

Word One Bible Study

One in Heart and Soul

by Tim Bayer

Text: Acts 4:32-35 for the Second Sunday after Easter, Lectionary Series B

OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

1. Discover how the early church modeled Jesus' redemptive life through community living.
2. Explore basic principles of community stewardship reflected in Jesus' life through the early church.
3. Identify ways to be this kind of community that imitates Jesus.
4. Create and implement a plan to live with "one heart and soul... having everything in common."

MATERIALS NEEDED

Newspaper or towel

Edible Play-Doh (see recipe at the end)

Bibles

Pens

Index cards

BUILDING COMMUNITY

Everyone sits in a circle either on chairs or on the floor. One person in the middle has a rolled up newspaper or towel. One person starts the game by saying his or her name and someone else's name. The person in the middle tries to tap the second person on the knees before that person says their name and someone else's name. If they get hit before they finish, they go in the middle and the middle person starts. Otherwise, play continues.

Variation: You can have the person say their name and someone else's before they sit down. If they don't they are back in the middle.

GROUP GUIDELINES

GETTING TO KNOW YOU (and splitting up into groups) – In a large open area, play a game of Blob Tag. Start with 2 single or double players (or, however many groups you wish; so if you wish to have 3 groups, you will begin with 3, etc.). As soon as they tag someone, they join arms or hands and become part of the blob. The blob must separate after there are four people (or however many people you wish). Groups are finalized when the leader calls it, or each group has the desired number of people together in a "blob".

IN EACH GROUP – distribute edible play-doh. Ask students to think of a group of people, a community (Christian or non-Christian), of which they are a member. Invite them to use the edible play-doh to "model" the answers to the following questions:

- Describe their community.
- What defines their community?
- How do its members relate to one another?
- How does the community relate to those outside it?

Hold onto the edible play-doh (don't tell participants that it's edible).

GETTING INTO SCRIPTURE

1. In small groups, dramatically read Acts 4:32–35 (you may wish to extend this to verse 37).
2. Verses 32–37 give us a closer look at the early Christian community. What are some specific ways they lived out their "one heart and soul [or mind]"? What does this tell us about their priorities?
3. What was the common belief at the center of their community? What did they give testimony to? (vs. 33)
4. Verse 33 tells about their "witness" or "testimony." What adjectives are used to describe their witness?

5. Put yourself in the story. If you were on the outside looking in, what might be going through your mind as you observe these Christians interacting with each other and with others?

REINFORCING WHAT HAS BEEN LEARNED

What does it mean to be “one in heart and soul?” What doesn’t it mean? What would your “community” (whatever you want to consider) look like if it really was of “one heart and soul?” What would your witness be like? How does having a common belief in the resurrection of Jesus make this kind of community different from others? What are some things you can do to strengthen your community? Use the edible play-doh to model your answers.

Let’s consider that if God was bringing these questions and answers to mind, what (in summary) is God saying to you right now?

Using the edible play-doh, model how you plan to respond to what God is saying to you in these verses today. Each individual can share their plan of response with their small group.

CLOSING

Distribute index cards and pens, one to each person. Each person writes his or her name on the card in a corner on either side. Individually, write any prayer request on one side of the card. On the other side of the card, write a one sentence summary of what you last modeled with the edible play-doh. Exchange cards in your group and share them as your prayer time. Keep the card that was given to you and encourage students to pray for each other throughout the week. They may also choose to write encouraging notes or text/call them later in the week to ask, “how’s it going”.

Now, you can eat the play-doh. :)

EDIBLE PLAY-DOH RECIPE

1 cup peanut butter
1 cup honey
1 ½ cups powdered milk

Mix ingredients well. Place dough in covered container and store in the refrigerator.

For nut-free zones, go to: http://www.peanutfreeplanet.com/Peanut_Butter_Alternatives_Substitutes_s/129.htm for alternatives.

youthESource is published on the Web by the LCMS Office of National Mission—Youth Ministry. The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, 1333 South Kirkwood Road, St. Louis, MO 63122-7295; 1-800-248-1930; www.youthesource.com. Editor: Sherrah Holobaugh Behrens. VOL. 12 NO. 4. April 2015.