

Word One Bible Study

Unity of Believers

by Terry and Barb Wiechman

Text: Ephesians 4:1-16 for the Tenth Sunday after Pentecost, Lectionary Series B

OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

1. Acknowledge that it is belief in Christ that unifies all Christians.
2. Understand the qualities that will help build unity in a group.
3. Understand that it is important to always continue growing in knowledge of Christ

MATERIALS NEEDED

Bibles

Newsprint or white board

Markers

GROUP GUIDELINES

Line up according to your shoe size - smallest to largest. Break up into small groups of 4-6 people. The leader is the person with the longest shoe strings. The leader's job is to keep the group moving through the material and ensure that everyone has a chance to share.

BUILDING COMMUNITY

1. Draw a composite picture on newsprint illustrating qualities, items, etc. of the most popular teens at your school.
2. Now draw a composite picture of a teen with the qualities you think God would want the teen to have.
3. Share and explain your drawings with the other groups.

LOOKING AT GOD'S WORD

1. Read Ephesians 4:1-7.
2. The Apostle Paul is writing to the Christians at Ephesus. In verse 1, he urges/begs them to live a life worthy of their calling, to be a Christian. In what ways does he urge them to live in verse 2?
 - a. How does the world view a person with these qualities?
 - b. How do you view a person with these qualities?
 - c. How can we strive to strengthen these qualities in ourselves? What is our part? What is God's part?
3. What does Paul encourage the Christians to keep in verse 3.
 - a. Why are unity and peace important among Christians?
 - b. What does the Spirit have to do with unity?
 - c. Does unity happen easily?
 - d. How can unity be promoted?
4. Read verse 7-16.
5. All people have been given different gifts, but all gifts are to be used for common purposes. What purposes do you find?
 - a. To prepare God's people for the _____.
 - b. So that the body of Christ may be _____ until all reach _____ in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become _____, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.
6. Why is it important to grow up into Him who is the Head?
 - a. What does it mean to no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching?
 - b. What are some examples of deceitful scheming?
 - c. How can you be aware of and stand firm when there is deceitful scheming?

7. In verse 15 Paul describes Christ as the Head of the body of Christians. Christians are described as being held together by supporting ligaments, growing and building the body up in love. Share ways you think your youth group could support and build each other up.

REINFORCING WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNED

1. Although unity is desired within Christian communities, is there room for diversity?
2. Talk about the pros and cons of unity and diversity.
3. What can you do to become more mature in your faith?

CLOSING

Close with prayer thanking God for His Son Jesus Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit in bringing us to faith. Pray also for the unity of all believers - especially your youth group and congregation.

Originally published in Discovery Bible Studies 9, 1996.

Updated for youthESource in June 2015

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. 7. July 2015.