

### LESSON 2 UNITY

#### LESSON AT A GLANCE

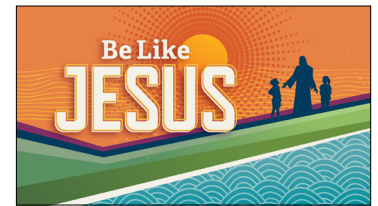
**WONDER TRUTH:** God Brings Us Together

**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

- Welcome Question: If you could spend one hour with anyone in the world, who would you choose?
- Curiosity Questions
- Elementary Interactive Game: You Too?
- Preteen Interactive Game: Dice Discoveries
- Declaring God's Wonder
- Prayer of Invitation and Worship
- God's Big Story: Hear It, Watch It, Experience It!
- Connecting the Wonder Truth
- In Awe of God's Wonder
- Word of Wonder Activity
- Discussion Questions for Elementary Kids and Preteens
- Small Group Prayer Time
- Elementary Responding in Worship: Me and We
- Preteen Responding in Worship: Unique and United
- 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

### Small Group

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

### LESSON AT A GLANCE

**WONDER TRUTH:** God Brings Us Together

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**WORD OF WONDER:** Galatians 5:22–23a

### Pre-Service Connection (15–20 min)

**RESOURCES:** whiteboard, poster paper, or butcher paper, writing utensils, board games or games

[Games & Activities Guide](#)

Small group leaders should be seated in place in their small groups 20 minutes prior to service time. Have activities ready to keep children occupied and engaged WITH you. This time is important to build relationships, welcome new kids, and keep structure in the room - you should be an active participant with them! Learn the kids names, and make sure they all know yours too!

#### As kids arrive ...

Warmly welcome new friends, and introduce them to your group.

Use the Welcome Question and the following "I'm Curious" questions to engage kids. Say "I'm curious.." before each question and give kids an chance to think before answering each one. After each question, consider having kids share their ideas with a neighbor before you call on one or two of them to share with the group.

Consider having a whiteboard or poster for kids to write or draw answers to any of the questions:

- **What is special about the person (or people) you would choose to spend one hour with?**
- **What usually brings you together with new people?**

If you could spend one hour with anyone in the world, who would you choose?

with JESUS

### Small Group Begins

After the Opening Activity or game, Large Group Leader will begin small group time by reading the Welcome Question aloud and inviting everyone to open their Bibles and begin.

## Word of Wonder Activity

### 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 (NIRV)

**SUPPLIES:** Bibles (1 per kid)

**Our Word of Wonder for the Be Like Jesus series lists the good traits that the Holy Spirit grows in us when we follow Jesus—we call these the fruit of the Spirit! Let's say the verse together.**

Introduce kids to Galatians 5:22–23a by reading it several times together.

Invite the kids in your group to form a circle and then to spread out as far apart as they can. (If possible, kids can be across the room from each other!) Say the Word of Wonder together with everyone spread out. Then invite kids to take one step closer together and say it again. Repeat this process multiple times until everyone is standing in a tight huddle and saying the verse together. Their literal togetherness will reinforce that God brings us together!

**Leader Tip:** For Preteens. Challenge older kids to do this activity with their eyes closed or with blindfolds on. To say the verse in unison and to move closer to each other after each round, kids must listen carefully to one another. Listening to each other is an important part of being united as God's family!

## God's Big Story

**SUPPLIES:** Bibles (1 per kid)

**In Ephesians 4, Paul teaches believers how to live together as God's people. He reminds them that following Jesus should change the way they treat one another, leading them to live with humility, patience, love, and unity. Paul also explains that God gives different gifts and roles to different people in the church so they can help one another grow stronger in their faith. Even though believers are different, they are all connected as one body in Christ. As you read, think about why unity matters in God's family and how people with different gifts can work together to help others become more like Jesus.**

Read Ephesians 4:1–6, 11–16 aloud while the kids follow along. Then do one or both of the following:

## Elementary Questions

- **When we follow Jesus, we become children of God! What does that tell us about what God is like?**
- **As Jesus-followers, we're all part of God's family! What are some things about us that are different?** (Possible answers: our ages, boys/girls, our personalities, our likes and interests, our ethnicities, our cultures, where we're from, etc.)
- **As Jesus-followers, what do we all have in common?** (Possible answers: We serve the same Lord Jesus Christ; we worship the same God the Father; we share the same Holy Spirit and hope of living forever.)
- **What's something we can do together as God's family that we can't do on our own?**
- **When we work together as one body, we become more loving. When this happens, who do we start to become more like?** (Jesus)
- **When we follow Jesus, God brings us together as His family! What's your favorite thing about being part of God's family?**

**As Jesus-followers, God makes us one family! He brings us together with other Jesus-followers and with Him. Let's talk with God in prayer now!**

**Leader Tip:** Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control are the fruit of the Holy Spirit's work in followers of Jesus! If kids are new to church or aren't sure who the Holy Spirit is, explain that the Holy Spirit is God's powerful, wise, and loving presence within every Jesus-follower. The Holy Spirit is God!

## Preteen Questions

- **When we follow Jesus, we become children of God! What does that tell us about what God is like?**
- **In Paul's letter to Jesus-followers in Ephesus, what advice does he give for experiencing unity?** (Possible answers: Be humble, gentle, and patient; keep your differences from dividing you by loving one another; unite over the things you have in common.)
- **As Jesus-followers, what do we have in common?** (Possible answers: We serve the same Lord Jesus Christ; we worship the same God the Father; we share the same Holy Spirit and hope of living forever.)
- **What's something we can do together as God's family that we can't do on our own?**
- **When we work together as one body, we become more loving, like Jesus! What's one thing you've done lately to show love to another Jesus-follower? What has someone else done to show you love?**
- **What do you think would happen in this group if we let God bring us together in unity? In our church? In our nation?**

**We live in a broken world where there's a lot of anger and choosing sides. Unity is rare, but we've discovered today where real unity comes from: the love of God flowing in and through us to bring us together. Let's thank God for bringing unity to His followers as we're transformed by His Holy Spirit.**

## Small Group Prayer Time

Invite kids to share any prayer requests or praises. Then invite them to each find a partner and pray for that person. It's OK if the prayers are silent—reassure kids God hears every prayer, no matter how it's spoken. Close the time of prayer, thanking God for bringing the kids together ... and for bringing them to you.

## Elementary Responding in Worship: Me and We

**SUPPLIES:** painter's tape, coloring utensils, paper (1 sheet per kid plus several)

**RESOURCES:** "YAHWEH (No One)" from the [Be Like Jesus Elementary Spotify playlist](#)

**Leader Tip:** Before this activity, test the painter's tape on the wall surface you'll use. Be sure the tape sticks but doesn't mark the surface.

Ahead of time, designate a part of a wall where you'll create a self-portrait cross. You'll be placing kids' artwork on the wall in the shape of a cross using painter's tape to adhere the self-portraits. Tear small strips of tape to be rolled and placed on the back of the kids' artwork. This will make it easier to put them into place during the second half of this activity.

Distribute paper and coloring utensils. Have a few extra pieces of paper on hand since some kids might decide they want a second chance at their artwork.

**I invite each of you to draw a self-portrait. You can draw yourself doing something you enjoy, an activity that says something about who you are. For example, if you love basketball, you might draw yourself spinning a basketball on your finger. Maybe you love to play music, so you might draw yourself playing an instrument. You have your paper and something to draw with. Let's jump in!**

Allow time for kids to draw. Play music from the [Be Like Jesus Elementary Spotify playlist](#). After a few minutes, ask for a few volunteers to show their art to the whole group.

**Your self-portraits are beautiful, and each one is unique! Your artwork shows how we're different in many ways. We like different things, see ourselves in different ways, and have different talents—some of us like to draw, and some of us don't.**

Move to the wall where you'll silently create the cross. Invite kids to bring you their self-portraits and tape the papers to the wall, creating the shape of a cross. If you have a large group of kids, ask a helper to assist you in hanging the portraits. Once kids hand you their papers, encourage them to sit on the floor near the cross. Once all the self-portraits are hung, point to the cross as you say the following: **We're different, but we can have unity because God brings us together. And the cross of Jesus is one place where God does that. Because Jesus gave Himself on the cross and then rose again, we can all have our sins—the wrong things we think, say, and do—forgiven. We can all boldly come to God to honor and praise Him and tell Him what we need.**

**Let's do that now. Let's spend a few minutes thinking about God's love for us. You can talk to Him quietly in prayer or stand and sing or dance in worship to Him. You can thank God for bringing us together as a family—His family—through the power of the Holy Spirit.**

**Make It Inclusive:** Provide a variety of drawing utensils to benefit kids of varying fine motor skill abilities. For example, markers require less muscle strength/pressure than crayons or colored pencils. If possible, also have simple adaptive tools on hand, such as pencil grips.

**Leader Tip:** If you have handheld instruments and/or ribbon wands, set them out for kids to use as they worship through music.

Play “YAHWEH (No One)” from the [Be Like Jesus Elementary Spotify playlist](#). When you reach the three-minute mark, slowly fade the volume until it’s low enough that you can be heard over it easily. Close this time of worship with this prayer: **God, thank You for Your great love. Thank You for bringing us together with each other and with You. You are good, God, all the time. Amen.**

## Preteen Responding in Worship: Unique and United

**SUPPLIES:** butcher paper, writing utensil (prep only), masking or painter’s tape, tempera paint (red, yellow, blue, white, black), large disposable cups filled with water (1 per several kids), paintbrushes (1 per kid), paper bowls (1 per kid), table(s), disposable tablecloth (optional, 1 per table), coloring utensils (optional)

**RESOURCES:** “YAHWEH (No One)” from the [Be Like Jesus Elementary Spotify playlist](#)

Ahead of time, draw a large cross outline on a sheet of butcher paper and tape it to the wall. There should be enough space in the cross for all the kids to paint or color a section of it at the same time. If your group is large, consider preparing multiple crosses. In this activity, each kid will choose a color of paint to represent them. They might choose a preexisting paint color or mix two colors to create something new. Fill large disposable cups with lukewarm water for kids to place dirty paintbrushes in, one per several kids. Consider covering the table(s) with a disposable tablecloth. Set the cups and paints out on the table(s). An alternative to painting is to have kids choose a coloring utensil, like a crayon or marker, to represent them.

**God created every person in a wonderful and unique way! There’s no one else in all the world exactly like you—even if you’re a twin! I invite you to choose or create a color of paint that represents the unique, one-of-a-kind person you are! For example, if you’re friendly and have a lot of energy, you might choose yellow, or you might mix red and yellow to make orange.** Give each kid a paintbrush and a disposable bowl. Invite all the leaders to help kids carefully squeeze a small amount of paint into their bowls. Some kids may want to squeeze one color of paint into their bowls,

while others may want to use their paintbrush to mix two or three colors together. If using coloring utensils rather than paint, invite each kid to choose a color that represents them.

**Leader Tip:** Choose or mix a paint color that represents you! Show it to the kids and explain what the color says about you. Then later in the activity, paint a part of the cross. Kids will love learning more about you!

Once all the kids have chosen (or created) a color, continue. Invite kids to answer the following questions, either with the large group or in smaller groups:

- **What color did you choose or make?**
- **What does that color tell us about you?**

Invite kids to simply hold their bowls and paintbrushes (or coloring utensils) or set them carefully on a table or the floor for a few minutes. **What a beautiful variety of colors! The colors you chose show how we're different in many ways. We all have different personalities and like different things. Some of us like to play sports, while others love music or reading. Even though we're different, we can have unity because God brings us together.** Point to the cross on the wall. **And the cross of Jesus is one place where God does that. Because Jesus died on the cross and then rose again, we can all have our sins—the wrong things we think, say, and do—be forgiven. The cross reminds Jesus-followers that even though we're different, we have a lot in common! We worship the same God, are loved by the same Jesus, and are filled by the same Holy Spirit! Let's create a colorful mural on the cross to help us remember that while we're unique, we're also united through Jesus.**

Invite kids to find one section of the cross to paint (or color) with their unique color. They should try not to overlap their paint color with anyone else's so that in the end, the cross is a mosaic—like a stained-glass window—where every person's unique color can be seen. If there isn't enough space for all the kids to paint the cross at the same time, invite kids to paint in shifts. Or if you prepared multiple crosses, assign kids to each cross. Play "YAHWEH (No One)" from the [Be Like Jesus Elementary Spotify playlist](#) as kids paint (or color). When kids finish, have them place their used paintbrushes in the cups of water. (You or another leader will need to thoroughly wash the brushes after the lesson.)

Once all the kids have contributed their unique color to the cross, step back and admire their collaborative artwork. Then close this time in prayer: **God, thank You for Your great love. Thank You for creating each one of us to be unique, and thank You for bringing us together with each other and with You. You are good, God, all the time. Amen.**

## Blessing Your Kids

**Wonder Ink RESOURCES:** Unity Blessing Slide

Display the Unity Blessing Slide. Speak this blessing over your kids, as a group or as individuals. If you bless kids individually, insert each name into the blessing.

**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!

