

Day 3—Break Down Walls: Build Bridges

Scripture Reading

For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is the hostility between us.

—Ephesians 2:14 NRSV

The One who created all humankind grieves at the shameful divisions within the human family. A prophetic people must work tirelessly to tear down walls of separation and to build bridges of understanding.

—Doctrine and Covenants 162:6b

Music Suggestions

“Put Peace into Each Other’s Hands” R-15

“Let Justice Roll like a River” NS 28

“Make Me a Channel of Your Peace” NS 34

“Weave” NS 51

Gathering/Worship

Intergenerational book: *The Coconut Monk* by Thich Nhat Hanh, illustrated by Vo-Dihn Mai (Berkeley, CA: Parallax Press, 2005), ISBN 1-8883-7553-1.

Lesson

Human Walls

Remember the game “Red Rover” where you divide into teams and one team calls out for someone on the opposite side to run over and break their human wall. If you break the wall, you can select a hostage and return to your home side. If you fail, you became an outsider in new territory. You continue this “wall” competition until time runs out. The winner is the team that captures the most people.

This game creates artificial walls. Were you the one who couldn’t wait to be captured and joined the opposing line? Were you the last one or the only one never to be captured? What are some of the walls we create that separate us from others? Pass around several notepads. Have each student write down one “wall” that separates people. Continue rotating the pads for one or two minutes or until everyone has added several ideas.

Stop the activity and have the persons holding the notepads to read the lists in their hands.

Then discuss these questions:

1. Why do we create walls?

2. What do we allow to come between us (hurt, want, fear, power, misunderstanding, pride, money, hatred, anger, mistrust, jealousy, greed, prejudice, religion)?
3. Can we tear these walls down? How?

Read Ephesians 2:11–22 NRSV from a PowerPoint slide or poster. The apostle Paul was talking about the people he knew in his life. He was telling the people who had accepted Christ that as others came to know God as they did, those people would also be included in the household of God. Just as it was difficult for those around Paul to accept the socially unacceptable of that time, it is hard for us today to accept some people. What breaks down those walls (faith, trust, love, forgiveness, knowledge, education, kindness, hope, prayer, friendship, an open mind, listening, and communication)?

Create an artificial “wall” in the class. You might put all teens with straight hair in one group and the others in another. Favor one group over the other throughout the activity. Call on them to answer all the questions, coach them if they don’t know the answer, only give them easy questions, and provide them with treats. Be sure to have enough treats to give to everyone at the end of this exercise.

1. In Ephesians 2:11–22, the people who were not Jewish were _____. (Gentile)
2. Christ is _____. (Peace)
3. Christ broke down the _____. (wall)
4. The different peoples were separated by _____. (hostility)
5. Jewish law had many _____ and _____. (commands, ordinances)
6. Christ _____ that law. (abolished)
7. His purpose was to make _____ (peace) and bring people back to God.
8. Christ accomplished this with his _____. (death on the cross)
9. Through him we have access to _____. (God)
10. Those who aren’t Jewish are no longer _____ (strangers), but citizens together with the _____. (household of God)

Discuss how each group reacted to the situation created by the artificial barrier.

The Selfish Giant

Tell the story of “The Selfish Giant” by Oscar Wilde. If possible, obtain the twenty-minute video, *The Selfish Giant* by Oscar Wilde (Lions Gate, 1985), ASIN: 6-3023-2772-5. The story is available in several different children’s books and available online using keywords “Oscar Wilde” or “The Selfish Giant.”

No one is excluded from Christ. As followers, we provide the action; we set the example. Everyone is invited into God’s household. New love and peace come through Christ. Human barriers can’t keep him out. Christ brings peace, justice, and reconciliation. Discuss how this story helps us better understand Christ’s peace and the importance of breaking down walls.

Activity Suggestions

Different, yet the Same

Provide small packages of M&M candies for each student. Ask each to look at and count the number of different colors in their package. Distribute sheets of graph paper, and have the teens draw bar graphs to represent their M&M color count. Next, combine the data into one graph representing the entire class. Compare the different colors to the diversity of people around the globe. Ask everyone to close their eyes and eat a few of their M&Ms. Ask: “Do the colors taste different?” (No, they are all chocolate. They are the same inside even though they appear different on the outside.)

Building Bridges

Now that we’ve seen the importance of breaking down walls, we must discover tools that bring us together so all can share in Christ’s peace. Divide into teams of four or five students. Provide each team with a bag of miniature marshmallows, small gumdrops, and a package of dry spaghetti. Challenge the teams to build a free-standing bridge with their materials. Explain that they will have ten minutes for the competition—two to think individually, three to plan strategy as a team working together, and five to build. Monitor the time for them.

After the activity, discuss what strategies were used to support and strengthen their structure. What problems did they face? What did they have to overcome to build their bridge? Did team effort help? What solutions were successful? How does having a good foundation help? What foundational concepts guide you daily? How do you receive strength to share the peace of Christ? Identify ideas that would help them in sharing Christ’s peace. Record the strategies on a flip chart. Have students select an idea they can use at home, then form groups of three and share what they plan to do. End the activity with each member of the group offering a prayer for the support of the others.

Prayers for You; Prayers for Others

Ask each student to find a stick about the size of a pencil. Collect all of the sticks and bundle them together. Show the bundle of sticks, and discuss how the sticks are like problems we have sometimes when we try to build bridges or overcome obstacles in sharing the peace of Christ. Let anyone who wants to try to break the bundle of sticks. (As leader try to break them as well.) All together, the problems we encounter seem overwhelming. When we allow Christ’s peace to help us, we are provided the strength to overcome those obstacles. How does Christ’s peace give us strength? (Take sticks apart and hand one to each student. Tell them to break their sticks.) Christ’s peace helps us see in new perspectives and shows us new ways to overcome our problems by helping us face them one by one.

Piece to Peace

Before reunion, collect old jigsaw puzzles. Cut 5 x 7-inch rectangles from heavy cardboard—two for each student. Cut a rectangle opening in the center of half of them so

they will accommodate a photo. Provide students with bottles of clear-drying glue, and have them decorate their frames by gluing puzzle pieces on the cardboard with the opening. When the glue is dry—you may need to complete the activity the next day—place a thin line of glue on the solid cardboard piece ¼-inch from the outside edge on three sides. Leave one of the short sides glue free to provide an opening for a picture to be inserted. Let them dry completely before inserting pictures. With a fine-point permanent marker write on one of the light-colored puzzle pieces “Be Peace.” Take digital pictures to fit the frames, and have them ready to give students by the end of the week.

Breaking and Building

Give each student a heavy, brown paper bag. Have them select items from a box filled with old, chipped dishes; cups; and ceramic pieces. (Check for items at garage sales and thrift shops.) Then they can insert their selected items in the bag, close it tightly, and break the items into small pieces with a hammer. Imagine these objects are walls they are breaking down. Glue the small pieces to a glass container—old, empty jars or vases—with clear, craft glue in the pattern of their choice to make a mosaic effect. When dry, insert a votive candle inside. Use these candles for Friday’s peace prayer.

Journal

What if you were treated like you treat others?
What are the walls in your life that keep Christ out?
What walls do you build to keep others out?
What can you do to let Christ and others into your life?

Peace Prayer

Crossing the Bridge

Give each person a sheet of paper. Ask them to tear from the paper the shape of a cross. Provide time for reflection about the walls they need to cross or the bridges they need to build. Write these down on their torn-out cross. On the back side of the cross, write a prayer asking for God’s help in breaking down walls and building bridges. When they are finished, tell them to bring their crosses to the front of the room, and place them at the base of the picture of Christ as they leave for the day.