

WALKING by FAITH

Grade 6 / Home Lesson

CHAPTER 26 CHRISTIANS AS ONE

Objectives

- Explore one's journey of faith.
- Affirm the importance of Christian unity.
- Explore the purpose of the ecumenical movement.
- Examine some steps toward greater unity among Christians.

Step 1: *We Are Invited* (Life Experience), pages 194–195

Ask your child to name his or her favorite story from Scripture. Point out that all biblical stories are part of our journey toward the kingdom of God in its fullness. Pray the opening **Prayer** on page 194.

Read the chapter title: **Christians as One**. As you read the text, refer to the **Language of Faith** section at the back of the textbook to make sure your child understands the highlighted term.

Explain that according to tradition there are three patriarchs and four matriarchs: Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; Sarah—Abraham's wife, Rebecca—Isaac's wife, Leah—Jacob's first wife, and Rachel—Jacob's second wife.

Point out that the people of Israel longed for the messiah. Ask: How did Jesus show that he was the Messiah? (by proclaiming the good news about the kingdom of God, healing people, gathered disciples) After Jesus' death and resurrection, who helped his disciples spread the good news? (the Holy Spirit)

Call attention to the photograph, which shows the city of Jerusalem, and read the caption. Recall with your child that David made Jerusalem the capital of his kingdom and Solomon built the first Temple there.

After reading **The Story Continues**, page 195, answer the bulleted question. (Because followers of Jesus are one body, any division or hurt causes harm to all. The divisions keep us from witnessing to the Holy Spirit's gift of unity. Divided communities lose gifts and talents that would be better shared.) Use the **Language of Faith** section at the back of the textbook to clarify the highlighted terms.

Read **Saints Walk with Us: Saint Charles Borromeo**. Tell your child that Saint Charles came from a wealthy family, the Medicis. While they expected him to marry and enjoy a wealthy lifestyle, he instead chose to serve God and the Church. Not only did he open seminaries to train priests, but he also established the CCD (Confraternity of Christian Doctrine) to teach children about the faith.

Point out the picture of Martin Luther. Explain that Luther is said to have nailed a document he called the *Ninety Five Theses* to the door of All Saints Church in Wittenberg, Germany. In Luther's day his action was a recognized way to invite debate on a subject. The subject he wanted to debate was *indulgences*.

Step 2: We Explore (Doctrine), pages 196–199

Discuss the advantages of unity in school. (It enhances school spirit, facilitates work, and so on.)

Read the **Scripture Story: That We May Be One** on page 196 to learn what Jesus, on the night before he died, told his followers about unity. Ask: What hope did Jesus have for his followers. (Jesus wanted them to be united in their faith.)

Read **Catholics Believe** and point out that through the power of the Holy Spirit, Christians work to increase their unity, which is the gift of Jesus Christ.

Have your child describe the drawing of Jesus and his followers. Point out that even when his suffering and death were imminent, Jesus continued to teach and pray for his followers because he loved them and loved all who would come after them. Invite responses to the caption question. (Answers may include: He wanted his followers to live together in love and peace, not stand against each other; unity is a sign of all he taught; the unity of his followers would lead more people to believe in the good news.)

Call attention to the photograph on page 197 of worshipers leaving a Protestant church. Discuss Sunday as a day of worship for most Christians.

Suggest that your child use a local phone book to complete the **Activity**.

Call attention to the title **Division Among Christians**. Have your child read the text to learn how we can all work toward Christian unity. Look up the word *ecumenism* in the **Language of Faith** section at the back of the textbook.

Ask: Historically, why have so many Christian denominations arisen? (because of disagreement over biblical interpretation, authority, and worship) What is the goal of ecumenism? (to work hopefully and cooperatively toward unity of all Christians)

Read the **Scripture Signpost** and discuss this passage. Invite responses to the question. (that all the baptized are equal, that they are one because they have “put on” Christ with their Baptism)

Read **Ecumenism and the Catholic Church** on page 198 to better understand how Vatican II opened the lines of communication among all Christians. Point out that unlike many previous councils, the Second Vatican Council was not called to combat a specific threat to unity, such as heresy; rather it was called to promote peace and unity in the world. Ask: How did the Second Vatican Council open up lines of communication among all Christians? (It encouraged them to share faith openly in order to create dialogue.)

Look at the picture on the bottom of page 198, and read the **Landmark**. Explain to your child that more than 2,600 bishops from all over the world attended the four sessions of Vatican II. Pope John XXIII’s opening speech laid out the positive goals of the council, including work toward unity. Among the distinctive teachings of Vatican II was the declaration that the Church includes, in various ways and degrees, all Christians.

Read **Our Moral Guide** and answer the question. (Love brings people together. If we respond to God’s call to love, we will let go of hostility and division in our hearts. We will come together as one people.)

Recall with your child that one of the chief goals of the Second Vatican Council was to work for Christian unity. Read the **Stepping Stones: Working Toward Unity** on page 199.

Look at the picture and point out to your child that it shows ministers of various Christian denominations gathered for an interdenominational prayer service. (Do you know if your community hosts such a service? The most common times for such interdenominational services are just prior to Thanksgiving and during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. Check with your parish to see when these prayer services are held in your area.)

Read **Where Will This Lead Me?** Look over the steps that the bishops outlined for working toward that unity. Ask your child to suggest some ways each of these steps could be accomplished.

Step 3: We Reflect (Integration of Faith into Everyday Life), page 200

Review the material taught in this lesson by completing the sections: **Recall, Think and Share**, and **Continue the Journey**.

Read and discuss **We Live Our Faith: At Home** and **In the Parish**. Try to follow through on these suggestions.

Refer to the **Language of Faith** section in the back of the textbook for clarification and review of all highlighted words.

Complete pages 51–52 in your **Faith Journal**.

Step 4: We Celebrate (Prayer and Conclusion), page 201

Note the image of Christ as the Good Shepherd on page 201. Ask: How does this image relate to the photographs of the sheep and the people? (Christ leads his people toward unity, just as a shepherd works to keep his flock together.)

Read the text on **One in Faith and Love**. Remembering Jesus' desire for all his people to be united as he is with his Father, take a moment of silence to prepare for the closing prayer. Remember all people of faith as you pray together the closing **Prayer**.