

Wholeness Through Christ

BALANCE and CONNECTION



Lessons for All Ages Together

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Being whole through Jesus brings balance and connection within ourselves and in our relationships with one another, and with God.

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Blessings of Community



Objectives

The learner will ...

- Listen to the story of Pentecost from Acts 2:1–11, 41–47.
- Engage in a bingo game to learn the names and qualities of one another.
- Discuss how our community is similar to the early church community at Pentecost.
- Sing a song “We Are the Church.”

Focus

We want to stay in balance with and stay connected to Jesus and to each other. The first step as we come together is to get to know each other. We recognize that each person brings a blessing to our community.

Focus Scripture:

Acts 2: 1–11, 41–47

Pentecost shows how disciples following Jesus Christ create a blessed community.

Materials

- Bible (NRSV) such as the *Lectionary Story Bible, Year A* by Ralph Milton, pp. 116–117
- A fan, with paper streamers taped on: red, orange and gold
- Tongue-shaped paper cutouts in red, orange, or gold to symbolize “tongues of fire”
- Pencils or pens
- Blank bingo cards (use the templates at the end of this lesson), one per participant
- A list of all participants’ names
- Pennies, small candies or other small items to use as bingo markers
- Lyrics of the song “We Are The Church” (included) printed on a flip chart or poster for all to see
- Poster with the theme and graphic of “Wholeness through Christ: Balance and Connection”

Resources

- An NRSV Bible or the *Lectionary Story Bible, Year A* by Ralph Milton, illustrated by Margaret Kyle (Wood Lake Publishing, 2007, ISBN 9781551455471). The *Lectionary Story Bible* is available from Herald House at <http://www.heraldhouse.org/cart/edit.asp?p=129081>.

1 Gather

Activates background knowledge, prepares and motivates for lesson.

Welcome everyone to the All Ages activity. For tips and guidelines on teaching an all age group, access “Planning for All Ages” on the Disciple Formation Guide at www.CofChrist.org/dfg or at the beginning of these lessons.

Can you keep your balance? Ask those who wish, to follow these directions. After each direction, they may return to their normal position:

1. Stick one leg out sideways, parallel to the floor. Try to balance.
2. Spin in a circle three times. Stop. Try to balance.
3. Kneel on your hands and knees. Lift one arm. Try to balance.
4. Lift the opposite leg. Try to balance.

Discuss:

Is it difficult to stay balanced? Sometimes you can do it, but not for long. Now do the same actions again, only have each participant choose a partner. The two together will be better able to keep their balance!

Other ways of being balanced are in our actions, such as being happy all the time, or sad all the time. You can also be angry or at peace, listening or speaking, being active or being still. We can stay in balance when our communities are in balance, when we’re in good, healthy relationships with others. Doing what Jesus did keeps us in balance!

In this series of lessons called “Wholeness through Christ: Balance and Connection,” we will explore how we can live in balance with Jesus, following his word and his example. We will also learn how to stay connected to Jesus and to one another by exploring five Enduring Principles. In Community of Christ, we believe that some things will last forever. They are called “Enduring Principles.” Today’s Enduring Principle is called “blessings of community.” (Write Blessings of Community on a poster which has the

title “Wholeness through Christ: Balance and Connection” at the top and the graphic of the stone sculpture. With each lesson, add that lesson’s Enduring Principle to this poster).

2 Engage

Invites exploration and interaction.

Community at Pentecost

With the help of a “special effects crew,” share the story of Pentecost from Acts 2:1–11, 41–47 from a children’s Bible storybook. If using the *Lectioary Story Bible, Year A* by Ralph Milton, the story is on pages 116–117. Emphasize that Jesus was gone, and that his disciples and followers felt lost. They and the other Jews were scattered in many countries, all around Jerusalem. They were from different cultures; they spoke different languages. Yet they all came to Jerusalem to celebrate Passover.

While reading about the Holy Spirit coming like a wind and tongues of flames, have your “crew” turn on a large fan where red, orange and gold “tongues of flame” paper streamers are tied or taped. The crew can throw small flame-shaped paper cutouts in front of the fan to blow over the participants.

When the disciples met to celebrate the Jewish festival of Passover, never in their wildest dreams did they think the Holy Spirit, which Jesus had promised, would come like it did. It allowed them to hear languages they didn’t know so everyone could learn about Jesus. Think what an awesome event this became as people excitedly shared the wonderful news of Jesus! They were welcomed and they found a community where they belonged! About 3,000 were baptized that day. The story of Pentecost shows the power of the Holy Spirit to create a blessed community.

Discuss:

1. What were the blessings of the community at Pentecost?
2. How did the Holy Spirit bring everyone together into one community?

3. The disciples could communicate in ways that everyone could understand. Show others in your classroom how you could say “God loves you” without using words.
4. If this was one of Jesus’ first communities of people who were different from one another, (they spoke different languages and were from different cultures) how did they stay in balance? (The apostles welcomed them and shared Jesus’ message by speaking in their language; they all believed in Jesus’ words; they shared all things in common).
5. When we get together, how are we like the people at Pentecost? (We come here from different places. Others help us to feel welcome and to understand Jesus’ message.)

3 Respond

Takes the learners from hearing to doing.

Community Bingo

Give each person a bingo card and a pencil or pen. There are two templates, one with 24 spaces and the other with 12 spaces. Divide the larger group into smaller groups of either 12 or 24 people each. The goal of this game is for participants to learn each other’s names with a reference to their involvement in their church or congregational community. Have them mingle among their group, asking people to sign the blank that describes something they have done. For instance, Betty may have “said a prayer at church,” and Josh “was invited by a friend.” When the cards are full, invite everyone to sit at tables, and call out the names of the participants from a list. If the name is written on a bingo card, the person may mark it with a penny, small candy, pencil marking, or other small item.

After the game is played several times so participants are familiar with each other’s names, discuss how our community is similar to the community that came together at Pentecost (travel from far away, made up of different people of different ages, we listen to stories of Jesus, try to live as Jesus taught). Encourage participants to continue to get to know one another during the series of lessons.

4 Send

Explores how the lesson might be lived out.

Gather in a circle and sing verses 1, 2, 4, and 6 of the song “We Are the Church.”

Chorus

“I am the church! You are the church! We are the church together! All who follow Jesus, All around the world! Yes, we’re the church together!”

Verse One

“The church is not a building. The church is not a steeple. The church is not a resting place. The church is a people!” **(Chorus)**

Verse Two

“We’re many kinds of people, with many kinds of faces, all colors and all ages, too. From all times and places.” **(Chorus)**

Verse Four

“And when the people gather. There’s singing and there’s praying. There’s laughing and there’s crying sometimes, all of it saying:” **(Chorus)**

Verse Six

“I count if I am 90, or nine or just a baby; There’s one thing I am sure about, and I don’t mean maybe:” **(Chorus)**

As time allows (as a group) create hand or body motions to illustrate the song.

5 Bless

Prayer of blessing, praise, thanksgiving, and hope.

Offer a prayer about belonging to a blessed community, a blessing because they came together from different places, but are learning together about Jesus’ love.

Came with a friend	Hugged a grandparent	Played an instrument	Said a prayer in church	Sang a solo in church
Listened to a little child's story	Sang in a choir	Took up the offering	Brought gifts to church at Christmas	Listened to an older person's story
Attends Scouts at church	Helped on church work day	FREE	Brought food to a church dinner	Hunted for Easter eggs at church
Helped paint the church	Is a member of a youth group	Studied the Bible in church with others	Gave an offering in church	Swept or shoveled the church pathway
Runs the church's website or audio-visual equipment	Knows people who live close to church	Helped clean the church	Performed a play or drama in church	Brought a friend to church

Helped on church work day	Came with a friend	Gave an offering at church
Runs the church's audio-visual equipment	Sang in a choir	Listened to an older person's story
Brought food to a potluck	Said a prayer in church	Played an instrument
Studied the Bible in church with others	Is a member of a youth group	Sang a solo

Unity in Diversity



Objectives

The learner will ...

- Discover likenesses and differences with other participants by listening to their voices.
- Engage in the story of Pentecost from Acts 2.
- Share reasons parts of the body are important and how the body is like a community where everyone is important.
- Interpret and create new verses for a song called “Body Song.”

Focus

All of us have differences, but God created us so we each have a place in our blessed community. We should celebrate our differences and work together toward common goals, so we can be unified in our diversity.

Focus Scriptures:

- 1 Corinthians 12:4–13 adapted. “All gifts are given by the Holy Spirit. All parts of the body work together and none is greater than the other.”
- Doctrine and Covenants 164:5 adapted: “When you are truly baptized into Christ you become part of a new creation. By taking on the life and mind of Christ, you see yourselves and others from a changed perspective. Through the gospel of Christ a new community of tolerance, reconciliation, unity in diversity, and love is being born as a visible sign of the coming reign of God.”

Materials

- Bible (NRSV) such as the *Lectionary Story Bible, Year A* by Ralph Milton
- Doctrine and Covenants, including Section 164
- Audio recording device
- Copy for each participant of the song “Body Song” (included)
- Pencils or pens
- Paper cutouts of body parts (head, heart, hands, nose, eyes, ears, feet, etc.). Put each one inside a small envelope. Prepare enough for everyone in class to receive one of the paper cutouts in an envelope.

Resources

- An NRSV Bible or the *Lectionary Story Bible, Year A* by Ralph Milton, illustrated by Margaret Kyle (Wood Lake Publishing, 2007, ISBN 9781551455471). The *Lectionary Story Bible* is available from Herald House at <http://www.heraldhouse.org/cart/edit.asp?p=129081>.

1 Gather

Activates background knowledge, prepares and motivates for lesson.

Make a Joyful Noise

Record the participant's voices, each saying the same phrase "Unity in Diversity!" Then have everyone change seats (so they won't be in the same order as they were when they recorded). Now play the recording, with all guessing who is speaking the phrase each time.

Discuss:

1. How can you tell who is speaking? What is unique about his or her voice?
2. What is diversity (our differences)?
3. What does unity mean (being brought together; combining all parts into one). Our voices show our diversity, how we are each different. But having voices shows how we are unified.

In today's lesson, we are exploring the Enduring Principle of unity in diversity. (Add those words to the daily theme poster started last session.) Let's explore how the scripture stories explain what unity in diversity can be.

2 Engage

Invites exploration and interaction.

Unity in Diversity at Pentecost

Today's story is about a letter the apostle Paul sent to the Corinthians about how to live God's way. He used the example of the body as a community in balance. If using the *Lectionary Story Bible, Year A* by Ralph Milton, the story is on pages 118–119.

Read the story and these scriptures:

- 1 Corinthians 12:4–13 adapted "All gifts are given by the same Spirit, but given individually to each one. All parts of the body work together and none is greater than the other."

- Doctrine and Covenants 164:5 adapted: "When you are truly baptized into Christ you become part of a new creation. By taking on the life and mind of Christ, you see yourselves and others from a changed perspective. Through the gospel of Christ a new community of tolerance, reconciliation, unity in diversity, and love is being born as a visible sign of the coming reign of God."

Discuss:

1. How do these two scriptures and today's story help us understand how to create a community? Why do the body parts have to work together?
2. How are the different parts of the body like different people in God's church? What does each do?
3. If you were a hand, head, heart, eyes, legs, feet, arms, heart, stomach—what body part would you most relate to?
4. What is your best skill? What body parts are required?

3 Respond

Takes the learners from hearing to doing.

Give each participant a copy of the song "Body Song" (on the last page of this lesson). Sing through the two verses together.

Now it's the group's turn! Work together to fill in the blanks below and create your own hilarious verse.

1. What if the body were all _____?
(rhyme with line 4)
2. And how can a(n) _____
(body part)
3. _____
(an action)
4. _____?
(rhyme with line 1)

Share in the larger group the funny verses everyone created. Perhaps write them on poster paper or newsprint to display around the room.

Body Song

Oh, a bo - dy can't walk on its nose, and a bo - dy can't eat with its toes. 'Cause
 What if the bo - dy were all hair? And how can an eye sit in a chair?

each lit - le mem - ber has a spe - cial work to do to make the bo - dy grow. Oh,

I can't do with - out you and you can't do with - out me. 'Cause

each lit - tle mem - ber has a spe - cial work to do to make the bo - dy grow. grow.

Text: Unknown
 Music: Unknown

9.9.13.5.Refrain.
 BODY SONG

Grace and Generosity



Objectives

The learner will ...

- Learn about the Enduring Principle grace and generosity by comparing God's grace to our own generosity.
- Read the scripture story of the Samaritan woman at the well to see that Jesus gave to the woman but also asked that she share with him.
- Witness a science experiment of water "bubbling over."
- Learn and sing the song "Bubblin' Over."

Focus

God's grace is always larger, broader, deeper, and greater than we can understand. We can respond to God's grace by receiving thankfully and giving generously. Because God gives, we can give!

Focus Scriptures:

John 4:1–29. Jesus asked a Samaritan woman at the well to get him water, going outside social convention. He ministered to her, but also asked her to share her gifts with him.

Doctrine and Covenants 163:9 adapted "As you grow as my disciple, you see how generous God has been if you share with a full heart. Don't give because you are commanded to. Give generously what you can give, out of your true capacity. Joy and peace will come to you as your heart grows generously without expecting anything in return. How else would you expect God to be, who gives forever for all creation?"

Materials

- Bible (NRSV), such as the *Lectionary Story Bible, Year A* by Ralph Milton, pages 84–85
- Doctrine and Covenants, including Section 163
- Poster with the theme and graphic of "Wholeness through Christ: Balance and Connection"
- Two (2) sheets of poster board or newsprint, two sets of colored markers (washable)
- Science experiment equipment: two opaque pitchers, one filled with water, the other with one tablespoon of baking soda in the bottom
- Paper cups, one per participant
- One-third cup (two and two-thirds ounces) of vinegar
- Copy of the song "Bubblin' Over" (page 14)

Resources

- An NRSV Bible or the *Lectionary Story Bible, Year A* by Ralph Milton, illustrated by Margaret Kyle (Wood Lake Publishing, 2007, ISBN 9781551455471). The *Lectionary Story Bible* is available from Herald House at <http://www.heraldhouse.org/cart/edit.asp?p=129081>.

1 Gather

Activates background knowledge, prepares and motivates for lesson.

God's Grace, Our Generosity

Hang two (2) sheets of paper or poster board on a wall. Label one: God's Grace. Label the other: Our Generosity.

Divide the participants into two groups, giving each group a set of colored markers. Assign each group to one of the posters and have them brainstorm those things that God provides for us through God's grace and write the words on the poster. The second group brainstorms those things that we might generously share with others. Then compare together. Discuss: Note that the posters probably won't be balanced because we can never give as much as God gives.

In today's lesson, we are exploring the Enduring Principle of grace and generosity. (Add those words to the daily theme poster.) Let's explore how today's scripture story shows us what grace and generosity is.

2 Engage

Invites exploration and interaction.

Grace and Generosity in Community

Read the story of the Samaritan woman at the well from the *Lectionary Story Bible, Year A*, by Ralph Milton (pages 84–85) or from John 4:1–29. Afterward, discuss:

1. What did Jesus ask the Samaritan woman to give him?
2. What did Jesus offer to give the Samaritan woman?
3. Why is it good to ask others to share their gifts like Jesus did?
4. What did Jesus' gift "living water" mean?
5. What can each of us give to Jesus (others)?

Show how the water that Jesus gives is different from the water the woman offers with this simple experiment:

Gather everyone to sit in a large circle around a table where there are two pitchers. Around the pitchers are paper cups, enough for each participant to have one.

One pitcher is full of water. The other has one tablespoon or baking soda in the bottom of it.

As you pour a glass of water from the pitcher of water, say that this is what the woman offered Jesus. But Jesus said the water that he gave might be different. Now pour the vinegar (keeping the smell away from everyone so they don't guess) into the second pitcher so everyone can watch the bubbly reaction. Jesus said his water was everlasting! Jesus' love for the woman was bubblin' over. Then the woman bubbled over, when she went back to her village and told them everything she had experienced that day!

3 Respond

Takes the learners from hearing to doing.

From the first pitcher of water, begin to fill the paper cups with water. Invite each person, one at a time around the circle, to come and pick up a cup of water. Then invite them to take the water back and give it to the person who is sitting to their RIGHT while the next person on their LEFT comes up to get the next cup of water. Everyone will soon see that they will receive a cup of water because of the generosity of the one sitting next to them.

This can be done in smaller groups as well.

Say: "Because God gives, we can give too and never go without."

Sing together the song "Bubblin' Over." Divide the whole group into three smaller groups.

Have group one sing repeatedly the phrase, "Bubblin' over, bubblin' over..."

Have group two sing repeatedly the phrase, “Ba-ba-ba-bubblin’, Ba-ba-ba-bubblin’...”

Have group three sing repeatedly the phrase, “Jesus’ love is bubblin’ over. Jesus’ love is in my soul...”

Have group one sing their phrase twice before adding group two. Have groups one and two sing their phrases twice before adding group three. Continue repeating.

Bubblin' Over

1



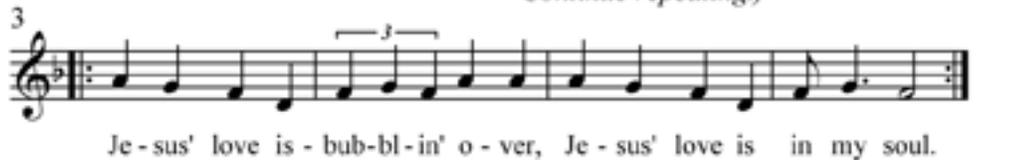
Bub - blin' o - ver, bub - blin' *(Sing twice before adding Group 2. Continue repeating.)*

2



Ba ba ba bub - bl - in' *(Sing twice before adding Group 3. Continue repeating.)*

3



Je - sus' love is - bub-bl-in' o - ver, Je - sus' love is in my soul.

4 Send

Explores how the lesson might be lived out.

Read Doctrine and Covenants 163:9 adapted: “As you grow as my disciple, you see how generous God has been if you share with a full heart, not because you are commanded to. Give generously what you can give, out of your true capacity. Joy and peace will come to you as your heart grows generously without expecting anything in return. How else would you expect God to be, who gives forever for all creation?”

Challenge participants to reflect on what their “true capacity” is and make a silent commitment to share generously to their true capacity.

5 Bless

Prayer of blessing, praise, thanksgiving, and hope.

Gather everyone into a circle for prayer. Offer the following prayer; then ask those who wish to share to fill in your blank statement with one word. “Thank you for bubbling over with love for us. I want to bubble over too, and generously share _____. Amen.”

Worth of All Persons



Objectives

The learner will ...

- Listen to the story of Acts 2:42–47.
- Discuss how our community can also share the gifts of everyone.
- Engage in a rock sculpture activity and affirm each other's worth by writing an affirming message on each sculpture.
- Create a rock sculpture by the whole group.
- Take a rock sculpture of affirmations home with them.

Focus

We should celebrate our differences and what makes us special, affirming the worth of all persons.

Focus Scriptures:

- Acts 2:42–47. In this new church community formed at Pentecost, people share everything “in common” to create a community that follows Christ.
- Doctrine and Covenants 164:6a adapted “Jesus is concerned about our relationships and our behaviors that hold up the worth and gifts of everyone and that protect the most vulnerable. If we follow Jesus, we will have love, respect, and fairness in our relationships, and be responsible for others ...”

Materials

- Bible (NRSV), such as the *Lectionary Story Bible, Year A* by Ralph Milton, pages 106–107
- Doctrine and Covenants, including Section 164
- Poster with the theme and graphic of “Wholeness through Christ: Balance and Connection,” to which is added each lesson’s Enduring Principle
- Self-drying clay such as Crayola’s Model Magic® or real stones of various sizes, enough for each person to have seven
- Thin stick or branch, one for each person
- Thin permanent markers
- Pens or pencils
- Small pieces of paper

Resources

- An NRSV Bible or the *Lectionary Story Bible, Year A* by Ralph Milton, illustrated by Margaret Kyle (Wood Lake Publishing, 2007, ISBN 9781551455471). The *Lectionary Story Bible* is available from Herald House at <http://www.heraldhouse.org/cart/edit.asp?p=129081>.

1 Gather

Activates background knowledge, prepares and motivates for lesson.

Gather all participants to sit in a circle. Call out characteristics that all have *in common*. Allow each person to take a turn leading the group with their own idea.

- Stand up if you have a first (given) and last (family) name.
- Laugh if something made you happy today.
- Sit down if you are growing.
- Wiggle your fingers if you _____ (have siblings, live in a house, help your mom, like camping, etc.)
- Stand on one foot if you _____ (have a specific color of hair, are wearing shorts, have a favorite color of _____, etc.)

Discuss what you discovered about the many ways in which participants are similar to one another.

Do the activity again, this time calling out characteristics that will define the participants as unique and different from one another. Allow each person to take a turn leading the group with their own idea.

- Clap twice if you have green eyes.
- Turn around if you are wearing sandals.
- Touch your knees if you have a birthday in _____.
- Jump up and down if you play a musical instrument.

Discuss: We are all different in some ways from the rest, but does that make us less worthy? Less important? Why or why not? Why do we decide, sometimes, that someone is not as important, is less worthy, than we are?

In today's lesson, we are exploring the Enduring Principle of worth of all persons. (Add those words to the daily theme poster.) Let's explore how the scripture stories explain what the worth of all persons can be.

2 Engage

Invites exploration and interaction.

Sharing With All

Share the story of Susanna and friends sharing all things in common from the *Lectionary Story Bible, Year A*, pages 106–107, or from Acts 2:41–47 using an NRSV version of the Bible. Participants may wish to dramatize the story showing how they could share everything they have (for instance, pull items from a suitcase or purse or pockets to put together on a table).

Discuss:

- What does it mean to have all things in common?
- What are the worries about sharing all things in common?
- In what ways does your church or congregation share things in common?
- How do we need to change and follow Christ for sharing things in common to really work?
- Do you feel more valued as a person when belonging to a community that shares? How? Why?

3 Respond

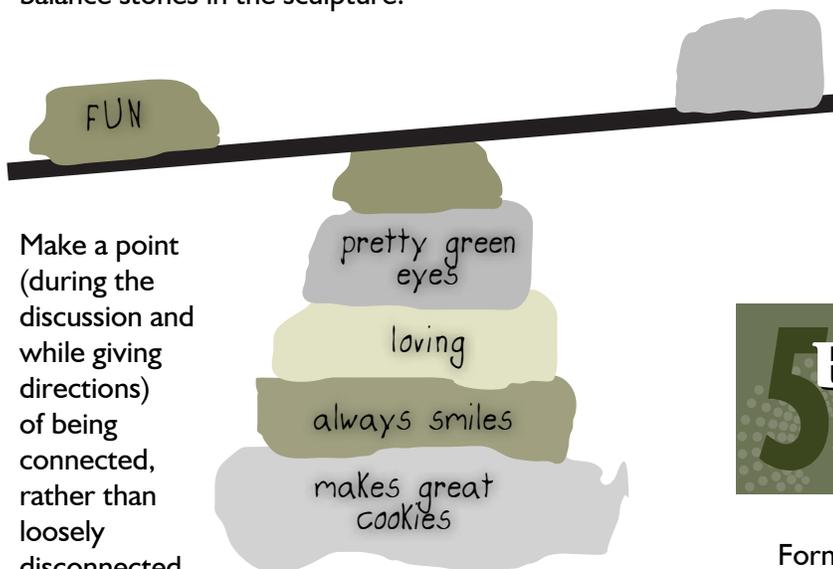
Takes the learners from hearing to doing.

Balancing Stones

Create a stone sculpture similar to the one on the cover of *Wholeness through Christ: Balance and Connection* or make something new; the idea is to bring together different stones to create a balance. Divide the participants into groups of five to seven.

Stones can be created using self-drying clay such as Crayola's Model Magic®. Give each person various colors of the clay and have them roll "stones" in various sizes that they can stack in a stone sculpture. Give each person a twig or flat stick on which they can balance stones in the sculpture.

Or stones can be gathered from a nearby field or park, or from stones bought for this activity. Ensure there are enough stones for each person to have at least seven of various sizes and colors. Again, give each person a twig or flat stick on which they can balance stones in the sculpture.



Make a point (during the discussion and while giving directions) of being connected, rather than loosely disconnected (as stones are in a field), of being formed, rather than being unformed (like the clay before it is shaped). The stone sculpture represents the balance and connection we have when we are connected with Christ and one another.

Ask each person to write an affirmation of the worth of the other people in their group. If they have used self-drying clay, each person may etch their affirmation into one of the “rocks” of each person’s sculpture using a pencil or sharp stick. See illustration. Use short affirmations like “loving,” “funny,” “helpful,” etc.

If real stones were used, affirmations can be written on the stones with fine-point permanent markers.

These sculptures may be taken home with each participant as a reminder of their worth and their sharing. The affirmations help us to understand our worth in the community of believers.

*As a challenge, the whole group may wish to create a larger stone sculpture to dedicate to the church building, or campgrounds that each person can add an affirmation to with either permanent marker or an etching with a stick. Forming a balanced sculpture references the story of sharing all things “in common” and affirms the worth of all persons as a valued part of the final sculpture.

4 Send

Explores how the lesson might be lived out.

Reflection

Ask participants to reflect on their sculptures and the sculptures of others by circling the room, looking at and reading the affirmations on each one.

5 Bless

Prayer of blessing, praise, thanksgiving, and hope.

Form a large circle and sing a version of the song “Hokey Pokey”:

You put your right foot in,
 You put your right foot out;
 You put your right foot in,
 And you shake it all about.
 You do the Hokey Pokey,
 And you follow Christ around.
 That’s what it’s all about!

Alternate version (“Hokey Cokey” UK):
 You put your left leg in
 Your left leg out
 In, out, in, out,
 You shake it all about.
 You do the Hokey Cokey
 And you follow Christ around.
 That’s what it’s all about...

All Are Called



Objectives

The learner will ...

- Engage in a game of affirming each other's gifts and working together as a community.
- Listen to Aesop's fable of "The Lion and the Mouse" (included).
- Retell the story of "The Lion and the Mouse" as a group, following the illustrations in the book *The Lion & the Mouse* by Jerry Pinkney.
- Work as a team to perform a task of untangling themselves as a group.

Focus

God graciously gives us gifts and talents and calls us to use them together to live out the principles of Jesus and create a blessed community. In these blessed communities of support, we can truly explore our gifts and respond by sharing with each other.

Focus Scriptures:

- "Lead a life worthy of Jesus' calling: be humble and gentle, patient, and make every effort to live in the peace of Jesus." (Ephesians 4:1-3 adapted)
- "All are called according to the gifts God gave them, so all may work together for God." (Doctrine and Covenants 119:8b adapted)
- "...the gifts of all are necessary so that God's purposes can be accomplished." (Doctrine and Covenants 161:4b adapted)

Materials

- Bible (NRSV)
- Copy of "The Lion and the Mouse" by Aesop (page 20)
- Doctrine and Covenants, including Section 161
- Poster with the theme and graphic of "Wholeness through Christ: Balance and Connection," to which is added each lesson's Enduring Principle
- Twine or thin rope cut into 5 in/2.5 cm lengths, one for each participant
- Scraps of paper and pencils, one for each participant

Resources

- An NRSV version of the Bible
- *The Lion & the Mouse* by Jerry Pinkney, Little, Brown Books for Young Readers, 2009, ISBN 9780316013567.

1 Gather

Activates background knowledge, prepares and motivates for lesson.

Choose one of these two gathering activities. The Red Rover game might be easier for all ages; the Knots game ties in better with the theme story.

Red Rover

Play a game of “Red Rover,” dividing the class into two teams facing each other. One team calls out “Red Rover, Red Rover, send [name] right over.” With this adaptation: have the person calling use a description with the name to call members of the other group over. For instance, “Red Rover, Red Rover, send Sue, the person who is a great storyteller, right over.” Continue this way, challenging participants to think of positive qualities (gifts and skills) the other team members have.

Afterward, discuss: What does it mean when we say you are “called” by Jesus or God to do something? What do you do when a friend calls you? A family member calls you? Someone from church calls you? When Jesus calls you, he is asking you to share your gifts or talents with others.

OR

Knots

Play a balancing game called “Knots” following these directions. Some people may not wish to play, but may enjoy helping with the “unknotting.” Everyone should stand in a circle, holding hands. Drop your hands. Reach in with your right hand and grasp the right hand of someone across the circle. Then, grasp the hand of someone’s left hand (a different person). This will tangle up the group into a seemingly impossible knot!

To get undone, give one another directions to crawl over, under, around, and through one another to untangle, without letting go of your hands!

When everyone is “unknotted” and back in a circle, sit down and discuss that even though we were in a knot, and were often unbalanced, we stayed connected and

could help one another. This is what living in a blessed community where everyone is unique and worthy, shares generously, and responds to their calling is like.

In today’s lesson, we are exploring the Enduring Principle of all are called. (Write those words on the daily poster.) Let’s explore how the scripture stories explain the meaning of “all are called.”

2 Engage

Invites exploration and interaction.

The Lion & the Mouse

The Lion & the Mouse by Jerry Pinkney is a storybook with no words. Jerry Pinkney received the Caldecott Medal for illustration for this “stunningly rendered wordless adaptation of one of Aesop’s most beloved fables, [in which] an unlikely pair learn that no act of kindness is ever wasted” (from the book jacket).

The story is set in the African Serengeti of Tanzania and Kenya. Aesop lived about 600 years before Christ in Greece, and was himself a reflection of the Enduring Principle of all are called, because he transformed himself from a slave into a well-respected adviser to kings.

Tell the story without using the illustrated book. A simple version of this fable is included on page 20.

3 Respond

Takes the learners from hearing to doing.

Retell the Story

Share the illustrations of the book *The Lion & the Mouse* by Jerry Pinkney in a PowerPoint or other electronic presentation, or photocopy the images and hang them around the room. To get permission for this one-time use, contact the publisher at publicity@littlebrown.com.

Invite participants, after forming smaller groups, to create their version of the story together. Take turns around the circle having each person *tell* the next page of the story. Encourage them to include what they see in the illustration for that part of the story: what are the sounds, the smells, the colors? What are the characters doing? How might they feel? What might they be thinking? If younger members struggle, have the rest of the group offer helpful suggestions.

Alternate idea: Give out drawing paper and markers or crayons. Have each small group draw their own book depicting the story. Each group member takes a section of the story and draws it, then hangs their illustrations around the room. A volunteer from each group may tell their group's interpretation of the story to all participants.

After all groups have retold their stories, discuss: What are the gifts or strengths of the Lion? What are the gifts or strengths of little Mouse?

The illustrator states, "... both animals are equally large at heart." What might he mean by this? How are both of them *called* to provide help to the other? Even if the motivation for Mouse is at first to preserve her own life, what results from her sharing her gifts?

Share the scripture readings from Ephesians 4:1–3 and Doctrine and Covenants 119:8b and 161:4b. Ask for reflections on the scriptures.

4 Send

Explores how the lesson might be lived out.

Give each person a small slip of paper, pencil, and a small knot made from a rope or heavy string. Ask each to reflect and prayerfully discern what they feel they are called to do, what gift they are called to share, or with whom they are to share their gifts, now. Give several moments for reflection.

Afterward, ask them to roll their paper and tie the knotted rope around it as a reminder of their gift of being called to share, just as Lion and Mouse did.

5 Bless

Prayer of blessing, praise, thanksgiving, and hope.

Ask if anyone (or several people) wishes to share a commitment about their calling in Community of Christ by completing the sentence, "I am called to..."

Close with prayer.

The Lion and the Mouse

A fable by Aesop (adapted)

Once when a lion was asleep a little mouse began running up and down on him, running from an owl, looking for food.

This soon awakened Lion, who placed his huge paw on her, and opened his big jaws to swallow her.

"Pardon, O King," cried Mouse, "forgive me this time, I shall never forget it: who knows but what I may be able to do you a turn some of these days?"

Lion was so tickled at the idea of Mouse being able to help him that he lifted his paw and let her go. And she scampered quickly back home.

Some time after, hunters came to the desert and set out traps. The Lion was caught in a net high off the ground.

Little Mouse heard his roars, and seeing the sad plight in which the Lion was, soon gnawed away the knots of the ropes that bound the King of the Beasts.

"Was I not right?" said the little Mouse as the Lion was set free.