

Ephesians Part 4 - Church United



Ephesians 4



The key message of Ephesians 4 is that we, the Church, are united in the body of Christ. In this chapter Paul emphasises the importance of unity, recognises the challenges it brings and outlines practical ways we can 'maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace' (Ephesians 4:3). In today's Bassline we'll consider the part we play in bringing unity in the Church, and how we can play that part only through the power of the Holy Spirit.

You will need:

- Labels Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree
- Paper and pens



Leader's notes:

The Beat activity for today is based on the LADbible game 'Agree to Disagree'.

A statement is read out, and the participants have to decide whether they:

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Undecided (depicted by a dividing line)
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

You can either have two group members sit at a table with glasses of water (just like the original) or divide your entire room into sections the whole group can move to. Read one of the statements below and ask the group to decide how much they agree or disagree. The original responses to the clip are provided as an extra discussion point.

The following statements are taken from the original LADbible clips.



- Pineapple on pizza is delicious. Tom Holland (A) and Zendaya (SD)
- **British humour is funnier than American humour.** Millie Bobby Brown (SA) and Chris Pratt (SD)
- McDonald's breakfast should be available all day every day. Matt Damon (SA) and Emily Blunt (D)
- Flight would be the best superpower to have. The Rock (SD) and Kevin Hart (SD)
- Cats are better than dogs. Chris Evans (D) and Taika Waititi (D)
- Paddington Bear is the most overrated of all the bears. Andrew Garfield (SD) and Florence Pugh (SD)

Leader's notes:

Discuss with the group how they feel when someone disagrees with them. How do they react? Expand the discussion to everyday life. How do young people react when people express opinions that directly contradict their own strongly held beliefs? In what ways are they able to hear the opinions and views of others? Are they willing to listen?



Ask:

What is your response to the following quote?

'Every man should periodically be compelled to listen to opinions which are infuriating to him. To hear nothing but what is pleasing to one is to make a pillow of the mind.'

- St John Ervine





Leader's notes:

Before we begin exploring Ephesians 4, ask the group to skim through the first three chapters and review the notes in their journal. What are the key themes they have noticed so far? Although we are looking at one chapter each week, we want the young people to keep in mind the overarching themes and message of Paul's letter to the Ephesians.

Encourage the group to jot down their responses to Ephesians 4 in their journals.

Say:

The key message of Ephesians 4 is that we, the Church, are united in the body of Christ. In this



chapter Paul emphasises the importance of unity, recognises the challenges it brings, and outlines practical ways we can 'maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace' (Ephesians 4:3).

Read:

- ¹ As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. ² Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.
- ³ Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. ⁴ There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; ⁵ one Lord, one faith, one baptism; ⁶ one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.
- (Ephesians 4:1-6)

Ask:

- What do you think it means to 'live a life worthy of the calling you have received' (Ephesians 4:1)?
- What does our life look like when we live this way?
- In what way are you living 'a life worthy of the calling you have received'? In what areas do you need God's help?
- Why do you think Paul repeatedly uses the word 'one' in Ephesians 4:4-6? What is he trying to emphasise to the church community?

Say:

When we think about the causes of disunity in our church, it can be easy to look to others as the root of the problem. Paul keeps his advice to the Ephesians very personal. He asks them to 'make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace' (Ephesians 4:3).

Leader's notes:

Lead a discussion in which the group considers how or if they personally work towards unity in their church. Other translations of Ephesians 4:3 are provided below to prompt discussion, but the aim is to amplify the group's personal role in seeking unity within the church.

Make every effort to keep the oneness of the Spirit in the bond of peace [each individual working together to make the whole successful].

(Ephesians 4:3 AMP)

Try your best to let God's Spirit keep your hearts united. Do this by living at peace.

(Ephesians 4:3 CEV)

Do your best to preserve the unity which the Spirit gives by means of the peace that binds you together.

(Ephesians 4:3 GNT)

Make every effort to keep yourselves united in the Spirit, binding yourselves together with peace.

- (Ephesians 4:3 *NLT*)



Ask:

- What is your response to the following quote?

'Unless we are working to maintain, defend and develop the unity we already enjoy and to demolish and put behind the disunity we still find ourselves in, we can scarcely claim to be following Paul's teaching.'

Tom Wright, Paul for Everyone

Say:

We may belong to different branches and denominations within the Christian Church, but we are all part of the same body of Christ. Ephesians 4 goes on to explain how, through his grace, Jesus gifted the Church in many different ways.

Read:

⁷ But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. ⁸ This is why it says: "When he ascended on high,

he took many captives and gave gifts to his people."

⁹ (What does "he ascended" mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions? ¹⁰ He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.) ¹¹ So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, ¹² to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up ¹³ until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

- (Ephesians 4:7-13)

Ask:

- What gifts did Jesus give to the Church?
- What is the main purpose for those gifts?

Say:

The gifts given by Jesus are not for our individual glory; they are given to equip the Church for service and build up the body of Christ.

Read:

¹⁴ Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. ¹⁵ Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. ¹⁶ From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

- (Ephesians 4:14-16)



Ask:

- What do you think Paul means when he describes that the believers will 'no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching'?
- Paul describes a wise, mature Church with a strong body working together. How do you think this teaching applies to the many different branches and denominations of the Christian Church?
- After considering your personal role in building unity, what could the wider Church do to move forward in this area?



Leader's notes:

If the group is interested in the similarities and differences among branches of Christianity, they should watch and discuss the clip together. Although it is a long clip, it may address some common misconceptions about the difference between the Roman Catholic and Protestant churches.

Watch:

Understanding Denominations: Christianity (9:50) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x5jHuYjDn6g



Leader's notes:

Ask the group to give examples they have watched of TV shows featuring transformation, eg house renovations, makeovers etc. How are the 'before' and 'after' images usually presented? What are the main features and format points of TV shows like this?

Explain to the group that they are going to create their own transformation show using Ephesians 4:17-32. If they prefer not to act it out, then they can share their ideas for the show instead. This passage urges the believer to put aside their old life, which it describes in detail, and embrace a new life in Christ. The aim of the activity is for the group to establish the key differences between life with and without Christ in a creative way.



Say:

Congratulations! Your show has been picked up by a major TV network, and they want to start filming as soon as possible. By the end of the day, they need to know your choice of name for the show, a presenter, and suggested theme music.





Leader's notes:

Ask the group to reflect on all they have discovered in Ephesians 4. The main message of this chapter is unity, but ask the group to list some of the behaviours we need to live out to achieve this goal. Examples include kindness, forgiveness, speaking truth to each other, etc. List these on a large piece of paper that the whole group can see. Which of these behaviours do they find the most challenging to live out?

Say:

We are never expected to pursue unity in our own strength. It is always through the transforming power of the Holy Spirit. As you listen to the music, focus on a few of the behaviours listed and ask the Holy Spirit to empower you in these areas.

Watch:

Unity Hymn (Official Lyric Video) - Mike Donehey (4:08) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eLRTHgGOShQ



Sau:

In a piece of music, the coda brings the different aspects of the melody, harmonies and bassline to a conclusion. pulls together the different themes and often, but not always, brings resolution to a piece of music.



Ask:

As you reflect on everything you have learned today, what is your coda?

What is the one thing you will take away from the fourth chapter of Ephesians?

Leader's notes:

Give the young people a moment to think about your question and briefly share their coda with the group before the session comes to an end.

