



Community of Christ

Sharing in Community of Christ: Exploring Identity, Mission, Message and Beliefs

Lesson 12 - We are One, We are Many

This lesson is based on 'Sharing in Community of Christ' pages 68-75.

Guide Times

- Introductory Section – 10 minutes
- Community – 20 minutes
- Worth of Persons/Worship and Sacraments – 15 minutes
- Scriptures - 5 minutes
- Mission, Peace and Justice – 10 minutes
- Sharing – 10 minutes
- We Are One, We Are Many – 10 minutes

This is the last of the 12 classes (unless you have not done your catch up class yet) It is slightly different in that it focuses on a document created during an International Leaders' Meeting in 2004 as a reflection of the unity and diversity found within the church. Each class member will need paper and something to write with. The lesson takes several topics and draws out the nature of these in a diverse church. You may not have time to cover all of these topics, so consider what is most valuable for your group and just mention other topics.

If there is someone in your group who has travelled internationally for the church, give them a chance to share their experiences. You could consider inviting someone in to take this class who has had such an experience.

Introduction (10 minutes)

Read the first section of the document aloud. Maybe have four readers take a paragraph each.

Discuss:

- What do you think the authors meant by the phrase 'the face of Jesus is torn'?
- Do you agree with the phrase 'The church tears the face of Jesus'?
- Why do you think we may have become insular as individuals, as a society, as a church? Or do you feel we have not?

Community (20 minutes)

Draw the expanding circles of your life. Place yourself in the middle and then the communities of which you are part in circles moving out from the centre.

Share these and then discuss:

- Have you chosen the circles of society you are part of?
- Do you feel tension between any of these circles?

The document talks about feeling pain when members of the body of Christ are persecuted or lack freedoms we take for granted.

Discuss:

- Can we truly empathize with other people's situations, especially those in lands we have never personally visited?
- How much does the media help or hinder our understanding of those who live beyond our life experience?
- Can we feel unified with others whose lives are very diverse from our own? (both at home and abroad)
- List some of the practical ways your congregation/group could truly share community with those 'beyond our borders'. Again, think about at home and abroad. Commit to talking and praying more about this, making your ideas come alive.

Worth of Persons (5-10 minutes)

Read the paragraphs on Worth of Persons

Discuss:

- Is there one phrase that stands out to you? Share with the group why. (little/no conversation)

Worship and Sacraments (5-10 minutes)

These paragraphs talk about the many and varied styles of worship we enjoy in Community of Christ across the world. Take one of the examples and ask the class how they would feel in that situation. Aim to draw out that there is no 'one way' to worship.

Conversely, are there elements of worship that should be common in any situation? (Do not get into too deep a discussion about the purpose or nature of worship but allow some comments).

Discuss:

- What is your favourite style of worship?
- What draws you into God's presence?

Scriptures (5 minutes)

Make sure all the group understand Community of Christ beliefs in scripture (Lesson 9)

Discuss:

- Do you think scripture promotes community or encourages divisions within the church?
- Does it matter that we may have different interpretations of scripture? (Think of examples such as LGBTQ+ issues, creation story, gender roles)

Mission, Peace and Justice (5-10 minutes)

Read together the paragraph starting 'We have many ways of going.'

Discuss:

- Where do you go?
- Where are you the proudest that the church goes? Why?

Sharing (10 minutes)**A. Generosity**

Discuss:

- Where do your offerings go? Do you know?
- Do you agree with the distribution of international financial gifts?

B. The 'gospel'

Discuss:

- Do you feel it's your responsibility to share your faith?
- Ask the group to relate times when they did share their Christian belief, preferably in the last week, but otherwise a memorable time.
- How do you share the gospel as a congregation? Can you think of one more modern, new way to do so? Are you willing to try it?

We Are One, We Are Many (10 minutes)

Whatever topics you choose from the above, be sure to leave time to reflect together on the last section.

Have the group read silently to themselves. Then take turns to read a paragraph each, pausing after each paragraph. At each pause ask group to reflect individually and silently what one word stands out in that reading. As they do so, ask them to write the word in one of the circles they drew earlier.

Encourage the group to take home their paper, stick it somewhere they will see it and reflect on the class over the next week.

We are one, we are many; what a privilege and gift that is to us as church. Let us be grateful.