



UNCERTAINTY: Bible Lessons for Families

Lesson: Unity and Community
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Series Overview

Uncertainty: A 6-pack of Bible lessons helping families wrestle with the COVID-19 pandemic and other uncertain times.

UNCERTAINTY: UNITY & COMMUNITY

BIBLE: Galatians 3: 26-28; Acts 2:42-43

MAIN IDEAS: We are one in Christ, which requires us to love and forgive others.

Everyone needs a place where they can:

- Love and be loved.
- Accept and be accepted.
- Pray for and be prayed for.
- Forgive and be forgiven.
- Celebrate and be celebrated.
- Know and be known.

SUPPLIES

For Family Activity:

- Popsicle sticks (one per person)
- Bag of mini marshmallows
- Bowl

For Object Lesson:

- Stack of heavy books

FAMILY ACTIVITY

This game can be played two different ways: in teams or as individuals.

As teams of two: Give one person a popsicle stick.

As individuals: Give each person a popsicle stick.

Dump the marshmallows into a bowl and set it in a place that can be reached by everyone.

You can set a timer for the game and see who has the most marshmallows on their stick when time is up.

Or... you can just keep stacking marshmallows and see who is the last to drop their marshmallows.

Today, we will be talking about “unity” and how our love for God brings us together.

So, I thought it would be fun if we played a quick game to get us started and we can see if it brings us together.

Go ahead and put the end of the popsicle stick in your mouth.

When I say GO, you're going to stack as many marshmallows as you possibly can on your popsicle stick.

If any marshmallows fall off, then you are out of the game.

The last person to have marshmallows remaining on their popsicle stick wins.

Play as many rounds of the game as you would like.

After the game, ask... Were you happy or upset with who won the game?

Is it easy for you to be happy for others when they do well, and you don't?

What would happen if instead of being jealous of each other, we could celebrate each other's successes?

Allow a few responses after each question, and then move onto the lesson.

TEACH

For the first time in our lives, the entire world has been impacted by one single pandemic or crisis. COVID-19 is something that has affected just about everyone in our country and world – and every person our family knows.

But, there is good news - it has the opportunity to bring us all together in unity.

And that's what we want to talk about today... Unity.

First, let's talk about unity when it comes to those who follow Jesus.

Read Galatians 3:26-28 (NIV).

So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.

There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

Gentile meant anyone who wasn't a Jew.

We might not be able to identify with being Gentile or Jew, but we can get a better idea of what this scripture is talking about when it says, "slave or free."

Can you think about the main differences between being a slave and being free?

Imagine what it would be like not to be free.
You are told what to do...

What to eat...

And your decisions are not your own.

In Bible times, giving people these names divided people: Jew or Gentile. Slave or free.

Think about ways that we divide people today. We divide people by race, gender, popularity, how much money they have, how nice their clothes are, etc.

Ask: Do differences bring us closer together or farther apart? How?

Let everyone who wants to take a turn sharing.

As Christians, we are supposed to be "One."

That means we are unified together. We may be different in how we look and think, but our love of God brings us together.

What do you think it could look like if we really did live as if we were ONE?

What would have to change for us?

In the world... in our country... in our church... in our family?

Just think about that.

Being ONE in Christ requires us to:

#1 - Love

We genuinely need to love one another – and sometimes we can be difficult to love – grownups *and* kids alike.

Does it mean that we always agree on everything?

No, it means we care about other's opinions, and we take the time to understand one another.

We accept others as-is. Just the way they are... imperfections and all.

We put others first, rather than ourselves.

We have a servant's heart that serves others without complaining.

We look for what we have in common with each other, rather than what separates us.

None of those things are easy to do on our own - we need God's help!

#2 - Forgiveness

Being one in Christ means that we forgive each other.

Doing life together means that, unfortunately, we will hurt each other.

To move forward, we must forgive one another because we will probably need others to forgive us one day as well!

Forgiveness means we let go of the hurt or anger that we're holding onto in the inside.

We surrender it to God.

And ALL of us need the forgiveness of God.

Accepting forgiveness from God is humbling because none of us are perfect.

And by saying, "God, I accept Your forgiveness," we are admitting that we need a Savior.

When we experience God's forgiveness, we can more easily forgive others.

When we genuinely love and forgive others, we're helping bring unity to those around us.

This extends beyond those who follow Jesus.

Our world is divided, and it needs people who build a bridge of unity rather than a wall of division.

We either bring people together or tear people apart by the way we treat others.

When we show love, acceptance, forgiveness, and peace to everyone around us... then, we're helping to build a bridge of unity in the world.

Let's read another passage in the Bible.

Read Acts 2:42-43 (NIV).

“They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles.

All the believers were together and had everything in common.”

This passage is a snapshot of the early church shortly after Jesus’ resurrection.

When Jesus went back to Heaven, those who followed Him formed churches that would get together for fellowship.

They were learning, eating, and growing in their faith together. They were friends and genuinely cared about each other.

This is a really great picture of unity. But actually, it goes a step further and shows us what Christian community looks like.

Sometimes, life can be really tough.

The Bible tells us time and time again that we will encounter suffering, and the Bible encourages us to persevere through it.

Ask: What are some tough things we have been through as a family?

Let everyone talk who wants to have a chance to share.

As we make our way through this life, we’ll encounter hard days, trials, suffering, and obstacles.

And we can’t do it alone.

Everyone needs a place where they can:

- Love and be loved.
- Accept and be accepted.
- Pray for and be prayed for.
- Forgive and be forgiven.
- Celebrate and be celebrated.
- Know and be known.

Think about this...

Ask: Have you ever been excited to share good news with someone – a parent, a sibling, a friend – and have been disappointed when they responded to your news without that same excitement?

Let everyone share a story if they want to.

When someone asks like they don't care about what is important to you, it can really let you down!

We want someone to feel the same way we do.

For someone to come, stand by us, and "get it."

When we go through life's obstacles with others, it's so much easier to get through it.

And it feels amazing when we have others to celebrate life's wins with!

We need each other!

We should always feel like that in our family. This is a safe place where we can share life and not have to worry about if we will be rejected.

We are unified together as followers of Jesus and as a family.

OBJECT LESSON

For this object lesson, you will need a stack of heavy, hard-backed books.

Maybe you noticed that I placed a stack of books here – they aren't for us to read.

Choose one person in your family for the object lesson. Preferably the smallest person – able to hold a stack of books.

I am going to place a book on top of your head, and then I want you to tell me if it feels heavy.

Wait for a response.

Okay. Now, I'm going to keep adding books until you tell me it's too heavy.

Stack books until it's too heavy for them to hold.

At this point, choose someone else to help the first person with the object lesson.

Let's try this again.

I want each of you to hold one end of this book.

Now, I'm going to keep stacking them.

Use the same number of books as before.

Does this feel unbelievably heavy?

To the first person that was holding books... Are the books heavier or lighter this time?

Of course, they feel lighter.

These books help us understand how important it is that we have each other.

Each of us carries burdens that are made lighter when we have other people that pray for us and help us in times of need.

We were never meant to go through life on our own.

God created us to live in community with each other. Have you ever noticed that "unity" is part of the word "community"?

We find friendship and support when we are unified with other believers who help share our burdens and grow in our faith.

My prayer is that you will also live your life in love, unity, acceptance, and forgiveness so that a sense of unity surrounds every aspect of your life.

Pray together and then end the lesson.

Take a few minutes to discuss the following questions.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What is one thing that you will remember from our time together today?
- What would our country look like if everyone were more unified? Our world?
- What would our family look like if everyone was more unified? What would have to change for us to get along with each other better?
- What would your school look like if everyone were more unified?
- What would our church look like if everyone were more unified?

- What's the biggest obstacle for you to truly love, accept, and forgive others? Why is it hard?
- Starting today, how can you be more loving and accepting of those around you?

FAMILY CHALLENGE

For the next week, think of one thing you can do each day that will bring unity to our family... and do it anonymously. It doesn't have to be something big... just be thoughtful.

When we serve each other, it demonstrates that we don't think we are better than anyone else. Consider tidying up around the house, putting away the dishes, doing things without having to be asked... seeing a need and trying to be part of the solution.

If people all over the world tried to serve each other, it would bring our world together in unity. Let's see what difference it can make in our family this week.