**1. Motivate**

What are some things children struggle with in grade school?

* paying attention … daydreaming
* keeping organized, keeping things in order (desk, locker, books, …)
* bullying
* being made fun of for different reasons
* a particular subject – math, reading, physical education (sports)
* being bored
* procrastination
* learning disabilities – dyslexia, hand eye coordination writing, speech defects

**2. Transition**

The early church also had some struggles.

* Today we look at Paul’s exhortations to the church at Corinth.

**3. Bible Study**

3.1 Divisions in the Body of Christ

Listen for divided loyalties.

1 Corinthians 1:10-13 (NIV) I appeal to you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another so that there may be no divisions among you and that you may be perfectly united in mind and thought. 11 My brothers, some from Chloe's household have informed me that there are quarrels among you. 12 What I mean is this: One of you says, "I follow Paul"; another, "I follow Apollos"; another, "I follow Cephas"; still another, "I follow Christ." 13 Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Were you baptized into the name of Paul?

In verse 10, Paul appeals to the Corinthians to "agree with one another" and "be perfectly united in mind and thought." What do you think it means to be united in mind and thought?

* we agree on the basic truths and spiritual concepts of Scripture
* we might not agree on some of the interpretations and applications, but we are united in serving the Lord together
* we agree on a set of goals of ministry
* we work together with people amiably, even though we have differing opinions on some things
* on some issues we agree to disagree with no loss of fellowship

Why do you think people in the church often become divided over leaders or specific teachings?

* they might be personal friends of that person
* that’s the person who led them to Christ
* “That deacon is really handsome – a really godly person”
* “That deacon is short and fat – not a good Christian”
* one of those leaders said something that bothered you
* you grew up being taught a specific spiritual principle that the leader teaches (or disagrees with)
* that person makes sense to you … another person, you have trouble listening to

How does this impact the church’s witness and unity?

* can cause divisions, factions within the local body of believers
* can cause a church split
* can result in competition between leaders
* a good person in leadership can become discouraged if a majority reject him/her
* ends up people are straying from true reason of the Body of Christ supporting one another

Paul asks in verse 13, “Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you?” How can making Christ the focus help prevent division within a church?

* by focusing on what Jesus taught and did, we will not be led astray
* when all of us apply Jesus’ teachings to our lives we will be going in the same direction and going together
* Jesus will not lead us into factions or divisions

What are some practical ways we can keep our focus on Christ as a unified church body?

* study God’s Word together
* learn good principles of Bible interpretation (hermeneutics)
* consider working through the Rick Warren study, *40 Days in the Word*
* pray together – pray for more than just the list of physical needs
	+ pray for spiritual needs – discouragement, worry, spiritual needs of friends and family

How can practicing humility and selflessness contribute to unity within a church community?

* one is less likely to be offended
* easier to agree to disagree – you don’t feel that another person’s different opinion is an attack on your ideas
* you don’t feel you must argue and be right all the time
* willing to admit you said something wrong or didn’t have a full understanding when you spoke
* able to apologize and seek forgiveness
* willing to forgive one another

3.2 The Struggle of Immorality

Listen for when to run away.

1 Corinthians 6:15-18 (NIV) Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ himself? Shall I then take the members of Christ and unite them with a prostitute? Never! 16 Do you not know that he who unites himself with a prostitute is one with her in body? For it is said, "The two will become one flesh." 17 But he who unites himself with the Lord is one with him in spirit. 18 Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body.

In what way did Paul argue that sexually immoral behavior dishonors the body of Christ?

* our physical bodies are meant to be “members of Christ”
* we must not unite our bodies to experiences that dishonor Christ
* it’s like viewing porn and saying, “Hey Jesus … look at this one … woo hoo!”

How did Paul advise his readers to deal with the potential of sexual sin?

* flee from it
* when the temptation comes along, go the other direction
* don’t dabble in it
* remember that Jesus died to free you from all sin
* Jesus paid a great price … don’t mock that by participating in sin

According to this passage, how will sexual misbehavior affect people?

* your body becomes united to something/someone outside of Christ
* a believer would be acting *against* the union with Christ
* the unbeliever would be creating even more of a barrier between against Christ
* you weaken godly unions (marriage) that do exist

Consider these specific ways Christians can live set apart for God in today’s culture.

* allow God’s Holy Spirit to produce in and through our lives the Fruit of the Spirit – love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness, and self-control
* appropriate the whole armor and weapons of God for both spiritual defense, and spiritual ministry
	+ Helmet of Salvation (guards your mind)
	+ Breastplate of Righteousness (guards your heart/emotions),
	+ Belt of Truth – holds all our beliefs in place
	+ Sword of the Spirit – Word of God (used to kill sinful urges, to convict sinners – including ourselves)
	+ Shoes of the Gospel – firm spiritual footing (like wearing sports cleats)
	+ Shield of Faith – protects us from temptations and doubts fired at us by Satan

3.3 False Doctrinal Beliefs

Listen for a if-then statements.

1 Corinthians 15:12-17 (NIV) But if it is preached that Christ has been raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? 13 If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. 14 And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith. 15 More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that he raised Christ from the dead. But he did not raise him if in fact the dead are not raised. 16 For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either. 17 And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins.

In verse 12, Paul addresses the issue of some Corinthians denying the resurrection of the dead. Why do you think some people in the church struggled with the idea of resurrection?

* none of the people there were eyewitnesses
* they knew that people just don’t come back from being dead
* personal experience denied any kind of resurrection
* they probably figured it was just a made up story

List words and phrases in these verses that speak to what would be different if Jesus had **not** risen from the dead? Why is the resurrection so crucial for Christianity?

* if Christ not raised, our preaching is useless
* so is your faith
* we are false witnesses about God
* our faith is futile, we are still condemned in our sinful condition
* people who have died are lost
* we are to be pitied more than all men

So, based on this list, how does the *reality* of the resurrection of Jesus give *meaning* to our faith?

* the whole concept of sin deserving the judgment of death pointed to Jesus’ substitutionary death
* but if He stayed dead, then He was just another victim of a Roman crucifixion
* but … Jesus conquered death – God raised Him from the dead
* we worship a *living* Savior,
* unlike others who claimed to be God, Jesus rose from the dead
* the whole concept of Jesus’ claims hinge on this fact

If we believe in the resurrection, how should this hope influence our daily lives, values, and decisions?

* this life is transitory, temporary
* whether rich or poor, we leave our human status behind
* where we end up at the end of our lives depends on the choices we make here and now
* putting your trust in Jesus decides that destination
* Scripture speaks of putting up treasures in Heaven – giving of our time, treasure, and talents to God’s work

Application

Offer thanks.

* Reflect on how your life has changed because of Christ.
* Thank Him for setting you free from the former way of life.
* Pray for the Lord to continue His good work.

Memorize.

* Memorize 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 and repeat it to yourself when you need to flee from temptation.
* “*Don’t you know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought at a price. So glorify God with your body*.”

Walk alongside others.

* Making the daily choice to live a holy life is much easier when you walk alongside other believers.
* Surround yourself with others who also choose to live their lives for Christ. Your Bible study group is a good place to start.

Crossword Puzzle

Clues and words taken from 1 Cor. 6:9 – 20 (NI V)

If the Bible you read, the words you will find