

LESSON 2 UNITY

LESSON AT A GLANCE

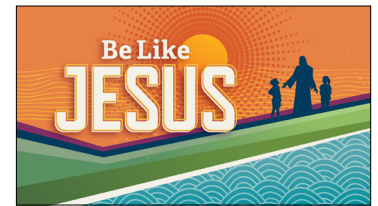
WONDER TRUTH: God Brings Us Together

SCRIPTURE: Ephesians 4

GOD'S BIG STORY: While in prison, Paul writes a letter to Jesus-followers in Ephesus, urging them to put aside their differences and live in unity with the help and power of the Holy Spirit.

WORD OF WONDER: But the fruit the Holy Spirit produces is love, joy and peace. It is being patient, kind and good. It is being faithful and gentle and having control of oneself. —Galatians 5:22–23a

- PRESERVICE
 - OPTION 1 Interactive Game: You Too?
 - OPTION 2 Interactive Game: Dice Discoveries
- Welcome Question: If you could spend one hour with anyone in the world, who would you choose?
- Curiosity Questions
- Declaring God's Wonder
- Prayer of Invitation
- Worship: This Little Light, Your Love For Me
- God's Big Story
- Connecting the Wonder Truth
- In Awe of God's Wonder
- Blessing Your Kids



INVITATION

We invite you to pause, listen, and shift your gaze toward the Father ...

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: God Brings Us Together

SCRIPTURE: Ephesians 4

WORD OF WONDER: Galatians 5:22–23a

When I was in my teens, I often felt frustrated with my parents—as many teens do! I remember going through one particularly difficult moment with my mom and the Lord reminding me of a passage of Scripture I had just memorized: Ephesians 4. The Spirit prompted me to pray through that passage, asking God to keep me from bitterness and anger, to bring me unity with my mom.

Are there people in your life with whom you struggle to be unified? Read Ephesians 4:1–16, and as you do, picture those people.

Ephesians 4 is an encouraging chapter—living in unity is the calling we have received as we become more like Jesus. But it’s also a convicting chapter because we so often fail at being humble and gentle, and bearing with one another in love.

Do you see Paul’s instructions for unity being lived out in your Christian community? In your church? Do you live the life of unity that God calls you to?

As God’s people, we are to live in unity because it represents Him to the world around us. It’s impossible to do on our own, but as we receive help from the Holy Spirit, we can grow in grace, forgiveness, and unity as He brings us together.

—Denise Morris Snyder

Spiritual Formation Pastor

Contributor to Wonder Ink

DID YOU KNOW?

FOUNDATION BUILDING BLOCKS

WHO?

Paul wrote the letter to the Ephesians. Paul once believed that only Jewish people could be in God's family. But when Paul gave his life to Jesus, Jesus told him to preach that God wanted everyone—Jews and non-Jews—to be part of His family.

WHAT?

In Ephesians 4, Paul encourages Jesus-followers to be unified over their similarities despite their differences. Paul explains that his readers are like parts of Jesus' body—each part is different, but all are essential.

WHERE?

The earliest manuscripts of Ephesians don't include an addressee, so the letter was most likely meant to circulate among churches in multiple areas of the Roman empire. Paul wrote this letter while he was imprisoned in Rome.

WHEN?

Paul probably wrote the letter around AD 62 while he was a prisoner in Rome. He was most likely put to death by the Roman emperor Nero two years later.

CONNECTING TO GOD'S BIG STORY:

In Psalm 133, King David longs for unity: "How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity!" (v. 1 NIV). Centuries later, Paul's words to the Ephesians express a similar desire—for God's people to "remain as one," living together in peace (Ephesians 4:3).

LESSON 2 ELEMENTARY & PRETEEN

Large Group

Spark curiosity and get kids thinking about the wonder of God.

LESSON AT A GLANCE

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As kids arrive...

20 minutes before service begins, leaders are in place ready to welcome kids.

Display series theme loop. Play high-energy music in the background.

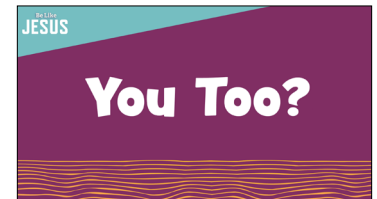
LG Leader walks around the room on mic and greets kids by name as they enter the room. Be intentional about introducing yourself to new parents and kids.

SLIDE: SERIES THEME LOOP

VIDEO: COUNTDOWN (2min OR 30sec) Start a countdown to begin game 10 minutes prior to service start)

OPTION 1 Interactive Game: You Too?

Display the *You Too?* Slide and gather the kids. Help kids form groups of two or three. **When I tell you to start, find things you have in common with your partners. And don't find obvious things like, "We all have noses." Find hard-to-see things, like "We all love pineapple pizza" or "We can all swim." When your group finds five things in common, you need to jump up and down five times. When your group finds seven things in common, you need to give each other seven high fives. Then, at ten things in common, you need to do a victory dance. And be listening!**



I might shout out, "Switch!," and you'll all need to find new partners. Does anyone have questions?

Allow kids to ask questions. Invite them to review the instructions for finding five, seven, and ten things in common: Jump up and down five times, give each other seven high-fives, and do a victory dance. **Get ready and go!**

Allow kids time to play the game. Add urgency by enthusiastically giving a warning before a switch, saying, "You have 30 more seconds! Find something else you have in common fast! 30 ... 29 ... 28 ..."

Make It Inclusive: Timed activities can trigger anxiousness in some kids. Be sensitive to what works best for each kid in your ministry, and if needed, play the game without any time limits or urgency.

When you've finished playing, gather the kids and ask the whole group this question: **What's the strangest thing you had in common with others?** Allow kids to respond.

Here's something we all share: God wants us to be a family—His family. He brings us together with others who know and love Him. It's easy to see how we're different from other people, but what we have in common is far greater and deeper. We can all love God, all follow Jesus, and all care for each other. Display the Unity Wonder Truth Slide. Today's Wonder Truth is GOD BRINGS US TOGETHER.



OPTION 2 Interactive Game: Dice Discoveries

SUPPLIES: dice

Display the Dice Discoveries Slide and gather the kids. **Let's play a game that helps us discover what we have in common with others in the room! I'll roll this dice.** Hold up the single dice for kids to see. **Whatever number it lands on tells us two things: 1. The number of people you'll get into a small group with (including you), and 2. The number of things you need to discover you have in common with the people in that group. For example, if I roll a three (hold up the side of the dice with three dots), you'll get into a group of three (including you!) and find three things you all have in common. Try not to find obvious stuff like "We all have noses." Find less obvious things like "Mint chocolate chip is our favorite flavor of ice cream," "We are the oldest children in our families," or "Our middle names start with A." Does anyone have questions?** Allow kids to ask questions. **OK. Let's get started!** Roll the dice and call out the number it lands on. If it lands on "1," roll again. Give kids time to get into small groups and discover what they have in common. Play several rounds, rolling the dice each time.



Leader Tip: If your ministry is small, invite all of your leaders (including you!) to play alongside the kids. If there aren't enough people to form a group of six, that's OK! Encourage kids to simply form groups that are as close to the number rolled as possible.

When you've finished playing, gather the kids and ask the whole group this question: **What's the strangest thing you had in common with others?** Allow kids to respond.

Here's something we all share: God wants us to be a family—His family. He brings us together with others who know and love Him. It's easy to see how we're different from other people, but what we have in common is far greater and deeper. We can all love God, all follow Jesus, and all care for each other. Display the Unity Wonder Truth Slide. Today's Wonder Truth is GOD BRINGS US TOGETHER.

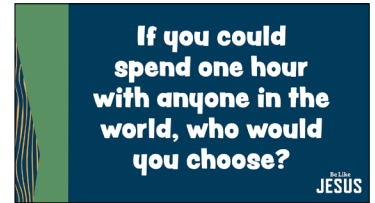


Welcome Question

SUPPLIES: paper, coloring utensils, poster board OR , whiteboard, dry-erase markers (if needed)

SLIDE: WELCOME QUESTION

At service start time, draw kids' attention to the Welcome Question. Invite kids to write answers on the poster board or whiteboard. **When we spend time with other people—no matter who they are—we discover more about what we have in common. Today in God's big story, we'll learn what we have in common with other Jesus-followers**



Small Group

Introduce small group time. While kids are in small group, consider sitting in the groups for a few minutes each. Engage and interact as is appropriate.

Countdown

After about 15 minutes of small group, give a 5 minute warning and begin the countdown.

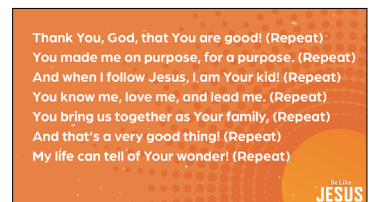
VIDEO: COUNTDOWN

"Hey everyone! Welcome to our Large Group Worship time! My name is _____ and I'm excited to take this time to worship God, review what we just read, and talk about ways we can respond to what we are learning about God! We are going to pray as we prepare our hearts to worship God!"

Declaring God's Wonder

Display the **Unity Declaration Slide**. Read each line boldly and invite kids to repeat after you.

Thank You, God, that You are good! (Kids repeat.)
You made me on purpose, for a purpose. (Kids repeat.)
And when I follow Jesus, I am Your kid! (Kids repeat.)
You know me, love me, and lead me. (Kids repeat.)
You bring us together as Your family, (Kids repeat.)
And that's a very good thing! (Kids repeat.)
My life can tell of Your wonder! (Kids repeat.)



Prayer of Invitation

Lead kids in a prayer of invitation before entering into worship and God's big story: **God, thank You for bringing us together and making us part of Your big story. Through Your Holy Spirit, help us celebrate our differences and not fear them. Help us love each other like You love us. Please speak to us today, God. We're listening. In Jesus' name, Amen.**

Worship

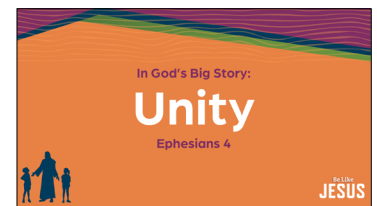
When we follow Jesus, we're all part of God's family, which means we have a lot in common! Today we'll hear how God brings us together and helps us live in unity with each other. Let's praise God now for how amazing He is! Play songs [This Little Light](#), [Your Love For Me](#) and encourage the kids to sing and dance as they praise God.

God's Big Story

[Display the Unity Title Slide](#). Let kids know today's portion of God's big story comes from the book of Ephesians, Explain that today's passages are part of a letter the apostle Paul wrote to help Jesus-followers know the best way to live.

Today we are learning how God brings His people together and helps them grow. As you watch, think about why God gives different gifts to different people and how those differences can help build a stronger church family.

[Watch the God's Big Story Video](#).



LESSON 2 UNITY

EXPERIENCE IT! SCRIPT

Gather the kids together and help them form groups of 3–4. Encourage kids to sit next to the people in their group. **I need your help bringing today’s part of God’s big story to life through human illustrations! Do you know what an illustration is?** Pause for answers. **Yes, an illustration is a picture in a story or book. At several points in the story, I will pause and say, “Illustrate!” But you won’t be drawing pictures of the story. Instead, you’ll stand up and work together with your small group to create an illustration with your bodies. That means that you’ll act out what’s happening in the scene as if it’s a still picture, like you’re human statues. Any questions?** Allow kids to ask questions. Let’s get the story started!

Leader Tip: Consider taking photographs of the human illustrations that kids create during this activity, especially the last one, which shows that we’re all united as God’s family. Post the photos in the room or use them to create a slide show to display before the next lesson. (Just be sure you have photo releases for all the kids.)

After Jesus ascended to heaven and the Holy Spirit came as a powerful helper to the disciples, Jesus appeared to a man named Paul. Jesus changed Paul’s life, and Paul went from being an enemy of God’s people to one of Jesus’ most devoted followers!

Paul traveled to many places, telling people about Jesus and starting churches. OK, it’s time to illustrate! Stand up with your group and act out a human illustration of Paul starting churches and telling people about Jesus. Give kids about 20–30 seconds to work together to make a human illustration. If needed, remind them that a human illustration remains still, like a statue. Admire each group’s creativity. Then invite the kids to sit back down.

After leaving, Paul often wrote letters to teach and encourage the people there. Paul wrote his letter to the Ephesians while he was in prison. He wanted Jesus-followers to pass the letter from church to church in and around the city of Ephesus, so they could all be encouraged in their faith. It’s time to illustrate! Stand up with your group and create a human illustration of Paul writing a letter from prison. Give kids about 20–30 seconds to work together to make a human illustration. When they’re finished, admire each group’s work and invite kids to sit back down.

Paul started his letter by explaining that through Jesus, we’re all children of God. We are part of the same family! This would have been a difficult idea for many of Jesus’ followers to understand because people who became disciples of Jesus often came from very different backgrounds. Some were men and some were women. Some were servants and others were free people. Some were Jewish and others were non-Jews, called Gentiles. They represented many distinct races, ethnicities, and even religious backgrounds. At that time, people usually only interacted with those who were just like them.

Paul explains in his letter that God wants His family to be a different kind of community. He wants it to be made up of men, women, and kids from every nation and tribe, every language, race, and ethnicity. God is the One who makes humans unique, and He wants His children to reflect the differences of all humankind.

But sometimes we let our differences separate us from other members of God’s family. Let’s illustrate! Stand up with your group and create a human illustration that shows how we might let our differences separate us. Give kids about 20–30 seconds to create their human illustrations. This concept is pretty abstract, so if needed, help kids think of scenes they could create. Their illustrations might show people arguing or their group separated into two, based on age or their birth month. Admire each group’s finished illustration and invite kids to sit back down.

God’s heart is for His family to be united! So in his letter to the Ephesians, Paul explains how to keep our differences from dividing us. First, Paul encourages Jesus’ followers to be humble, gentle, and patient with each other. It’s time to illustrate! Stand up with your group and create a human illustration that shows people being humble, gentle, and patient. Give kids about 20–30 seconds to create their human illustrations. When they’re finished, admire each group’s work and invite kids to sit back down.

In Paul’s letter, he encourages Jesus-followers to show love to one another, even when their differences make it hard. He explains that as Jesus’ disciples, the things they have in common are greater than their differences. All Jesus-followers share the same Holy Spirit and the same hope of living forever with God. They all serve the same Lord, Jesus Christ, and have the same faith. They all worship God the Father. With all of these things in common, all Jesus-followers are one family, and that family includes us! Our differences are less than the things we share.

Paul also explains that Jesus’ followers are like the different parts of a single body and that Jesus is the head that leads and guides the whole body. While the parts are different, they’re all valuable! Let’s pause to illustrate! Stand up with your group and create a human illustration of the body of Christ. Remember that Jesus is the head who leads the body, and each person is a different and valuable part! Encourage groups to be creative and have fun with this one. Assure them there is no one right way to illustrate this idea! Groups with younger kids might need a little extra help. Affirm all the groups for their creativity and invite kids to sit back down.

Without feet, we couldn’t walk; without eyes, we couldn’t see. Many differences between us are actually gifts from Jesus that help us serve each other better. Some of those gifts are the unique roles Jesus assigns to His disciples, like being pastors and teachers. These roles are not about ruling over Jesus’ other disciples but serving them. Together all the parts of the body help one another share Jesus’ story with the world. As we work together like one body, we become more loving, and together we begin to be more like Jesus.

God made all of us different, and our differences are not meant to divide us. We are all part of God’s family—united as one because God brings us together. Let’s create one final illustration! With your group, create a human illustration to show that you’re all united as God’s family! Give kids 20–30 seconds to create their human pictures. Admire each illustration and thank all the kids for helping tell God’s big story!

Make It Inclusive: As you explain what it means that we’re the body of Christ, be sensitive to kids with unique needs or physical limitations. For example, if a child in your group is legally blind or vision impaired, consider using a different body part (rather than eyes) as an example.

Connecting the Wonder Truth

Display the Unity Wonder Truth Slide. Our Wonder Truth today is **GOD BRINGS US TOGETHER**. Where did you see our Wonder Truth in action in the story? Allow kids to answer freely.



David was a shepherd, king, and poet who lived during the Old Testament. David wrote many song poems called psalms. In Psalm 133:1, David wrote, “How good and pleasant it is when God’s people live together in unity!” (NIV). Hundreds of years later, Paul wrote similar words to the Ephesians. “The Holy Spirit makes you one in every way,” he told them, “So try your best to remain as one” (Ephesians 4:3).

In Awe of God’s Wonder

Spend a few moments allowing kids to think about the wonder of God’s story.

Paul said that as Jesus-followers, we have differences, but we can work together like the parts of our bodies work together. If you’re a part of the body of Christ, which part do you think you are and why? Expect a few funny comments before kids share deeper insights. (If any comments are inappropriate, redirect the conversation by asking kids how they are like certain body parts, such as the mouth, ears, and hands.)

What are you wondering about as you think about what Paul had to say? What questions do you have that he didn’t answer? Give kids time to think about and share their responses.

Responding in Worship

SLIDE: RESPONDING IN WORSHIP

Talk about ways we can respond to what we are learning with next steps such as tithing, prayer, asking questions, and worship. Encourage kids to ask their SG leaders any questions they were wondering during the lesson.

***Introduce this next song and invite kids to respond and participate in worship. See the "Worship Posture Tutorial" on the RBKids Resource Page.



WORSHIP VIDEO: [I Could Sing of Your Love Forever](#)

Blessing Your Kids

Encourage the kids to hold their hands out in front of them, with palms up, as if their hands are open to receive something. Tell them to listen and receive the blessing as you speak it over them.

Blessing: God knows you—your name, your voice, the sound of your heartbeat. No one else in the world is exactly like you! May we celebrate our differences and live in unity and peace with each other through the power of the Holy Spirit!