



**WE ARE ONE,  
UNITED IN  
LOVE**

## **CULTURAL AWARENESS WEEK**

JANUARY 19–25, 2020

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## INTRODUCTION—WE ARE ONE

*WE ARE ONE—KNIT TOGETHER IN LOVE WITH FAMILY,  
AT WORK, AND IN THE CORPS.*

Whether it is the Toronto Raptors winning the NBA Finals or the United States women's national soccer team winning the Women's World Cup title, every team has superstar players who perform athletic feats that seem impossible. Each individual player possesses talent and skill, but these teams could not beat their opponents without cooperating. In order to win, they had to become one. In words attributed to Mattie Stepanek, a poet and best-selling author who died of a rare genetic disease at age thirteen, "Unity is strength . . . when there is teamwork and collaboration, wonderful things can be achieved."

Jesus spoke of the importance and blessing that comes from being one with Him, just as He was one with the Father. Before dying for humanity, Jesus spoke to his disciples in the upper room during the event that we all know as the Last Supper. Philip, one of Jesus' disciples, asked the Lord to show them the Father to confirm their faith. Jesus replied, "He who has seen Me has seen the Father;" and he added, "Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father in Me" (John 14:8–11). Beforehand, Jesus asserted that He and the Father were one (John 10:30). As we read in John 14:23–24, there is great hope for those who believe in Jesus. He promises that those who love Him will enjoy a close relationship with Him and with the Father. It goes without saying that being one with Jesus is a huge blessing for Christians.

The third doctrine of The Salvation Army affirms that there is one God, revealed in three persons who are "undivided in essence and co-equal in power and glory." The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are one God. In John 17:11, Jesus prays that his disciples will be one with Him as He is one with the Father. He later adds to his prayer that this blessing would also be available in the future to everyone who puts their faith in Jesus (John 17:20–21). You and I are the recipients of that promise. You and I can be one with Jesus if we accept Him as the way, the truth, and the life (John 14:6). When we accept Jesus as our one and only savior, the Holy Spirit comes to dwell in us. The prayer and promise that Jesus shares with us reveals that we have a relationship with the Godhead. We can share in the unity that belongs to God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit.

The unity that exists between the Father and the Son is a model of the unity that is meant to exist between the church and Jesus. Remember the Old Testament declaration that Moses taught God's people, the Israelites, to make: "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one!" (Deuteronomy 6:4) This statement is known as the Shema, from the Hebrew word for listen. Since the church represents God's people and has been referred to as a new Israel, we are overjoyed by the prospect of being one with God the Father.

The great dream of our Creator is that we be one in love—with our family, at work and in church. Ecclesiastes 4:9 asserts the huge potential in unity by saying "two are better than one." Surely, we can achieve wonderful things when we are one with Christ.

Let us seek to better understand our Lord Jesus Christ's wish that we be one with the Father, as He was. Jesus prayed for his disciples to experience a deep bond. His desire was strong and His words became an expression of the unchanging love that exists between Jesus and the heavenly Father.

## THE BROKEN VASE



that all of them may be one, Father...

John 17:21





## THE BROKEN VASE

### PERSONAL REFLECTION

*...that all of them may be one, Father... that they may be one as we are one. John 17:21,22*

Jesus prayed to the Father on behalf of his followers into the future including me and you. He prayed that we, his followers, would be one, as (in the same way) that he and the Father are one. Our doctrines define that oneness as "undivided in essence, and coequal in power and glory." The word Jesus used for oneness here is the same word he used in Mathew 19:6 to describe the relationship between a husband and wife, "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." Clearly, the kind of oneness that Jesus desired is profoundly more significant than we have perhaps considered and contrasts sharply to the condition of his body today.

## PERSONAL REFLECTION

With this in mind, meditate on this image and consider the following questions:

- In what ways have I, by my actions or by my neglect, contributed to the fractured state of the body of Christ?
- In what ways must I "leave my father and mother", that with which I am familiar, comfortable, indeed these I am most like, and become one with others in Christ's body?
- In light of the oneness that Jesus desires for us, in what ways have I failed to see others as undivided in essence, and coequal in power and glory (greatness)?

## FOR DISCUSSION

- How can we work along with the Father to reconcile (rejoin to its intended condition) the body of Christ in our community?
- In what ways have we contributed, either by our action or by a lack of action, to the fractured condition of the body of Christ in our community?





## UNITY IN LOVE (A CALL TO WORSHIP)

JOHN 17:20-27 (ERV)

*Script By Kyle Higgins*

The scene begins with actors standing. THREE and FOUR should be in the middle of the group. The first section should be lighthearted, quick-paced and fun.

*Staging Option*

1   3   4   2

### ONE

John's recounting of the Last Supper is jam packed with stuff.

### TWO

It takes up four whole chapters!

### THREE

There is an accusation of Judas' betrayal.

### FOUR

Followed by a dramatic exit.

### THREE

An accusation of Peter's denial.

### FOUR

Followed by a dramatic rooster.

### ONE

A promise of the Holy Spirit

### TWO

A promise of Heaven

### FOUR

A command to love one another.

### THREE

And don't forget the foot washing!

### TWO

After all that excitement, Jesus finishes dinner with a prayer.

### THREE

Not for himself

### FOUR

Not for the disciples

### ONE

But for us. For those that believe in Him.

Staging Option

3 1 2 4

**TWO**

This is what He said:

*(ONE and TWO cross to DSC and go down to their knees. THREE and FOUR stand behind them with a hand on the kneelers' shoulder.)*

*(This prayer should be earnest and spoken as if it was with one voice. The energy and pace should build throughout. Use each "All" line as a guidepost to increase the energy.)*

**ALL**

(praying)

Father

**ONE**

I pray not only for these followers

**TWO**

But also for those who will believe in me because of their teaching.

**ALL**

Father!

**THREE**

I pray that all who believe in me can be one.

**FOUR**

You are in me and I am in you.

**TWO**

I pray that they can also be one in us.

**ALL**

Then, the world will believe that you sent me.

**ONE**

I have given them the glory that you gave me. I gave them this glory so that they can be one, just as you and I are one!

**THREE**

I will be in them, and you will be in me. So they will be..

**ALL**

Completely one!

**FOUR**

Then the world will know that you sent me and that you loved them just as you loved me.

**ALL**

Father!

**TWO**

I want these people you have given me to be with me in every place I am.

**FOUR**

I want them to see my glory

**ONE**

The glory you gave me because you loved me before the world was made.

**ALL**

Father, you are the one who always does what is right

**TWO**

The world does not know you

**THREE**

But I know you

**FOUR**

And these followers of mine,

**ALL**

know that you sent me.

**TWO**

I showed them what you are like, and I will show them again!

**THREE**

Then they will have the same love that you have for me

**ONE**

*(with finality)*

And I will live in them.

**TWO**

*(stands up and takes a step DS. Others actors hold the last beat of the prayer)*

Let Jesus' call for unity resonate in our hearts as we move into a time of worship.

*Exit*

*Staging Option*

3 4  
1 2





## **JUNIOR CHURCH**

HEBREWS 11:7A (ERV)

**THEME** FAMILY TEAMWORK!

### **CLASS PURPOSE**

During this lesson the children will learn the importance of God's love in the family. They will learn of how Noah listened to God and followed His instructions, saving his family. Children will learn how Noah's family worked together to accomplish a great task.

**MEMORY VERSE** HEBREWS 11:7A (ERV)

"Noah was warned by God about things that he could not yet see. But he had faith and respect for God, so he built a large boat to save his family."

**GROUP ACTIVITY** A FAMILY COLLAGE

Have the children create a collage of family members helping each other. Use pictures cut from a variety of magazines. During this exercise the children will work together to complete the project.

### **MATERIALS NEEDED FOR CRAFT**

Large poster board, color pencils and markers, various magazines, small scissors, and glue or glue stick.

### **SNACK FOR THE CLASS**

Please prepare some brownies in advance using the recipe provided below. During the story time you will have a moment to share the recipe and eat the brownies. Provide some milk too.

### **BROWNIE RECIPE**

#### **Ingredients**

- 1/2 cup + 2 tablespoons salted butter melted
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 2 large eggs
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 1/2 cup melted milk chocolate chips
- 3/4 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/4 cup unsweetened cocoa powder
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup milk chocolate chips

## Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Line a metal 9x9 pan with parchment paper.
2. Pour melted butter into a large mixing bowl. Whisk in sugar by hand until smooth, 30 seconds.
3. Add in eggs and vanilla extract. Whisk 1 minute.
4. Whisk in melted chocolate until combined and smooth.
5. Use a rubber spatula to stir in flour, cocoa powder, and salt until just combined. Stir in whole chocolate chips.
6. Pour into prepared pan and smooth out.
7. Bake in the preheated oven for 30 minutes. Let cool in pan 30 minutes before slicing.

## TEACHING THE LESSON

Today, I'd like to talk to you about a family in the Bible that remained together and helped each other by building a boat that saved them and the animals they cared for. Noah was a faithful father. He heard the voice of God and followed some specific instructions that God gave him.

Please have the children read verse by verse the portion of the scripture found in Genesis 6:9-21 (ERV Version). The children should take turns reading.

When the children are done reading, say, "Noah had three sons. What were their names?" Allow time for them to answer the question. Then say, "Correct! Their names were Shem, Ham and Japheth. God asked Noah to build a big boat according to very specific measurements and instructions."

Say, "How many of you like to bake? What is your favorite dessert?" Allow time for the children to respond. Then say, "All desserts have various ingredients, and they need to be well measured, so that we can have a delicious treat at the end like brownies."

Show the children the recipe of the brownies you prepare for them. Ask one child to read the recipe and another child to read the instructions. During this time, they can enjoy their snack and milk as you continue teaching the class.

Say, "The boat that Noah built with his family was huge. It was called an Ark. It was three stories high. God made the materials available to Noah to build it. So how many decks did the boat have?" Allow response. Say, "Three decks. Correct!" Continue, "So, now everything was in place. The Bible says, in Genesis 7:5, that 'Noah did everything the Lord told him to do.'"

Ask, "Do we do all the Lord tell us to do?" Allow time for the children to respond. Continue, "Sometimes, we want to do what we want and then we don't like to pay the consequences of our actions. Remember Noah had a job to do. What was his job?" Allow response. Say, "Yes! To build the Ark. He did it to save his family."

Say, "Genesis 7:7-9 tells us that Noah's family survived the flood and so did the animals, too. Let us read it together." Again, allow the children to take turns reading the scriptures. Then, say, "Noah's family entered the Ark, and they all survived. The family decided to remain together. They helped Noah to complete the Ark. If Noah's wife or sons decided not to help him or not to enter the Ark, it would have been the end of their family and of all the families on earth. But, thank God that they all obeyed God and listened to their father Noah!"

Ask the children, "What do you think is needed to have family members who help each other like Noah's family did?" Allow time for the children to answer the question. Then, say, "To have a family that helps each other, every family member needs to make an important decision. That decision is to love one another and to obey what the word of God says."

Jesus says, in John 13:34-35 (ERV), 'I give you a new command: Love each other. You must love each other just as I loved you. All people will know that you are my followers if you love each other.'

Ask, "A family that loves each other enjoys doing things together. What things do you enjoy doing together with your family?" Allow time for the children to respond. Then, continue, "I need a volunteer to read Genesis 7:1-4." Have one child read all 4 verses. Then, say, "Not only was Noah's family saved, but two of every animal species were also saved." Ask the children, "Can you share with me the names of different species of animals that you know, such as birds, fish, or mammals?" Allow time for them to respond. You may show the following VeggieTales video, available on YouTube; it portrays the moment that the animals entered the Ark: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nui0Wo4K11g>.

Say, "Noah's family and the animals entered the Ark safely. Noah did everything God told him to do. Some of us have problems when our parents ask us to do something around the house. Right? Like, cleaning our rooms, doing the dishes, putting away our toys, or taking out the trash. Do you know why our parents ask us to do those things?" Allow the children time to respond.

Now, say, "Your parents are asking you to help with the house chores because they love you, and they are teaching you to be responsible with what you have and teaching you the importance of teamwork as a family. If I had ignored the instructions to make the brownies, if I had put salt instead of sugar into the mix, would the brownies have tasted any good at all? No. They would have tasted awful. We must follow instructions and especially the instructions that our parents give us so that things can go well with us! They want what is best for us. So, for this week, I want you to remember to obey your parents. Remember that, by respecting them, you are showing them how much you love them. And, Jesus is pleased with you when you do that!

## CLOSING TIME OPTIONS

### Option #1

At this time, you can show the following 5-minute video to wrap up your time together: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gGAcaFfWmiQ> (Noah's Ark by Lucy Cousins). It is a brief summary of today's story. Then, have a word of prayer with the children.

### Option #2

Pray with the children. Let them repeat the following prayer after you:

"Lord Jesus, thank you for loving me and my family. I ask you to help me to listen to your words like Noah did. Help me to listen to my parents, too. Please, God, be with me and my entire family every single day. Help us to always love each other, just like you love us! In Jesus name, I pray! Amen!"

## REFERENCES

1. Version of the Bible: Easy-to-Read Bible [www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com)
2. YouTube Videos:
  - VeggieTales: Noah's Ark - We Welcome You Aboard <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nui0Wo4K11g>
  - Lucy Cousins: Noah's Ark <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gGAcaFfWmiQ>
3. Best Brownie Recipe Ever: <https://thestayathomechef.com/brownie-recipe/>





## JUNIOR SOLDIER ACTIVITIES

AGE GROUP

Elementary School

TIME NEEDED FOR ACTIVITIES

Approximately 15–20 Minutes Each

### ACTIVITY 1: GAME *"SEEK-AND-HIDE"*

#### DIRECTIONS

Participants will play a game that is a reverse version of hide-and-seek. It requires 2 or more players.

- First, let the children choose who is going to be the "it" person.
- Then, the rest of the players must cover their eyes and count up to 100. They can count in 2s or even in 5s until they get to 100.
- Meanwhile, the "it" person will need to find a place to hide. "It" will need a good location.
- When they are finished counting, the rest of the players will search for the "it" person.
- As each player finds the "it" person they will need to stay there hiding with the "it" person until everyone discovers the same hiding place.
- Once all of them have reached the hiding place, the game is over.

If there's time, the first player who found first the "it" person will become the "it" person on the next game.

#### TAKEAWAY

We can try to hide from each other all we want but we need each other as a community, church, and family. Love is what unites us together. When we get lost, our loved ones search for us, because they love us. We unite because of the amazing love of Christ.

### ACTIVITY 2: LESSON *"UNITED IN LOVE"*

#### SUPPLIES

A Jigsaw Puzzle

#### LESSON

Today we are going to learn about being One—United in Love.

Many of you like to do jigsaw puzzles. Jigsaw puzzles come with different amounts of pieces in the box. They can have as few as 10 pieces or as many as 1,000 pieces or more. *What can you tell me about the shapes of the puzzles? Are they the same or are they different?* (Allow response.) *Do puzzles and their pieces all do the same thing?* (Allow them to share their ideas.)

Bring a jigsaw puzzle to the class for them to look at and even to put together. You see that all of these pieces have different shapes and sizes, but they have one thing in common. *What do they have in common with each other?* (Allow them to share.) The main purpose of a jigsaw puzzle is to connect and be united together. *What happens when they unite together?* (Allow response.) When the puzzle is finished, you have created a picture and all of the pieces have come together for the same purpose to create the picture.

In John 17:20–23, we read Jesus praying,

*“My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one—I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.*

From the beginning of time, God has wanted us to be united together. We are to unite for one purpose, just like the puzzle. *Why do you think we, as people who follow Christ Jesus, unite?* (Allow children to share their ideas.) *Why do you think that God wants us to unite?* (Allow them to respond.) Here’s the word: *love*.

We read in the passage earlier that Jesus prayed, “My prayer is not for them alone.” God did not intend for us to be solitary individuals—alone. He was not only praying for his original disciples, but for us, too. He intended for us to be united together in love.

Jesus came into the world to show us what love is. When we love others, we get to share with them the love of Christ. *Can you share with me how you can show love at your church? How about in your community and with your family? What are some of the things that you can do to show your love? What things can you do together?* (Allow them to share their ideas.)

Now that we have shared some of the things that unite us with our church, community, and family, let’s take an opportunity to share what things we need to be careful of. *What do you think can prevent us from being united in love?* (Allow them to share.) *What can we do to make sure such things do not happen?* (Allow them to share.) *Remember the puzzle? What happens when we are missing parts of the puzzle?* (Allow sharing.) The puzzle becomes incomplete, and we are not able to finish it.

The purpose of completing the puzzle is disappointed if it is missing parts. It is the same with us. God wants us to be united. He does not want people to be missing out on His wonderful love. We need to reach out to people, whether they come to our corps, live in our community or even our family. We want them all to be united with God in love.

Once a puzzle is completed and all of the pieces are united, we get to see a beautiful picture. We get to see the end result of the puzzle. *What do you think is the end result once we are united in love with our church, community, and family?* (Allow them to share.)

## ILLUSTRATION

Jesus was a great example because he was united in love with His disciples. The disciples came from different places and had different gifts. They were unique in their own backgrounds and talents. But, they were part of Jesus’ ministry, and they united in love for their friends and their community. As Jesus sent them, they united to go out and share the love of God. They were united in love with Christ.

Let it be our desire to come alongside other people in love and to share the wonderful love of Christ with others by our words and by our behavior. Jesus continued his prayer for his followers, including us, with these words (John 17:25–26):

“Righteous Father, though the world does not know you, I know you, and they know that you have sent me. I have made you[e] known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them.”

## **ACTIVITY 3: CRAFT** *“HEART OF UNITY”*

### **SUPPLIES**

- Reproducible Heart Puzzle cutout design printed on card stock for each child
- Crayons or color pencils
- Scissors
- Optional: baggies or envelopes to hold the pieces for use at home

### **PREPARATION**

Have all of the materials ready and prepared for every child. Provide a sample of the finished product.

### **DIRECTIONS**

1. Encourage the children to be creative in designing their jigsaw puzzle.
2. They can color their heart to represent unity in love with our church, community, and family.
3. When they have finished coloring the heart, they can cut out the shapes of the puzzle pieces.
4. Once they are cut apart, let them connect the puzzle together.

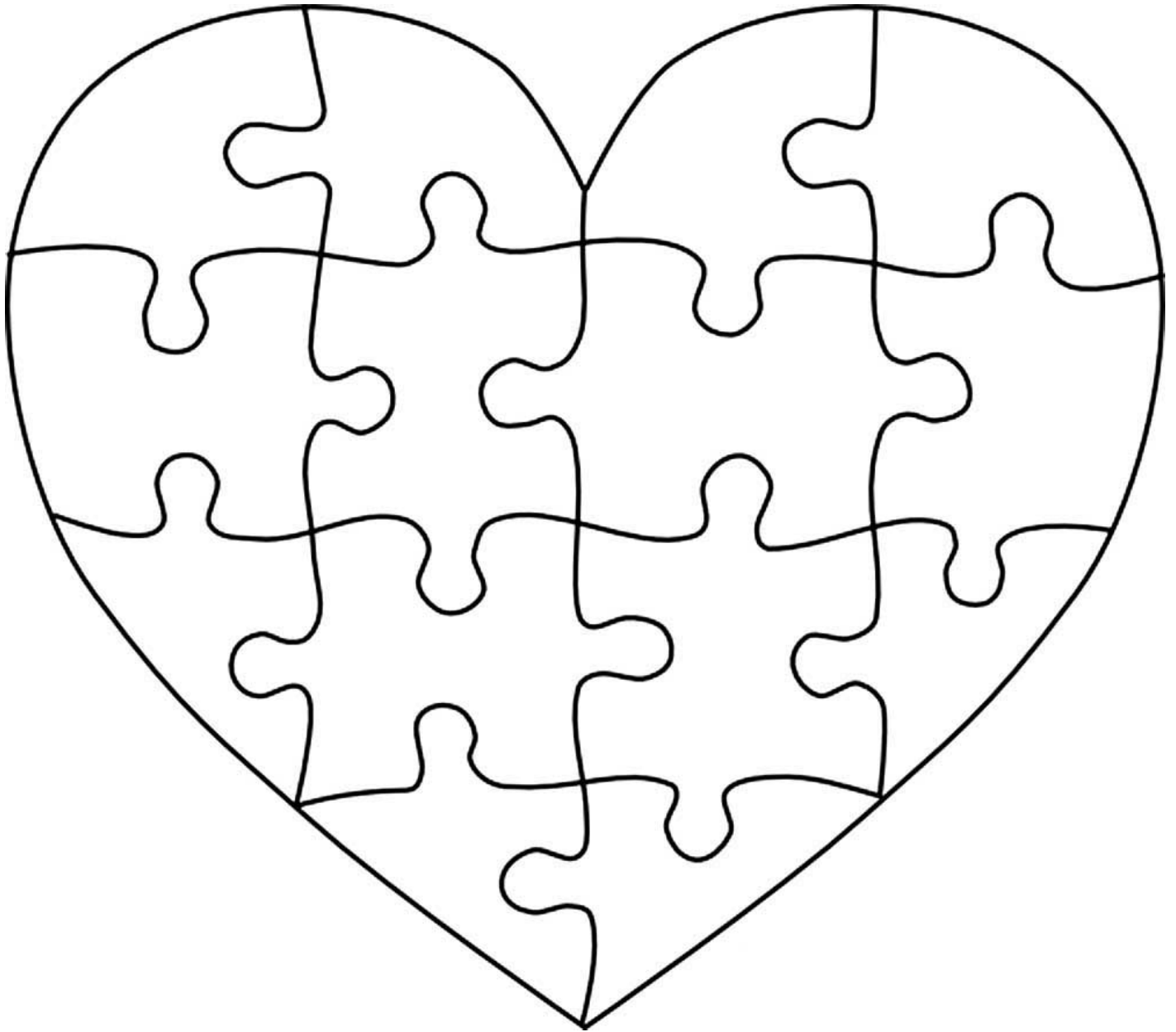
### **SAY**

Now that we have finished creating the puzzle, we can see the various ways that we can be united in love as a church, community, and family. You can use this puzzle as an invitation for a friend, neighbor, or family member to come and visit with you at the Corps. It is a great opportunity to share how we can be united in love with God.



# HEART OF UNITY

*"THAT THEY MAY ALL BE ONE." – JOHN 17:21*





## ON UNITY

### BIBLE STUDY JOHN 17

**Note to Facilitators:** Start by reading the text aloud, then ask the questions one at-a-time and be patient. Do not try to answer the questions for participants, but give them the space and time they need to respond. Make sure everyone knows that all discussion will be held in confidence.

## INTRODUCTION & SETTING

The disciples had been with Jesus for three years at the point where we read John 17. At the beginning of his ministry Jesus had called them to follow him. Jesus told them of themselves, of his Father, and of the Kingdom of God. He told them many things.

Jesus taught them throughout the course of his ministry. In fact, in the Sermon on the Mount, when Jesus sat down to teach his disciples, it says, "He opened his mouth." This phrase seems obvious and unnecessary, because we know that you must open your mouth to speak. But the Greek verb translated *began teaching* indicates that he not only taught on the mount but continually throughout his ministry with his disciples. That is, he continually reinforced his words to them at every opportunity. This is why we know that the disciples could be faithful witnesses of his words and his actions, because they saw and heard him first-hand.

When Jesus prays in John 17, the last supper had ended, and Jesus and the disciples had left the upper room (14:31). Chapters fourteen through seventeen of John's Gospel represent what is known as Jesus' Farewell Discourse.

## UNITY WITH GOD REDEEMS THE PAIN OF SOLITUDE

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What fears or anxieties might being left alone or facing life by yourself cause you?
2. What actions have you seen in others that might have been motivated by fear of being left alone?
3. Why do you think that Jesus told the disciples that he would not leave them as orphans (John 14:18)?

The disciples may have been nervous about Jesus's departure, but they were assured by their Master that He would not leave them alone even though He had to depart. He said, "But very truly I tell you, it is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you" (John 16:7).

Jesus promised that he was departing to prepare a place. He said, "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am" (John 14:3).

Jesus also affirmed that the disciples knew the way to where Jesus was going. In the scripture that points this out, Jesus said, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no one comes to the Father, but by me" (John 14:6).

The disciples grasped Jesus' claim of being the only way to salvation, to the Father, and to eternal unity. We even find the Apostle Peter stating, "And in none other is there salvation: for neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). This identifies Jesus as the only path to salvation.

After making this claim, Jesus asserted his unity with the Father in John 14:7-9: "If you know me, then you will also know my Father;" and "Whoever has seen me has seen the Father."

## UNITY WITH GOD REDEEMS THE PAIN OF PURPOSELESSNESS

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. *When you were a child thinking about your future, what did you want to be when you grew up?*
2. *What leaders in your life helped you to understand who you were as a person? Coaches usually instill confidence in an athlete's ability and unique skills. Teachers of the arts see creativity in their students and strive to cultivate that creativity. Parents are the first examples that children see and emulate. What purpose, if any, did your parents or guardians instill in your life?*

Jesus instilled purpose in the disciples. He first sought the disciples and then called them out from their respective environments. He instilled value in the disciples. In the beginning, Adam and Eve had purpose—to be caretakers of the Garden of Eden. Adam named the animals and differentiated each from the others. Eve became a mother as well as a fitting companion. Each part of creation had its own role and lived in blessed unity with God until sin and death entered through man's rebellion.

God then called out to Adam, "Where are you?" This calling was not because God did not know. Rather, there was a disruption in the unity. God wanted Adam to explain why he was now hiding instead of meeting God as had been the practice many times before.

God still asks you today, "Where are you?" You may answer physically or metaphorically, with regard to your spiritual life. We may also ask, "Where were the disciples?" God called Adam and Eve. Jesus called the disciples. Who else can you think of that Jesus called?

When God calls us to Himself, we find value and purpose in that unity—first, because God is love and life and, second, because God has given us a mandate that we should *"love one another"* (John 15:12). In unity with God, we have peace unto purpose. As the Father has sent Him, so Jesus sends us; and, as He sends us, He equips us. In His prayer, He said, *"As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world"* (John 17:18).

## UNITY, PURPOSE, AND LOVE

Our purpose is to be salt and light and to show the world God's love. As believers, we are to show ALL people, regardless of color, ethnicity, language, or other distinction the same love that God has shown to us. Our unity in Christ requires us to face the enduring issue of racism. Many years ago, churches used Scripture to justify racism and slavery. Whole sections of Scripture were ignored or used by "missionaries" to influence slaves.

When the Passover meal was finished, and Jesus had walked outside of Jerusalem, he may have looked up at the wall and seen the vines. He and his disciples might have seen them hundreds of times. This time, he used them as an object lesson. He said, *"I am the vine, you are the branches: whoever remains in me, and I in him, the same brings forth much fruit: for without me you can do nothing"* (John 15:5).



Jesus is the vine. He is the source of life for the community, for the “whosoever,” for Jews and, as prophesied, for all humanity.

How can we, as members of the body of Christ, exclude other members of his body? Our purpose is to love all, so how can we exclude people on the basis of their birth? Eternity is a long time to live with someone with whom you are uncomfortable or whom you do not like, so racists should plan to be quite unhappy for eternity. In all seriousness, ask God to search your heart and heal it of hatred and any prejudice you may harbor.

## UNITY WITH GOD REDEEMS POWERLESSNESS

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. *Have you ever been asked to do a task for which you felt that you lacked the necessary skill or knowledge? How did that make you feel?*
2. *Have you ever been part of a team? How do you imagine that being part of a highly skilled team would make you feel about your own ability or lack thereof?*
3. *Have you ever been trained in a field of skill and knowledge and felt confident to operate in that field afterward? Describe the difference that made.*

The prayer in John 17 is generally known as Jesus’ Farewell or High Priestly Prayer. In it, Jesus intercedes for the newly forming church—His body. It is the longest prayer of Jesus in any of the Gospels.

In this High Priestly Prayer, Jesus asks God for unity for his disciples and he extends this prayer for unity toward any and all believers—even us (John 17:20). Unity with God removes our sense of unworthiness and replaces it with power—power because we have been given purpose. Part of our purpose is to be ambassadors for God (2 Corinthians 5:11–21). Ambassadors are diplomats of the highest rank, formally representing the head of state, with full authority to represent the government.

Moses recorded God’s promise to the Israelites in Deuteronomy 31:8, stating, “He will never leave you nor forsake you; do not be discouraged.” Being on Jesus’ team means not only that we have been given the honor of serving as an ambassador for God but also that God now works through us. Paul wrote, “For it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose” (Philippians 2:13).

Fear may come when we are asked to do things which require strength and willpower, but there is an answer—God encouraged His People, “Don’t fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name; you are Mine” (Isaiah 43:1). Sometimes we may experience lingering fear, anxiety, worry, obsessive thoughts; but, as we walk with God, we know that He redeems those. We know that God will never leave us or abandon us, and so our privilege is to walk in faith and to walk free from fear.

Jesus has given us a PURPOSE: to remain in the vine, to bear fruit, and to call others to follow Jesus. The Amplified Bible version of John 14:12–15 reads as follows:

*I assure you and most solemnly say to you, anyone who believes in Me [as Savior] will also do the things that I do; and he will do even greater things than these [in extent and outreach], because I am going to the Father. And I will do whatever you ask in My name [as My representative], this I will do, so that the Father may be glorified and celebrated in the Son. If you ask Me anything in My name [as My representative], I will do it. If you [really] love Me, you will keep and obey My commandments.*

Jesus gives us power as Ambassadors for Christ to speak on his behalf, sharing the reality of the Kingdom and that sins are forgiven through his blood. That is our proclamation of power. Without it, we have no power within ourselves to forgive anything or not to forgive. We have power to go boldly before the throne, and we have power to teach, rebuke, correct, and encourage.

Paul speaks of the power available to believers in 2 Corinthians 10:3–5, which reads,

*For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.*

In conclusion, we know that King Jesus gives peace and wants us to be united among ourselves as well as united with the Father.



## **SHELTERED BY THE MOST HIGH**

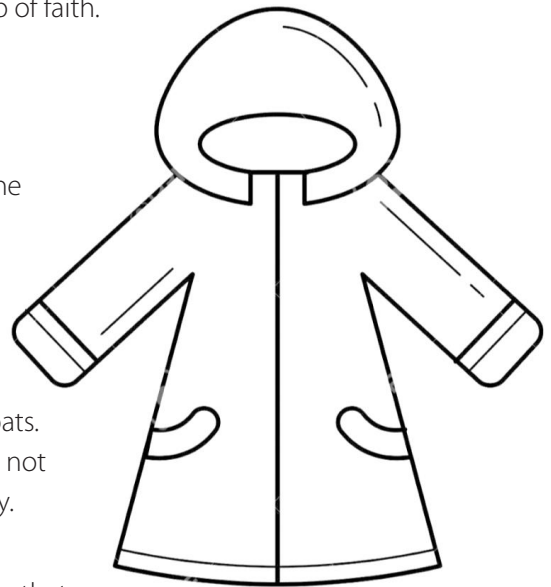
*WOMEN'S PROGRAM AND DEVOTIONAL  
PSALM 91*

### **FOCUS**

In the shelter of the Most High, each one of us has a place. It doesn't matter who we are or where we come from. We can all gather under his shadow and share in the fellowship of faith.

### **PREPARATION**

Purchase felt fabric and cut out miniature coats, then affix them to the printed program as the cover decoration. See pattern to the right. Decorate as desired or leave plain.



### **DECORATION**

- Decorate with coats. Many of our Corps receive donations of coats. You can use what you have on-hand for the decoration. It does not matter whether they are used or new, as long as they smell okay. Use them as you wish, hang them, use a coat rack, be creative.
- Ask the women to bring flags from their countries or other items that represent their cultural heritage. Remember: It is a program for cold weather.
- Dress the tables and prepare a place to set the flags of the represented countries and other cultural items on display.

### **SNACKS**

Preferably hot snacks, like soup, coffee, tea, and hot cocoa.

### **OTHER PROGRAM IDEAS AND ADVICE**

- Invite the women beforehand to bring their favorite coats. Make a runway, so women can model their coats. Play catwalk music.
- Talk about the history of your coat. Tell the story behind it. Where did it come from? What made you select it? This should be an enjoyable time.
- Read different versions of Psalm 91.
- Be sure to offer a warm welcome.
- The Most High is listening. Open with prayer.
- We are covered with His blessings. Close with a final prayer.



## DEVOTIONAL *SHELTERED BY THE MOST HIGH*

***Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. —Psalm 91:1***

Winter is a time for coffee, chocolate, ginger, soup, chili, a whole slew of warm drinks and foods to warm us. In regard to clothing, we have hats, scarfs, face masks, gloves, earmuffs, and lined pants to keep us warm. You can even buy salt to put on your hands and feet. Homes are protected from the cold by insulation. Even roofs are protected to keep us warm inside.

Consider the outdoors, too. Birds fly close together for strength and warmth. And, if you are outdoors, you walk faster to your destination so you can get warm. Sometimes, it is so cold that you even have to make a stop before arriving.

Some of us have a blanket or other article of comfort for when we read or watch TV.

How wonderful it is that you and I can take shelter in the Most High. As Psalm 91, verse 1 says, "Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High ..."

To take shelter with the Most High means wanting to be with God, longing for his presence, and yearning for God. Like Psalm 42:1 says, "As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, my God."

To take shelter with the Most High is to have "communion" with God through His word. As Psalm 1:2 says, "But whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and who meditates on his law, day and night."

Whoever knows God loves him and longs for him. Whoever wishes to be close to God will live under his care, in his company, his protection, and his shelter.

Although everyone else might leave us, God is always with us. Hebrews 13:5 says, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you." He is a secure shelter.

We desire to enter his presence. He is our home. Can you imagine what it is like to live with him and him with you?

Whoever seeks this shelter may face winds and storms, but he will guard you forever (Matthew 28:20).

Yet, we must decide to be inside the shelter of his love. Again, in the words of Psalm 91:

***Whoever lives in the shelter of the Most High ...***

Whoever lives with Him will have a refuge. Listen to the same verse in various translations:

*New Living Translation—"Those who live in the shelter of the Most High ... Almighty ..."*

*New International Version (1990)—"Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High ... Almighty ..."*

*Today's Living Bible—"We live within the shadow of the Almighty"*

## CONCLUSION AND PRAYER

As we pray, let us tell the Lord, "I want to live with you, I want to reside with you."

This means that we want to have communion with him here, now, and always. We want Him to be our shelter.

There may be many cold, distressing situations in our lives (health, finances, relationships, etc.). But, we can all come into his shelter without distinction of condition, color, or race. His love endures (Hebrews 13:1, John 14:23), and he comes to live with us. There is a place for each one of us under the shelter of the Most High. Let our answer be: Yes, I want to live under this generous and loving shelter.



## LET US BE UNITED IN CHRIST

SERMON  
JOHN 17:20-26 (NLT)

### OUTLINE

1. United Like Jesus (Verses 21a, 22b)
2. United as Witnesses (VERSES 20, 21b)
3. United for Salvation (VERSES 23b, 26)

### INTRODUCTION

In colonial America, European colonists who faced a shortage of resources used old clothing to make garments, coats, and blankets. Amish women handmade quilts using this technique when someone was getting married. It was very delicate work and families began selling them in the markets as works of art. They were made of patches of cloth in different colors, shapes, and materials that, once sewn together, created a unique and especially valuable work of art.

The work of art that Christ made with our lives is like this. Only through His love can we attain real and precious unity in Christ.

#### 1. UNITED LIKE JESUS (VERSES 21A, 22B)

***In his high priestly prayer, Jesus said, "I pray that they will all be one, just as you and I are one—as you are in me, Father, and I am in you" (John 17:21a).***

***Jesus also expressed his hope: "... so they may be one as we are one" (John 17:22b).***

It's great when everything goes well, but when we know that our days are coming to an end, things change. Jesus' final hours on Earth were approaching, so there was no better time to teach what was good and what was essential. This prayer records his farewell and what Jesus wanted to teach as important.

It's wonderful to remember that Jesus had a close group of companions who were with him daily, during the good times and the bad.

Jesus was one with His Father, which is why he declared, "My Father and I are one" (John 10:30). It is in this final hour that the Lord gives us an instructive prayer. He wanted to pray for his disciples, give them a universal prayer so that they would be like Him. With it, He was giving them an example: Himself.

He wanted His disciples to feel his closeness. As James said, "Come close to God, and God will come close to you" (James 4:8). Jesus prayed, "Holy Father, you have given me your name; now protect them by the power of your name so that they will be united just as we are" (John 17:11b). He wanted more than just closeness, He wanted them to experience that unity. His purpose: "that they may be united just as we are."

As John explained in his first epistle, “God is love” (1 John 4:8). It’s not just that God *has* love; He *is* love—the verb *and* the noun. How indescribable is His love! (Romans 11:33) “For this is how God loved the world...” (John 3:16).

Jesus’ life was a life of prayer. “But Jesus often withdrew to the wilderness for prayer” (Luke 5:16). Big events and important decisions were preceded by prayer: Before His ministry, when He was tempted (Luke 4:1–2). At the time of choosing His disciples (Luke 6:12). Before His sacrifice on the cross, He prayed for what was important and essential in the lives of his beloved people (John 17).

Jesus asked the Father for great blessings for His followers. He knew that His Father always heard Him. That’s why He said, “Father, thank you for hearing me” (John 11:41). Among those requests were love, unity, and peace. And, he especially prayed “that they may be one” (John 17:22). This request was granted and achieved with the first believers. We can see this in Acts 4:32, which reads, “All the believers were united in heart and mind.”

Jesus’ relationship of unity with His Father was the same relationship He wanted for His disciples, believers, and the church in general. The unity Jesus had with His Father was through love. The unity He claimed for His disciples allowed them to have a heart-to-heart relationship, through which they would love each other as they loved Him.

Only by faith can lives be transformed. Paul said it quite clearly in Romans 5:1, which reads, “Therefore, since we have been made right in God’s sight by faith.” Unity through love only comes by the power of His Holy Spirit (Romans 5:5).

Unity is so important that geese and some other birds can resist even the strongest winds because they fly together in a “V” shape. That’s how they do it, and that’s what Jesus wanted for His followers—that we become one.<sup>1</sup>

LET US BE UNITED LIKE JESUS, AND LET US ALSO BE ...

## 2. UNITED AS WITNESSES (VERSES 20, 21B)

***Jesus pleaded with the Father, “I am praying not only for these disciples but also for all who will ever believe in me through their message” (John 17:20).***

***Jesus continued, “And may they be in us so that the world will believe you sent me” (John 17:21b).***

*What is a witness?* It is someone who gives testimony of something—someone who sees or experiences something, then tells about it. *Why are there witnesses?* So that the world will believe. It is quite a responsibility, but it is one of the purposes of being united. Even Jesus, in John 13:35, affirmed, “Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples.”

Jesus wanted believers to reflect His love; He wanted the world to see, believe, and know Him through the unity, fellowship, and love that exists among His followers. It’s possible that this didn’t happen often among His followers, but Jesus wanted to teach them that, no matter what position they held or where they were, the world would believe only if it saw that they belonged to Jesus’ circle.

The best way to coexist was to display the unity and togetherness they shared, showing His love among them. The mutual love and unity Jesus’ followers share is His business card to the world.

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<sup>1</sup> See explanation in Ed Yong, “Birds That Fly in a V Formation Use An Amazing Trick,” in National Geographic (January 15, 2014) at <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/science/phenomena/2014/01/15/birds-that-fly-in-a-v-formation-use-an-amazing-trick/>.



Jesus wish wasn't for believers to teach, keep, wear, show, or do just anything. No other manifestation would suffice. The truth of the faith couldn't be seen merely through rituals and ceremonies. Jesus was asking for something profoundly simple yet powerful—that "they be in us so that the world will believe you sent me" (John 17:21). He wanted us to be an example. He expected us to be witnesses, representatives, to open the eyes of the world—to reflect Jesus.

In his first epistle, John pleaded, "Dear friends, let us continue to love one another, for love comes from God" (1 John 4:7a). He later continued, "Dear friends, since God loved us that much, we surely ought to love each other" (1 John 4:11). As witnesses of Christian unity, believers need to overcome the differences, positions, and stereotypes among us and be united together through Jesus' love.

Unity among Christ's followers may have been in danger. That could be why Jesus prayed to the Father that they might show God's love—that they might show that the relationship among them was one of unity and love.

His disciples had different jobs, stories, and backgrounds. They also hailed from different places. So, only love could break down the barriers between them. Jesus wanted them to show the world that they had been changed by Him and, in this way, the world would believe that Jesus was the One sent by the Father.

God's love, both toward them and among them, would testify about Jesus. The love between them could speak the gospel's truth. What a way to be witnesses for Christ!

JESUS PRAYED FOR THIS, AND HE PRAYED THAT THEY BE ...

### 3. UNITED FOR SALVATION (VERSES 23B, 26)

***Jesus prayed, "May they experience such perfect unity that the world will know that you sent me and that you love them as much as you love me" (John 17:23b).***

***Jesus continued, "I have revealed you to them, and I will continue to do so. Then your love for me will be in them, and I will be in them" (John 17:26).***

Jesus prayed so that others would be saved. He preached an extensive gospel.

We could say that perfect unity doesn't exist. Nevertheless, Jesus could speak of it because He was God and he had the power to speak things into existence. When he said, "May they experience such perfect unity that the world will know that you sent me" (John 17:23), it is as much as to say, *They alone cannot do it; but perfect unity can be achieved through me.*

The unity that he prayed for us to enjoy was a perfect unity. He said, "May they experience *such perfect unity*" (John 17:23). Plus, Jesus had communicated his desire for his followers earlier when he said that his aim was "so that you will be filled with my joy. Yes, your joy will overflow!" (John 15:11).

Oh, may we experience such perfect unity that the world will know! Seeing that perfect unity, the world can know and be convinced that Jesus is the Savior sent by the Father. Jesus wanted the whole world will know Him through us. Jesus prayed for his followers to keep that unity through love—a universal love, as deep as God's own. Jesus prayed to his Father "that the world may know ... that you love them as much as you love me" (John 17:23). Jesus's prayer was one with a reach, so they would be united together with the purpose of saving the lost.

*United for salvation.* That was William Booth's wish for The Salvation Army. Facing confrontation in East London, he sought a way to respond to so many attackers. So, he took up arms ... sort of. The arms he taught The Salvation Army to take up were those that the Apostle Paul referred to: "We use God's mighty weapons,



not worldly weapons, to knock down the strongholds of human reasoning and to destroy false arguments” (2 Corinthians 10:4–5). That may be the reason for Booth’s famous slogan: “Saved to save.”<sup>2</sup>

*United for salvation.* Jesus prayed for perfect unity—one filled with hope for the present and the future. He said, “Father, I want these whom you have given me to be with me where I am” (John 17:24). Only through unity with Jesus can his followers see His glory—the glory of God that He reflected in their lives. That glory is what makes unity perfect.

We trust Jesus for the salvation of our souls (1 Peter 1:9). The Lord is being patient for our sake. He does not want anyone to perish (2 Peter 3:9).

Now we see things imperfectly, like puzzling reflections in an imperfect mirror, but as Paul says, one day we will see everything with perfect clarity (1 Corinthians 13:12a). Jesus prayed for His disciples and for us so that this unity would last forever. And, today, He continues praying for that unity to characterize us (Romans 8:26–34; Hebrews 7:25).

## APPLICATION AND CONCLUSION

### ***Let Us Be United in Christ.***

Yes, let us be united so that we may be one through His love.

When someone says goodbye, people often want to express how much love they feel for each other. Jesus was not the exception. Jesus loved His followers. John 13:1 says, “He loved them to the very end.”

What a privilege it was for His followers to hear and learn how Jesus prayed for them! We are also privileged because Jesus prayed for us to become one—like He was with the Father. That we may be one with Him—this, in the first place, is personal. Jesus prayed for me. We were already on His mind 2,000 years ago. He chose us. He said, “You didn’t choose me. I chose you” (John 15:16).

Let us be one with our eyes fixed on Him, as Hebrews 12:2 says, “keeping our eyes on Jesus.” Let us be one with Him; “For,” as Jesus said, “Apart from me you can do nothing” (John 15:5).

Like the ivy, a plant that grows attached to the wall, the Lord wants us to become attached to Him—to be one with Him and with each other as a church.

Jesus knew the power of prayer. His dependence on the Father was based on prayer. That’s why He prayed, “Not my will, but yours be done” (Matthew 26:39). Notice the relationship He had with the Father. Even though Jesus was God, he said, “If it is possible ... if you want ... not what I want but what you want.” Let us be one with Him so we can also live out the truth that we depend on Him.

We, too, should pray for our families to see the Lord in us—in you and in me. Our responsibility is to decide to seek the Lord. We can base this on Joshua 24:15, where Joshua said, “Then choose today whom you will serve ... But as for me and my family, we will serve the Lord.”

Someone prayed for us—Jesus himself—so that we may be one with Him.

The unity between Jesus and the Father was through divine love, and we are able to love each other because of the same love. In 1 John 4:7–8, it says, “Dear friends, let us continue to love one another, for love

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<sup>2</sup>Based on verbal accounts and a salutation above Booth’s signature. See Loizides Norris, “Zeal and Determination in the Life of Young William Booth,” Blogpost (May 31, 2014) at [https://lexloiz.wordpress.com/tag/william-booth/#\\_edn1](https://lexloiz.wordpress.com/tag/william-booth/#_edn1)). According to Norris, Sarah Osborne (nee Butler) reported Booth’s tendency to use the phrase. Norris cites Harold Begbie, *Life of William Booth: The Founder of the Salvation Army* (2 vols. London: MacMillan, 1920) 1:49.

comes from God. Anyone who loves is a child of God and knows God. But anyone who does not love does not know God, for God is love." If we have Jesus in our hearts, being one isn't optional. It's the result of *His* love in me; it's the result of *His* love in you.

Some children think that Band-Aids are magical since they heal their wounds and make them disappear. Love is the "Band-Aid" that unites us. "God [...] has [...] filled our hearts with his love" (Romans 5:5) so that we can pour it into others. Let us be united as witnesses so that the world might believe. What a responsibility you and I have! Think of the implications of Hebrews 12:1—"Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses ..."

May those who do not believe begin to believe because of you and me, because we are living with Jesus, because we are united as His witnesses. Because His love unites us, we love each other, we take care of each other, we care about and support each other.

Where we're from, our race, our color, and our culture don't matter. His love unites us. There will be no race in heaven, although there will be lineage. That reality must start here on Earth. "Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples" (John 13:35). Someone will believe in Jesus because of you and me. We must be united as brothers and sisters in Christ here, so the world will believe.

What a responsibility! We unite together so the world can know Christ. Jesus teaches us how we can live to please Him—through unity—so that those who don't know him can be certain about how much He loves us and how much He loves them. It's a unity without borders.

Jesus continues praying this prayer even in this moment. His prayer continues to be answered today because you and I are learning to love each other so we can be more like Jesus. In our homes, in our workplaces, schools, and marketplaces, they must see us united.

We may need to pray for forgiveness, because we often prefer to be together but not united. Let us also pray that His love be reflected in our Corps through the quality of unity—a true answer to Jesus' prayer. Say this to the Lord: "I want to be united with you and my brothers and sisters." His Holy Spirit will help us to achieve it.

If someone here doesn't know the Lord, please know that Jesus prayed for you, too. He died on the cross and spilled his blood to save you. You are, therefore, also among those he came to save. Let me extend to you, on Christ's behalf, an invitation into his family of love. Let us be "one in Christ" through His love. Amen.



# WE ARE ONE, UNITED IN LOVE

I PRAY ALSO FOR THOSE WHO WILL BELIEVE IN ME THROUGH THEIR MESSAGE, THAT ALL OF THEM MAY BE ONE... JOHN 17:20B-21A (NIV)



**CULTURAL AWARENESS WEEK**

JANUARY 19-25, 2020

