

Transition

Lesson Lg. Group Part 1

Let's return to the classroom and sit down.

Back in the days of the early church the people were categorized into only 2 groups, the Jews and the Gentiles. Gentiles are all those who are not Jews. There was a problem in the early church between the Jewish Christians and the Gentile Christians. Just like George and Brenda grew up hating groups of people who lived in different parts of town, the Jews and Gentiles generally hated each other. When George and Brenda were put on the same soccer team they were no longer Northsiders or Southsiders but Bobcats. In the same way when the Jewish people and the Gentile people received Christ's forgiveness, they were no longer Jews and Gentiles but Christians. In the letter to the Christians in Ephesus, Paul told the Jewish and Gentile Christians that the dividing wall of hate had been torn down by Christ. They were now united in Christ and were to move toward each other in love.

Transition

Learning Activity# 2 Lg. Group

I have an object lesson to give you a visual picture of what it means to be united or one in Christ.

Object Lesson

Goal: Two substances that don't mix become one by being put into a third. This is a picture of two groups who don't mix being made one as they are put in Christ.

Instructions: Put the empty glass jar somewhere the kids can see and pour water and oil in it, stirring some with the whisk.

The water and oil in this dish represent two different groups of people that don't accept each other. Try as you might, they are separate and will not mix. Instructions: Add 1-2 tablespoons of dish soap into the water/oil mixture and mix together!

Dish soap is different than water and oil! It is drawn to both water and oil molecules. Soap grabs onto both types of molecules causing oil droplets to be suspended in the water. When you shake/mix the jar, the soap molecules adhere the water and oil together.

The dish soap in this dish represents Christ. The oil and water combine to make a completely new substance when the dish soap is placed into it. This is a picture of what happens to groups of people when they are in Christ. They become one new people. The oil and water can only combine with the addition of the dish soap. In the same way, two different groups of people can come together and form a new group when they have the Holy Spirit. God sees Christians as one people in Christ and wants us to see each other in the same way.

Lesson Continued Part 2

Listen as I read Ephesians 2:11-19.

Paul reminded the Gentile Christians that not only had they been separate from Christ, but they were also without hope of the promises God gave the Jews. In other words, they were really in a pathetic state. "But," he said in verse 13, "now in Christ Jesus you have been brought near through the blood of Christ's death." What does he mean by that? Any ideas? Look in your Bibles at Ephesians 2, verses 4-6. What does Paul mean? Jesus sacrificed Himself by dying on the cross to bring all people back to God. Because we sin we can't be in relationship with God who is perfect. But because His love for us is so great He sent His only Son, His perfect Son, to earth to die on the cross and receive the punishment we deserve for our sins. Now that's incredible love! How can we be sure our punishment has been paid? We can only receive God's love when we admit we need His forgiveness and are willing to accept His love. At the moment someone does that, they will be put into Christ and become one with Him and all other Christians, just as the oil and water became one with the soap in the object lesson.

It would seem that once we become Christians, there should be no problems in our relationships, especially with other Christians. Unfortunately, we don't become perfect. We still have a sin nature and often keep the same prejudices we had before we became Christians. Consequently, we do not always view others as one with us. It was the same for the Jewish and Gentile Christians in the early church. They hated each other because they were different, as if there were a wall between them. Our key verse this week is, "Christ is our peace, who has made both groups into one, and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall," (Ephesians 2:14). When Jesus died on the cross He made peace with God possible for all people. Not only did He make peace with God possible, but He made peace possible between people. Christ had torn down that dividing wall between the Jews and Gentiles and the two groups of people became one new people when they became Christians.

Transition

Let's get into small groups to talk about this a little more and to pray.

Learning Activity #3 Sm. Groups

- Have you experienced prejudice or hatred between different cliques in school, in your neighborhood, in sports teams or other places?
- What might be some reasons someone keeps separate from others who aren't like them?
- Why do you think Paul called the separation a wall of hatred? Those are strong words, but we do hate others when we refuse to be their friend either because we think we're better than they are or are afraid to get to know them.
- How do you think it would differ if we really believed that Jesus has made us one group with each other?

Learning Activity #3 Continued

Optional Activity

Missions Prayer: Talk about and pray for the Oasis Giving Campaign.

Let's pray now that we will remember that "Christ is our peace, who has made both groups into one, and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall," (Ephesians 2:14). Let's thank Jesus that He came to earth to forgive our sins. Let's ask God to help us think about one thing we can do this week to love someone.

Game – "Drop the Blanket"[1]

Instructions: Before starting, make sure visitors are introduced so that everyone has at least heard everyone else's name. Divide into two teams and have teams huddle at opposite ends of the room. Two people (neutral) hold the sheet in a vertical position, fully opened and touching the floor. Each team sends one person to stand twelve inches from their side of the blanket. When they are ready, the blanket is dropped. Whichever player says the other player's name correctly first captures that other person, and the losing player changes teams. The game continues until one team has only one person remaining. When neither player knows the other's name, they are introduced and sent back to their teams.

[1] David Lynn, Attention Grabbers for 4th-6th graders, © 1990 by Youth Specialties, Inc., p. 36.