

# This Great Mystery

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## Ephesians and the Secret God Kept for Ages

Session 6. One Body, One Faith, One Baptism

Reading: Ephesians 4:1-16

## Part One

# Leader Preparation Guide

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## Session Overview

### Discovery Aim

The group discovers that the unity Paul describes is visible and structured, held together by offices Christ gave as ascension gifts, not an invisible sentiment shared by scattered believers.

### Catholic Touchstone

The Church's oneness is a gift of the Trinity maintained through visible bonds: one professed faith, one baptism, and a body knit together by the ministries Christ himself gave.

This session stands at the hinge of the letter. For five sessions the group has watched Paul pile up what God has done: chosen, redeemed, sealed, raised, seated, joined into one new man, let in on the mystery. Now comes the first imperative of the whole letter, and it is not a private moral demand but a call to keep a unity the Spirit has already given. The group will count the seven ones, notice they move through the Trinity, and then follow Paul's psalm quotation to the strange discovery that the ascended Christ's victory gifts are people: apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers, given so the whole body can grow up into its head. The steelman tonight is a serious one, the claim that all of this describes an invisible spiritual unity. Let the group answer it from the text, where unity is baptized, taught, jointed, and capable of being lost.

## What You Need to Know

### The hinge: therefore

Ephesians divides almost perfectly in half. Chapters 1 through 3 are one long unfolding of what God has done; they contain essentially no commands. Chapter 4 opens with *parakalo oun*, "I therefore beg you," and from here to the end the letter is about how to live. The order is the whole point: gift first, demand second, and the demand is only ever the shape the gift takes in a life. The verb Paul uses in 4:1 is *peripateo*, literally "to walk." The RSV2CE renders it "lead a life worthy of the calling," which is accurate but hides the picture; it is worth telling the group the Greek word, because "walk" returns at 4:17, 5:2, 5:8, and 5:15 and gives the second half of the letter its rhythm. We plant that thread tonight.

### Maintain, not manufacture

In 4:3 Paul asks them to be "eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit." He does not ask them to create it. The unity is the Spirit's gift; the eagerness, the lowliness, the patience, the forbearance are what it costs sinners to keep a gift they did not make. Notice that every virtue in verses 2 and 3 only exists in friction with actual people. You cannot be patient alone. The unity in view here is the kind that has other people in it, which is exactly the kind that can be strained and lost. In a modern

image, and this is ours, not Paul's: you can maintain a fire someone else lit, but only if you keep tending it.

### **The seven ones and their shape**

Verses 4 to 6 contain seven "ones": one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father. The list moves through the Trinity, Spirit to Lord to Father, the same shape the group traced in Paul's opening blessing back in Session 1. Do not hand them this; let them count and notice. Then press a quieter observation: several items on the list are concrete and public. A baptism can be witnessed; it happens to a particular body on a particular day with actual water. The body sits in the list with the same solidity. Paul's ones are not seven abstractions; at least two of them are things you could photograph, and that observation carries the whole session.

### **The psalm Paul quotes, and the change he makes**

In 4:8 Paul quotes Psalm 68:18, a psalm of the divine warrior ascending the high mount in triumph with captives in his train. The psalm as we have it in the Hebrew and in the Greek Old Testament says the ascended one *received* gifts among men; Paul writes that he *gave* gifts to men. Be honest with the group about this rather than hoping nobody checks. Two things can be said. First, an ancient Jewish interpretive tradition, preserved in the Aramaic Targum on this psalm, also read the verse as giving rather than receiving, so Paul is not inventing a reading from nothing; hold this at the level of "an ancient interpretive tradition," which is what we can honestly claim. Second, and more simply, a conquering king in the ancient world received tribute precisely in order to distribute it; the victor's receiving and his giving are one gesture. Christ ascends in triumph and hands out the spoils.

### **Gifts that are people**

The second discovery passage, Numbers 18:6-7, gives the Old Testament precedent that unlocks 4:11. There God tells Aaron that the Levites are taken from among Israel as "a gift to you," given to the Lord to do the service of the tent of meeting. God has done this before: when he wants his dwelling place served, he gives persons as gifts. So when the ascended Christ gives gifts to his new temple, the gifts of verse 11 are not abilities sprinkled across individuals but persons set in office: apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. Verse 12 gives their purpose: "for the equipment of the saints, for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ." The structure exists for the body, never the reverse. The word behind "equipment," *katartismos*, is related to the verb the Gospels use for mending nets; the officed gifts exist to mend, set, and fit the saints for their work.

### **How long, and against what**

Verse 13 gives the offices their duration: "until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood." Since the Church has visibly not yet arrived at that maturity, the gifts have not expired. Verse 14 names the danger they guard against: children "tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the cunning of men." Notice what this assumes. Doctrine exists; some of it is false; winds can be manufactured by cunning; and without teachers a believer has no way to tell wind from breath. "Unity of the faith" in verse 13 is not a warm feeling of trust; it is a destination with content, something that can be known, taught, missed, and defended. The Greek word for unity here, *henotes*, appears in the New Testament only

twice, both in this chapter, at 4:3 and 4:13: the unity given by the Spirit and the unity of the faith we are still traveling toward. Given unity, guarded unity, one word.

### Truth in love, and the anatomy of verse 16

Verses 15 and 16 are an anatomy lesson. Growth comes from the head; the group met the head-and-body claim in Session 2 and it pays off here. The growth is carried through the body "by every joint with which it is supplied," each part working properly. Joints and ligaments are connective structure; a body's skeleton is not the opposite of its life but what lets the life stand and move (that image is ours, mark it as such if you use it). And the manner of the growth is "speaking the truth in love": truth without love wounds, love without truth lies, and Paul refuses to let the group choose between them.

## Old Testament Roots and Fulfillment

### Psalm 68: the divine warrior ascends

Psalm 68 celebrates God going up in triumph, leading captives, with gifts among men, on his way to dwell in his sanctuary. Paul reads the Ascension as the true ascent of the divine warrior: Christ has gone up not to a hilltop shrine but "far above all the heavens," past every power the group met in Sessions 2 and 5, and the spoils of his victory are poured out on his people. The psalm ends with God dwelling among men; Ephesians has already shown the group the new dwelling, the temple of 2:21-22. The ascent and the indwelling belong together.

### Numbers 18: persons given as gifts

When God established the tent of meeting, he did not distribute a sanctuary skill set across all Israel; he gave the Levites, whole persons, as a gift for its service. Ephesians 4:11 repeats the pattern for the new temple. The fulfillment is larger than the type: the Levites served one tent in one camp, while the gifts of 4:11 are given so that the whole body, Jew and Gentile together, grows to the stature of Christ himself.

There is also a quieter root under verse 14. Israel's prophets constantly warned against teachers who speak wind rather than word, shepherds who feed themselves rather than the flock. Paul's picture of children tossed by manufactured winds stands in that tradition, and his answer stands in it too: God's response to bad shepherds was never no shepherds. It was to promise true ones.

## Voices of the Church

*Read these aloud where they land. Each is either a direct citation or an honest summary, labelled as such.*

### St. Ignatius of Antioch, d. c. 107

*Writing to this very church at Ephesus a generation or two after Paul, while being escorted to his martyrdom in Rome, Ignatius urges the Ephesians to run together in harmony with their bishop, their presbyters attuned to him like the strings of a lyre, so that in their concord and harmonious love Jesus Christ is sung. For Ignatius, visible unity around real, named ministers is not bureaucracy; it is the Church's music.*

Letter to the Ephesians, ch. 4. Summary of St. Ignatius of Antioch's teaching, not a direct quotation.

**For the group.** The earliest Christians we can hear after the apostles read Ephesians exactly the way tonight's text pushed us: unity has a structure, and the structure exists so Christ can be heard.

### St. Cyprian of Carthage, d. 258

*He can no longer have God for his Father, who has not the Church for his mother.*

On the Unity of the Catholic Church, 6.

**For the group.** Cyprian's blunt sentence lands on tonight's list of ones: the one Father of 4:6 is not reached around the one body of 4:4 but within it.

### St. John Henry Newman, d. 1890

*Newman teaches that in this world life shows itself by growth: a living idea, like a living body, does not stay frozen at its first moment but develops toward its full stature, and this growth is not corruption but the very sign that the thing is alive. He applied this to the Church herself, and it helped carry him into her.*

An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine. Summary of St. John Henry Newman's teaching, not a direct quotation.

**For the group.** Verse 13's "until we all attain" means the Church is a body still growing toward maturity; Newman gives us permission to expect development without fearing it means decay.

## Catechism Connection

### The Catechism says

**CCC 813.** The Church is one because of her source: the unity of the Trinity itself. Her oneness is a gift before it is a task.

**CCC 815.** The visible bonds of that unity are named: profession of one faith received from the apostles, common celebration of worship, and apostolic succession through the sacrament of Holy Orders.

**CCC 866.** The Church is one: she acknowledges one Lord, confesses one faith, is born of one baptism. The paragraph is practically a gloss on Ephesians 4:4-6.

**CCC 794.** Christ the head provides for our growth: he supplies in his body, the Church, the gifts and helps by which we build one another up along the way. This is 4:11-16 in the Catechism's own voice.

**CCC 874.** Christ is himself the source of ministry in the Church; the offices are his institution and gift, not the community's invention.

**CCC 631.** The Catechism's treatment of the descent to the dead quotes Ephesians 4:9-10 directly: he descended before he ascended, that he might fill all things.

**CCC 1271.** Baptism is the foundation of communion among all Christians, including those not yet in full communion with the Catholic Church. This keeps our steelman answer honest and charitable.

## Thread Watch

### Thread Watch

**The walk (plant).** Point out that 4:1's Greek verb is *peripateo*, to walk, even though RSV2CE says "lead a life." This word will pace Sessions 7 and 8 (4:17, 5:2, 5:8, 5:15). Plant it lightly; just make sure the word is on the table.

**The mystery (develop).** Session 5 gave them Paul's partial definition: Gentiles as fellow heirs, one body. Tonight the one body gets its ligaments. Do not say more than that; the sealed guess opens in Session 9, so resist any temptation to tip where the mystery lands.

**Head and body (develop).** This is the payoff session so far for the thread planted in Session 2. Growth is *from* the head *into* the head (4:15-16). Draw the line back to 1:22-23 explicitly.

**The powers (develop).** 4:10, "far above all the heavens," echoes 1:21. The ascended Christ has passed above

the powers; his gift-giving happens from that height. One sentence in Q5 is enough.

**In Christ, in him, in the Beloved (develop).** The destination of growth is "into him" (4:15). The preposition thread they have tracked since Session 1 now has a direction of travel.

**Inheritance and possession (develop).** "One hope that belongs to your call" (4:4) touches the inheritance thread. A light mention when they list the seven ones is plenty.

## Objection Bench

*Leader only. Do not raise these unless someone in the room does.*

**My Protestant friend says the offices of 4:11 were for the founding era and ended with the apostles.**

Verse 13 gives the offices their own expiry date: until we all attain the unity of the faith and mature manhood. Ask whether the Church has attained that yet. If not, the gifts are still needed on Paul's own terms. Apostles as eyewitness founders are unrepeatable, and Catholics agree; but the founding office continues in those the apostles appointed, which is what Ignatius, writing to this same city within living memory of the apostles, already assumes.

**Isn't doctrine divisive? Jesus wanted love, not dogma.**

Verse 15 refuses that choice: speaking the truth in love. And verse 14 shows what a doctrine-free church actually produces: not peace but children tossed by every wind, easy prey for cunning. Doctrine is not the opposite of love; it is love's refusal to let people be lied to.

**If unity matters this much, why are there so many Catholic failures at it, scandals, factions, cold parishes?**

Paul is begging a real congregation to maintain unity precisely because real congregations strain it. The command's existence proves the problem's antiquity. The gift is the Spirit's; the tending is ours; the failures are ours too, and 4:2 tells us the repair kit: lowliness, meekness, patience, forbearing in love.

## Session Goals

1. Trace the hinge of the letter: three chapters of gift ground the first command, and the command is to walk worthy of it.
2. Find the seven ones of 4:4-6, notice their trinitarian shape, and notice which of them are visible and concrete.
3. Discover through Psalm 68 and Numbers 18 that the ascended Christ's gifts are persons given in office for the building of the body.
4. Establish from 4:13-14 that the unity of the faith is doctrinal, future-directed, and guarded by teaching offices that have not expired.
5. Hold truth and love together as the one manner in which the body grows into its head.

## Time Note

### **Planned for 75 to 90 minutes**

Roughly: Win 10 minutes, reading 5, Build questions 1 to 3 about 20, the discovery moment 12, questions 5 to 7 about 15, the steelman chain 10, question 9 and Send 10, Live It This Week and closing prayer 8. That fills 90; for a 75-minute room, apply the first two cuts before you start.

### **If you are running long, cut in this order.**

1. Cut question 5 (the descent and ascent parenthesis) and its Dig Deeper; mention in one sentence that the giver of gifts is the one enthroned above every power.
2. Drop Numbers 18:6-7 from the discovery moment and send the whole room to Psalm 68:18; supply the Levites precedent yourself in the answer.
3. Fold question 2 into question 1, asking only about "maintain" versus "create."
4. Ask only the first Win question.

## Part Two

# Discussion Guide

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## Opening Prayer

### Pray together

Father, you have called us with one call, washed us in one baptism, and given us one hope. Send your Spirit on this table tonight: give us lowliness enough to listen, patience enough to stay in the text, and eagerness to keep the unity you paid so much to give. Through Christ our Lord, who ascended on high and has not stopped giving gifts. Amen.

## Win

*Open questions. No wrong answers. Let everyone speak before you move on.*

**W1.** Tell us about a team, a band, a kitchen crew, any group you have been part of that actually worked. What was holding it together?

**W2.** When people say they like Jesus but not organized religion, what do you think they are really objecting to? Have you ever felt the pull of that yourself?

*Take real answers to the second question seriously and do not rebut them; tonight's text will do that work better than you can, and some of the objections named here will come back as our steelman.*

## Read

### Read aloud

Two readers. The first reads Ephesians 4:1-6 slowly, and then pause; let the sevens hang in the air for a few seconds. The second reads 4:7-16. Ask everyone to keep a finger in the chapter, because tonight we go hunting in the Old Testament.

## Build

*Numbered inductive questions. Ask, wait, let the group work the text. The ANSWER boxes are for you to share after the discussion, not before it.*

### The hinge of the letter

**1.** Paul opens the chapter with "I therefore." Flip back over everything we have covered in chapters 1 through 3. What is that "therefore" resting on? And what, exactly, does Paul ask for in verse 1, after three chapters of asking for nothing?

### Take it as far as the room wants

**Floor.** What comes first in this letter, what God does or what we do?

**Depth.** Why might it matter pastorally that Paul withholds every imperative until chapter 4? What happens to the gospel when the order is reversed?

**ANSWER** *(share after the discussion)*

The "therefore" carries the whole first half of the letter on its back: chosen, redeemed, sealed, raised, seated, made one new man, let in on the mystery. Only now, with all of that in place, comes the letter's first real command, and it is not a rule but a manner of moving: the Greek verb is *peripateo*, literally "to walk," which the RSV2CE renders "lead a life worthy of the calling." The order matters enormously: three chapters of gift before one word of demand. Christianity's demands are what its gifts look like when you stand up and walk in them. Watch for the walking word; Paul is going to keep using it.

2. Read verses 2 and 3 slowly. What do lowliness, meekness, patience, and forbearing in love all have in common? And look hard at the verb in verse 3: does Paul tell them to create unity or to maintain it? What is the difference?

**ANSWER** *(share after the discussion)*

Every virtue on the list only exists in friction with actual people; you cannot practice patience or forbearance alone in a room. So whatever unity Paul means, it is the kind with other people in it, which is the kind that can be strained. And the verb is "maintain," not "create": the unity is "of the Spirit," his gift, already given. We do not manufacture it; we tend it, the way you maintain a fire someone else lit. That cuts both ways: we cannot take credit for the Church's oneness, and we cannot shrug off its wounds as someone else's problem.

3. Count the "ones" in verses 4 to 6 and list them out loud. Do you notice a shape in the list? And here is a stranger question: which items on this list could someone photograph?

**Take it as far as the room wants**

**Floor.** How many ones are there, and which three name Persons of God?

**Ground.** Why do you think Paul puts "one baptism" in a list that also contains "one God"?

**Depth.** If unity were purely invisible and spiritual, which items on this list would not belong?

**ANSWER** *(share after the discussion)*

Seven: one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father. The list climbs through the Trinity, Spirit to Lord to Father, the same three-personed shape we traced in the opening blessing back in Session 1; Paul cannot talk about the Church for six verses without talking about God in three persons. And at least two items are concrete enough to photograph: a baptism happens to a particular person on a particular day with actual water, and the body sits in the list with the same solidity. The one hope also picks up our inheritance thread, the down payment of 1:14. Paul's ones are not seven abstractions. The list has water in it.

## The gifts of the conqueror

**Live discovery**

Split the room. Half of you turn to Psalm 68:18 and read a few verses around it: what is happening in this psalm, who is ascending, and what is he doing with gifts? The other half turn to Numbers 18:6-7: what exactly does God say he is giving to Aaron, and what for? Two minutes, then report back.

**Let them find it.** Psalm 68:18; Numbers 18:6-7

4. In verses 7 and 8 Paul says grace was given "according to the measure of Christ's gift," and then he quotes Scripture about someone ascending on high and giving gifts. Where does that come from, and has God ever given gifts like these before? Let's go find out.

**ANSWER** *(share after the discussion)*

Psalm 68 is a victory procession: God the divine warrior ascends the high mount in triumph, leading captives in his train, with gifts among men. Sharp readers will notice the psalm speaks of the ascended one receiving gifts, where Paul writes that he gave them. Two honest things to say: an ancient Jewish interpretive tradition, preserved in the Aramaic Targum on this psalm, also read the verse as giving rather than receiving, so Paul stands in a real reading tradition; and more simply, an ancient conqueror received tribute precisely in order to distribute it, so the receiving and the giving are one royal gesture. Then Numbers hands us the key: when God set up his dwelling place, he gave the Levites, whole persons, as "a gift" for its service. God's precedent for equipping his temple is to give people. Hold that thought; verse 11 is about to use it.

5. Verses 9 and 10 are a parenthesis, Paul interrupting himself. What does he stop to point out about the one who ascended, and where does the ascent end? Compare what we found in Ephesians 1:20-23.

**ANSWER** *(share after the discussion)*

Before the ascent there was a descent, "into the lower parts of the earth": Christ went down into death, and the Church's tradition has long heard here his descent to the dead, the article of the Creed. Then the ascent goes "far above all the heavens," above every power we met in chapter 1, and its purpose is startling: "that he might fill all things." That is the fullness language of 1:23. The Ascension is not Christ's absence; it is the enthronement from which he fills everything, and the gift-giving of verse 8 is what that filling looks like from where we sit.

### **Dig Deeper**

The Apostles' Creed confesses that Christ "descended into hell," meaning the abode of the dead. The Catechism's treatment of that article (CCC 631-635) quotes tonight's verses directly. If your group has ever stumbled over that line of the Creed, this is the passage to bring to it.

6. Now list the gifts in verse 11. What kind of things are they? Then read verse 12 carefully: whom do these gifts exist for, and what is the goal?

**ANSWER** *(share after the discussion)*

The gifts are people holding offices: apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. Not talents sprinkled across individuals, but persons given, exactly the Numbers pattern the discovery team found: God equips his dwelling place by giving people to it. And verse 12 sets their purpose: "for the equipment of the saints, for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ." The word behind "equipment" is related to the verb the Gospels use for mending fishing nets: the offices exist to mend, set, and fit the saints for their work. So the structure serves the body, never the reverse; clergy exist to equip the baptized, not to replace them.

### Dig Deeper

In the Greek, "pastors and teachers" may name one paired office, shepherds who teach, rather than two separate ones; scholars genuinely divide on the grammar, and the Church has not ruled on it. Either way, notice that shepherding and teaching sit closest together in the list. Feeding the flock and telling it the truth are almost one job.

7. How long do these gifted offices last, according to verse 13? And what danger does verse 14 imagine for a body that lacks them?

### Take it as far as the room wants

**Floor.** Does verse 13 describe something that has already happened?

**Depth.** What would a church have to possess in order to distinguish a wind of doctrine from the faith itself? Who, in verse 11, is given for exactly that?

### ANSWER *(share after the discussion)*

Verse 13 sets the horizon: "until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." Look around; we have not arrived, so the gifts have not expired. And notice that "unity of the faith" is a destination with content: something that can be known, taught, missed. Verse 14 shows the alternative: children "tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the cunning of men." Paul assumes doctrine exists, that some of it is false, that winds can be manufactured on purpose, and that without teachers a believer cannot tell wind from breath. Strikingly, the Greek word for unity here, *henotes*, appears in the New Testament only twice, both in this chapter: the unity of the Spirit we maintain in verse 3, and the unity of the faith we travel toward in verse 13. Given unity and guarded unity, one word, and the offices stand between them.

8. Here is the strongest version of a very common reading of this chapter. Take it seriously before you answer it, and answer it only from what we have found tonight.

### Build then press

**The strongest form of the objection.** The unity of Ephesians 4 is spiritual, not institutional. Paul calls it "the unity of the Spirit," something already given from above, which believers keep by love, not by shared church government. All true believers everywhere already form one body in Christ regardless of denomination, the way distinct regiments still form one army. The "one faith" of verse 5 is trust in the one Lord, not a shared dogmatic system. And the gifts of verse 11 are ministries scattered wherever the gospel is preached; nothing in this chapter mentions bishops, succession, or a visible institution. Denominational variety no more breaks this unity than the existence of many congregations broke it in Paul's own day.

**Answering from the text.** Feel the strength of that; much of it is true, and the Catechism itself says the baptized who are not Catholic stand in real, though imperfect, communion with the Church (CCC 1271). But test it against tonight's text. First, Paul is in prison begging a real congregation to be eager to maintain this unity with humility and patience: a purely invisible unity cannot be strained, and an unbreakable unity needs no eagerness. The command only makes sense if the unity is visible enough to wound. Second, the list of ones anchors unity in one baptism, a public, witnessed, wet event; the one body sits beside it with the same concreteness. Third, the gifts of verse 11 exist "until we all attain to the unity of the faith," so the one faith is not

bare trust but content still being guarded and taught; and verse 14 assumes false doctrine can blow believers off course, which requires some living way to tell wind from truth, which is precisely what teaching offices are for. Fourth, we have already found in this very letter a household built on the foundation of apostles and prophets with Christ as cornerstone (Session 4). Foundations are not sentiments. The honest conclusion is not that our Protestant friends are outside the body; it is that the body Paul describes has joints and ligaments, and separated Christians are wounded members of a structured body, not free-floating members of an invisible one.

**ANSWER** *(share after the discussion)*

The invisible-unity reading founders on four things the group has already found tonight: a unity that must be eagerly maintained can be lost; a unity anchored in one baptism is as visible as water; a unity of the faith that offices guard until maturity has doctrinal content; and a letter that builds the Church on apostolic foundations is not describing a sentiment. Say all of this with the charity the Catechism requires: baptism really does bind all Christians to Christ and to each other, which is exactly why the remaining divisions are a wound worth grieving rather than a variety worth celebrating.

## The anatomy of growth

**9.** Read verses 15 and 16 like an anatomy lesson. Where does the growth come from, what carries it through the body, and what two things does Paul refuse to separate in verse 15?

**ANSWER** *(share after the discussion)*

The growth comes from the head and moves toward the head: we "grow up in every way into him," and it is "from whom" the whole body grows, the payoff of the head-and-body claim we found in 1:22-23. What carries the growth is connective structure: "joined and knit together by every joint with which it is supplied, when each part is working properly." A skeleton is not the opposite of a body's life; it is what lets the life stand and move. And the manner of growth is "speaking the truth in love": truth without love wounds, love without truth lies, and Paul welds them into a single phrase. Notice the last words: the body "upbuilds itself in love." Structure and charity are not rivals in this chapter. They are the ligaments and the lifeblood of the same body.

## Send

*Open questions. Let these land in silence if they need to.*

**S1.** Where in your own life is unity something you are still eager to maintain, and where, honestly, have you quietly given up on it?

**S2.** Who has been a verse-11 gift to you, a person God gave who built you up in the faith? Have you ever told them?

## Live It This Week

**Practices**

1. Pray daily this week, by name, for one relationship where Christian unity is strained: a Protestant friend, a family member who has left the Church, a Catholic you find hard to forbear. One decade of the Rosary or one sincere minute; the point is the name.

2. Write and actually send a note of thanks to one person who has been a gift to you in the sense of verse 11: a priest, a catechist, a youth minister, the person who first taught you to pray. Two sentences is enough.
3. Practice "speaking the truth in love" once, deliberately: have one honest, kind conversation you have been avoiding, and prepare for it by praying verse 2 over yourself first, lowliness, meekness, patience.

## Scripture Memory

### **Ephesians 4:4-6**

"There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all, who is above all and through all and in all."

### **Ephesians 4:4-6**

## Closing Prayer

### **Pray together**

Lord Jesus Christ, ascended far above all the heavens that you might fill all things, thank you for the gifts you have not stopped giving: for the apostles on whom we are built, for the shepherds and teachers who have mended us and fitted us for work, for the one baptism that made us one body. Keep us eager to maintain what your Spirit has given. Teach us to speak the truth in love until we all grow up into you, our head. Amen.

### Part Three

## Leader Reference Card

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Every passage used in this session, in order. Print this page and keep it in front of you.

### Primary text

- **Ephesians 4:1-6** the call, the virtues, the seven ones
- **Ephesians 4:7-16** the psalm, the gifts, the growing body

### Discovery passages

- **Psalm 68:18** the divine warrior ascends with captives and gifts
- **Numbers 18:6-7** the Levites given as a gift for the sanctuary's service

### Echoes within Ephesians

- **Ephesians 1:20-23** enthroned above every power; fullness of him who fills all
- **Ephesians 2:19-22** the household built on apostles and prophets
- **Ephesians 1:13-14** sealed; the guarantee of the inheritance, behind the one hope of 4:4

### Terms

- ***peripateo***. to walk; Paul's word for the Christian life from 4:1 onward, rendered "lead a life" in RSV2CE
- ***henotes***. unity; in the New Testament only at 4:3 and 4:13, the unity given and the unity guarded
- ***katartismos***. equipping; kin to the Gospels' verb for mending nets
- ***poimen***. shepherd, pastor; the flock-feeding office of 4:11

### Catechism

- CCC 813. the Church one because the Trinity is one
- CCC 815. visible bonds: one faith, common worship, apostolic succession
- CCC 794. the head provides the body's growth through his gifts
- CCC 866. one Lord, one faith, one baptism