



JUNIORS' BOOK

Authors: Mr. Bijoy Thomas
Ms. Elizabeth Varghese

Ms. Cilcy Zachariah
Mrs. Jenny Varghese

Table of Contents

Chapter One – Unity	p. 3
Chapter Two – Unity in Holy Baptism	p. 7
Chapter Three – Unity in Christ	p. 10
Chapter Four – Unity in the Church	p. 13

“We are one in Christ.” (Galatians 3:28)

CHAPTER 1

UNITY



CHAPTER 1: UNITY

This year’s theme for OVBS is taken from Galatians 3:28 - “We are one in Christ” (“Naam Kristhuvill onnu”). A question to ponder here is: Are we still one in Christ? If not, when did we get separated from God and what was the reason behind this?

The separation of God and man occurred when Adam and Eve sinned by disobeying God in the Garden of Eden.

Adam and Eve were created by God. God blessed them, saying, "All this is for you. Help yourself to anything you like. But never touch the tree in the middle of the Garden". But Satan, manifested as a serpent, lures Eve to taste the forbidden fruit. Eve falls into the temptation and prompted Adam to do the same. And so they both ate from the Tree of Knowledge, but when God discovers that both Adam and Eve have eaten from it, he punishes them for defying his will. So God sent Adam and Eve out of the garden.

Sin, like the ones that Adam and Eve committed, is the cause of our separation from God. This means that each person born into this world, because of their sinfulness, is separated from God. They will not be allowed to enter into Heaven unless they are forgiven. God, because of his abundant love for us, provided a way of restoration.

Just after Adam and Eve had to leave the Garden of Eden, they were very sad about disobeying God. They asked God how they could show Him how sorry they were. God told them that they could do so by sacrificing a lamb, which they did.

After some time, Adam and Eve had two sons. Their first son was called Cain and their second was called Abel. Cain was a farmer. He grew vegetables and grains. Abel was a shepherd who looked after the family's herd of animals. Adam and Eve told Cain and Abel about the message God gave them - that they should sacrifice a lamb to God as a symbol of their repentance.

Abel was very concerned that his sacrifice should be special to God. He chose his first and best lamb and offered it to the Lord. It was hard for Abel to give up his most prized possession, but it was important to him to try his best to do as God had asked.

Cain thought his little brother was a bit silly for giving up his best lamb. "Good grief," he thought. "We need that lamb, God doesn't. I'm sure He'd be just as happy if we sacrificed the runt of the litter. In fact, why does it need to be a lamb at all? I'm a farmer and it's been a great year for my wheat crop, I can't use everything I've grown. Why don't I just burn some of the extra straw I have. That way, I won't be wasting any."

Cain's reasoning sounds pretty good when you first hear it, doesn't it?

Cain watched as the lamb burnt up completely on the altar, while his left over straw just smoldered a bit and never really caught fire at all.

That could mean only one thing! God preferred Abel’s sacrifice over Cain’s.

“We are one in Christ.” (Galatians 3:28)

Cain was jealous! He didn't take the time or the responsibility to realize that it was his decision to sacrifice straw that caused the difference in God's response to their sacrifices. Instead, he just got angry at his brother. Cain harbored his anger and let it get out of control

One day Cain asked Abel to go for a walk with him, and while he was still angry, Cain struck Abel to the ground and killed him.

The story of Cain and Abel marks a new level of separation in the world (i.e. separation among fellow humans).

God loved us so much that he wanted us to be united. God sent his only son Jesus Christ into the world so as to unite both God and man. The Incarnation of the Son of God not only unites earth to heaven but also the mankind. Christ the "Lamb of God" replaced animal sacrifice like the one Abel made.

Jesus wants us all to be united. He wants to build the kingdom of God and we will be the building blocks, as it is said in Romans 12.4-5:

For as in one body we have many members, and all the members do not have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.

ACTIVITY

Bible Point

The Body of Christ is many parts. Only when the parts come together do they form one body to accomplish one purpose!

SET UP

Get your body part name tag from your teacher and think about the function and importance of that body part.

Main Body Parts (For a class of 5-7 kids) Head, neck, torso, arm, arm, leg, leg.

Secondary Body Parts (For 15 or less kids) Ear, ear, nose, mouth, hand, hand, foot, foot.

Tertiary Body Parts (For 16+ kids) Fingers, toes, fingernails, toenails, elbows, kneecaps, knuckles, eyebrows, lips, belly button, hair, freckles, etc.

How to Play:

Players begin by going up to another player, then saying their name and body part. If the body part is one that is connected to the other player's body part, they must connect by linking arms, holding hands or clinging to his or her shirt sleeve. If their body parts do not connect, then they pass to another player. For example, if a "nose" meets a "face", they

“We are one in Christ.” (Galatians 3:28)

connect and continue playing as before, staying connected as they go. But if a "nose" meets a "foot" they do not connect. Players continue playing, searching for body parts that are connected to their body part. Play continues like this until the entire body is connected!

Read 1 Corinthians 12:12-27 from Bible.

Post-Game Discussion:

How does this game help to illustrate the message of 1 Corinthians 12:12-27? Are certain body parts any less important than another? How does this relate to different kinds of people within Christ's body, the church?

[John 17:20-24] - "I do not pray for these only, but also for those who believe in me through their word, [21] that they may all be one; even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. [22] The glory which thou hast given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, [23] I in them and thou in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that thou hast sent me and hast loved them even as thou hast loved me. [24] Father, I desire that they also, whom thou hast given me, may be with me where I am, to behold my glory which thou hast given me in thy love for me before the foundation of the world. Such unity is the church's most powerful witnessing tool, for it gives evidence of Christ's unselfish love for humanity.

“We are one in Christ.” (Galatians 3:28)

CHAPTER 2

UNITY IN HOLY BAPTISM



CHAPTER 2: UNITY IN HOLY BAPTISM

OBJECTIVE

After reviewing this lesson, students should be able to have a better sense of how our unity in Christ begins through the Holy Sacrament of Baptism.

BIBLE VERSES

St. Matthew 28:19

LESSON

If you take a look around the room right now, you can see many other people around you. It is clear that you all have your differences – some are tall, some are short, some are funny, some are serious, etc. But as we have reviewed in lesson 1, each of us is a part of the ONE body of Christ. If we are all members of one body, how are we linked together? If we are born to different parents, what makes us brothers and sisters in Christ? The answer may be found when we study the Holy Sacrament of Baptism.

The Church remembers the baptism of our Lord during the feast of *Danabo*. We know that Jesus went from Galilee to the Jordan River to be baptized by John the Baptist. John, who is also known as “the forerunner of his Master,” thought that Jesus should baptize him instead, but Jesus said “Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness.” (Matthew 3:15). This event was a part of God’s plan to bring righteousness to the world through His son. As Jesus got out of the water, the heavens opened up and the Holy Spirit descended “like a dove.” A voice from heaven then said “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.” (Matthew 3:17). Here, we are clearly able to see that God was pleased with His son, and also delighted that he had been baptized. As Christians, we try to be as Christ-like as possible, and this journey begins with our baptism.

When we read Psalm 51, we say that “...*I was born in guilt, and in sin did my mother conceive me.*” This means that we were born into a sinful world. When we are baptized, we are cleansed of this sin and become united with Christ. In a matter of speaking, the sinful “old man” within us is washed away, and the “new man” is born. Our godparents speak on our behalf, renounce Satan, and accept Christ into our lives. The person being baptized is then anointed with “oil of gladness.” We may be reminded of the anointing of the sick here, which reminds us that sin is likened to a sickness in need of healing by the spiritual physician Jesus Christ. We are cleansed of that sin and set apart from the ways of the world. We become a part of a community of believers who have also been baptized, and live as one with hope in Christ.

Jesus himself commands his disciples as follows: “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.” Jesus told his disciples to unite people all over the world through baptism and teaching of the Word. Therefore, we are not only united with members of the Indian Orthodox Church, but the entire network of Christians who profess the Orthodox faith.

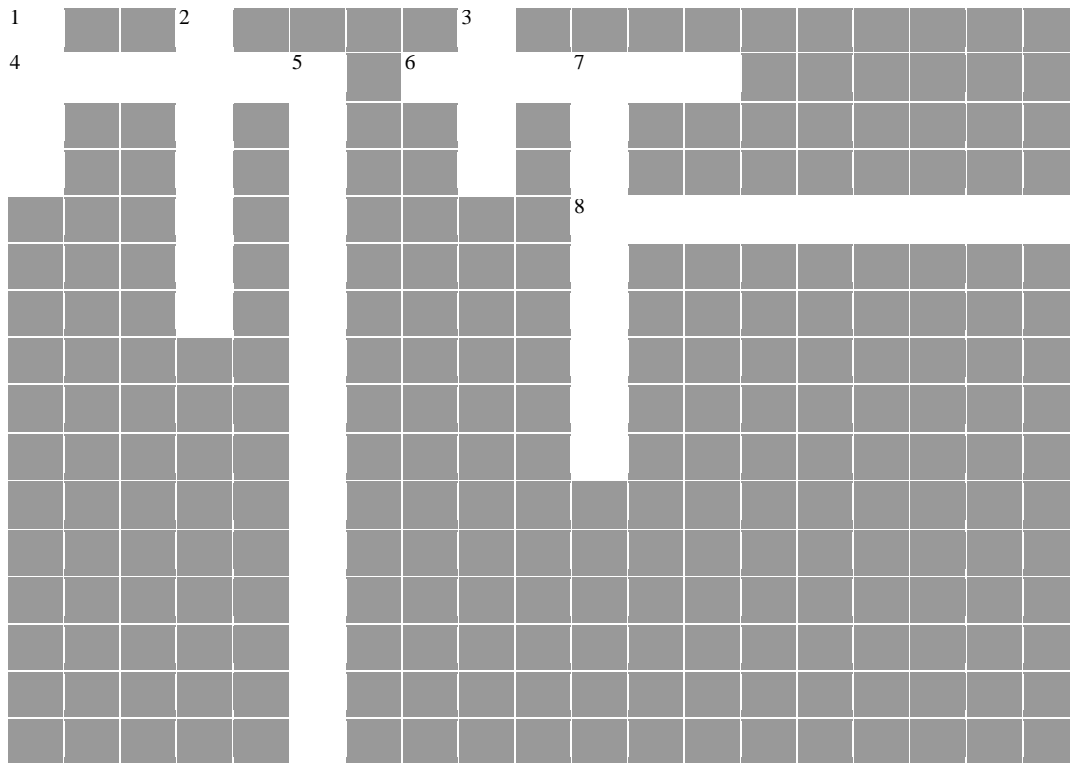
“We are one in Christ.” (Galatians 3:28)

Baptism is the key which enables us to receive great gift of the Holy Qurbana so that we can all partake as a family in the body and blood of Christ. This idea will be covered in more detail in lesson 3.

Question:

- 1) During the service of Holy Baptism, we renounce Satan and accept Christ. How can you relate this to the unity between members of the Church?

Activity:



ACROSS

4. Feast commemorating the baptism of our Lord
6. The river where Jesus was baptized
8. Baptism makes us each a part of a _____ of believers in Christ

DOWN

1. The source of our inherited sin
2. Without having received this, we cannot receive Holy Qurbana
3. The Holy Spirit descended in the form of this animal
5. When we are anointed with this oil during baptism, we are anointing of the sickness of sin
7. Through baptism, people across the world are made _____ of Christ

“We are one in Christ.” (Galatians 3:28)

CHAPTER 3

UNITY IN CHRIST



CHAPTER 3: UNITY IN CHRIST

Objective: The aim of this lesson is understand the importance of Christian fellowship through Christ—His live-giving Body and Blood. By partaking of the Divine Eucharist, the members of the church eat and drink from one table, the ultimate act of fellowship with Jesus Christ, our Lord. The Kiss of Peace we give to each other during the Holy Qurbana symbolizes the peace and harmony that exists between the members of the Church.

Bible Verse: St. Matthew 26:27-28

Lesson: When we very young, we were brought to church by our parents to participate in the Holy Qurbana, the life-giving Body and Blood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. As we grow older, have we fully accepted the importance of regular church attendance and participation in the Holy Qurbana? In the gospel according to Saint Matthew, Jesus Christ clearly tells his disciples to eat of His body and drink of His blood. He instructs the Church and to do this until His second coming.

"While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, 'Take and eat; this is my body.' Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, 'Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.'" (St. Matthew 26:27-28).

By partaking of the Holy Qurbana every Sunday, we obey the command of Jesus Christ to His disciples. Through apostolic succession, we believe that the Holy Qurbana we partake of is the very same “Last Supper” that took place before Jesus Christ died on the cross. Orthodox Christians all over the world celebrate the Holy Qurbana. Even though we may be in different buildings and countries, we are made one because we celebrate the same Holy Qurbana. We also believe that our faithful departed also partake of the Holy Qurbana. The Holy Qurbana is a cosmic celebration, where all members of the Church, living and departed, are made one in Jesus Christ.

We may feel that the Holy Qurbana is repetitive, but we must try our best to stay focused on importance of what we are doing. Every Holy Qurbana must be attended with adequate preparation. We must reflect on our lives and confess our sins, so that our offering will be accepted by God. A condition of our confession is that we must also make peace with our brothers and sisters, forgiving and/or asking forgiveness from them. This is displayed through the Kiss of Peace.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Loving Son and Gracious Spirit – we praise You, thank You and worship You for Your continued love and mercy towards us, for the opportunity to live a life pleasing and acceptable to You, according to Your perfect and divine will. As we grow older, we thank You for allowing us to learn more about the importance of Christian fellowship in our lives. We earnestly pray for and seek Your wisdom as we strengthen and build our relationships with our brothers and sisters, praying for a better understanding of

“We are one in Christ.” (Galatians 3:28)

our communion and oneness with Your only begotten Son, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Thank you for the blessing of the Holy Church which allows us to come and grow together in worship. Help us to attain Christian perfection in You and through You and to be a witness of Your abundant, unconditional and endless love to those around us. We seek all the intercession of all Your holy saints and angels, praying in the name of the Father, the Son and Holy Spirit – Amen.

Activity: Word Search



- | | | |
|-----------|----------------|-----------|
| Christ | Forgiveness | Unity |
| Divine | Love | Heavenly |
| Eucharist | Reconciliation | Angels |
| Liturgy | Achen | Tradition |
| Peace | Sacrament | |
| Creato | | |

“We are one in Christ.” (Galatians 3:28)

CHAPTER 4

UNITY IN THE CHURCH



CHAPTER 4: UNITY IN THE CHURCH

Objective: The aim of this lesson is to understand the importance of Christian fellowship. Through fellowship with one another, we build unity in the Church. Fellowship is more than worshipping and praying together. It also means sharing together in a common life with other believers through our relationship with God.

Bible Verses:

St. John 15: 5, St. John 15: 4, Acts 2:42, Philippians2:1-2, St. Luke 5:17-20, Acts 2:42-45

Lesson: Jesus said, ‘I am the vine; you are the branches’ (St. John 15: 5). Of all the trees in the land of Israel that Jesus could have chosen, He selected the vine. He could easily have said, “I am the palm tree; you are the branches.” The vine and the palm tree both bear fruit, but their appearances are very different. A palm tree has a long clearly defined trunk and branches that are almost leaves. Its branches are completely different from its trunk. A vine is made up entirely of branches and has no clearly defined trunk at all. In other words, the vine is its branches.

We could easily think that the palm tree would have been a better picture of Jesus and his followers. The long, strong trunk would represent Him, and the cluster of large leaves at the top would be his followers. However, this is not the picture Jesus chose to symbolically display the nature of our relationship with Him. . He chose the vine, the one plant that is made up entirely of branches. We are totally identified with Him. He is the vine and we are also of that same vine. We are in Him and a part of Him.

The vine perfectly illustrates what Jesus said, **‘Remain in me, and I in you’** (St. John 15: 4).

We have no separate identity from Him. If we are in Him, and He is in us, then whatever He is we are. If He is the Son of God, we also are sons of God. If He is the Light of the world, then we also are the light of the world. And by being branches of the vine, we are all united together through Christ.

Christian fellowship starts with unity with Christ. Fellowship means more than praying together or eating together. In the Orthodox Church, fellowship means being like-minded in all things and living a life that is centered on Christ. St. Paul teaches us how to be like minded - [Philippians 2:1-2] - **“Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from His love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind.”** Through fellowship, we pray and take care of each other. We look to the needs of others over and above our own. We grow toward unity in spirit and mind.

There are many examples of fellowship in the Bible. In St. Luke 5:17-20, we read of one aspect of fellowship, that is, caring for each other. We read that a group of friends brought a paralyzed man to Jesus and He healed the man from his sickness because of the faith of his friends. Also, in St. Mathew 8:5-13, we read about a Roman centurion who approached Jesus

“We are one in Christ.” (Galatians 3:28)

and implored Him to heal his ailing servant. Jesus, impressed by the centurion’s faith, heals the servant.

The book of the Acts of the Apostles is filled with examples of how the early Church practiced fellowship. Look at some of the verses below:

- **Acts 2:42 – Devotion to the Gospel and apostles teaching.**
- **Acts 2:44 – All the believers were together and had everything in common.**
- **Acts 2:45 – They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need.**
- **Acts 2: 47 – They praised God and enjoyed the favor of all the people.**

Let’s take a minute and think about our own Churches. Do the above verses remind us of our Church? Is our fellowship similar to the joy, communal harmony and spiritual well-being that the early Church enjoyed? Sometimes we hear about quarrels in our Churches. What are some of the things that hinder true fellowship?

Relativism: Relativism maintains there are no absolutes of truth, of good and evil, or of values and priorities. It is just as Isaiah warned Israel, “Woe to those who call evil good and good evil; who substitute darkness for light and light for darkness; who substitute bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes, And clever in their own sight!” Jesus Christ said – “I am the way, the truth and the life”. There cannot be multiple truths but only one truth – and that is Christ. It is common to hear that one person’s truth and opinion is different from another person’s. When there is no resolution to this, the unity in the Church is broken. This is why being like-minded in Christ is the foundation of real Christian fellowship.

Privatization: Privatization says – “What I believe and do is my private business. Since it doesn’t really matter if you believe in God and I believe in Mother Earth, let’s agree to keep our beliefs to ourselves.” Believers too often don’t want to be involved in the lives of others and they especially don’t want anyone getting too close to them. Think about this – if the friends of the paralyzed man (5:17-20) left him to himself, would he have received healing? Or if the Roman centurion did not care for his servant, would we have learned of his great faith and the healing power of Christ? Unity in the Church is not limited to participating in the Holy Qurbana on Sundays. When the Holy Qurbana causes real change in our life, it will move us to be more sympathetic towards the needs of others.

Individualism: Individualism means that you have put yourself in the center. The Bible teaches that we are each individual people with gifts and talents given to us by God for His glory, but these gifts are for the blessing, encouragement, help, and edification of the body of Christ. We are members of the body of Christ and we rely on each other for support. We have specific responsibilities so that we can move as one unit. The Bible provides us with many descriptions about what these responsibilities are. Unfortunately, the forces of relativism, privatization and individualism have become common place in today’s culture and we accept them. We should strive to overcome these forces by reminding ourselves that we

“We are one in Christ.” (Galatians 3:28)

are members of one body – the body of Christ, and that we are all branches of the same vine that is rooted in Christ.

Therefore, when we find ourselves being self-centered, let us remember Jesus Christ who died for us. When we argue and refuse to come to an agreement, let us remember that there can be only one truth and try to come to peace in the light of Christ’s teachings. When we hear of someone going through hard trials, let us remember the centurion who approached Christ on behalf of his servant and pray for them. When we hear of someone in need, let us remember the story of the Good Samaritan and help them in any way we can. Through Christ and in Christ, we can build a strong fellowship with one another.

Activities:

Charades gets people involved and active. Allowing people to be goofy in front of one another can break down barriers. Encourage everyone to get involved--most people need a little help getting out of their shell.

Break the class into two or more groups. Give each group an envelope containing a different function of the church and ask one member of the team to act it out without using words. The group has to guess the function that their teammate is trying to act out to win a point.

