

Ordinary Time, Proper 12

Heal the wounds, which sap the strength of the church spiritually and materially, in the spirit of love and compassion.

— Doctrine and Covenants 151:10 adapted

Explore

Gather Together in Unity

several copies of the same Bible version, candle, matches

Psalm 85

Provide several copies of the same Bible version for students to share. Light a candle and circle around it. Wait for the group to quiet. Tell them they are going to pray Psalm 85. Share: “We gather together as brothers and sisters in Christ to celebrate the many gifts that God has given us to be able to work together in unity.” Take turns reading each verse until the psalm is completed. When finished, sit or stand quietly with eyes closed for a few moments imagining the images discussed in the psalm. Invite students to offer a one-sentence prayer based on their thoughts.

Extract

Strength in Unity

Ask what things mentioned in Psalm 85:10, 11 allow us to dwell in unity (steadfast love, faithfulness, righteousness, and peace). What additional ways can we work together in unity? In what areas of our lives do we need unity?

Ask a volunteer to read Doctrine and Covenants 151:9. What does the verse say? Who is it commissioning? Ask another to read verse 10. What will working together do (promote unity, resolve conflicts, relieve tensions between individuals, heal the wounds that have been sapping the strength of the church)? Invite guests who have testimonies about working together in unity to come and share with the class. How do they become witnesses of God’s love and compassion to others?

Bible, Doctrine and Covenants, guests

Psalm 85:10, 11
Doctrine and Covenants 151:9, 10

Recognize the possibilities found in unity.

Experience

Working Together in Unity by Eva Wasonga

In most rural areas of Kenya and other African countries, it takes more than one family to work together in their *shambas* (fields), build a hut, and do other communal activities. Building a simple mud-walled house for a family involves the community. How does it take place?

The first day, they gather the materials. The men and youth cut down poles from trees in the forest. They also dig out clay using *jembes* (hoes). Women and children fetch water from a nearby water source, which can either be a lake, spring, dam, or river. The women carry the water in containers on their heads or on their backs. The older children do the same. After gathering the materials, construction begins. The men and the youth build a frame of poles for the house, while the women and children make mud by mixing together clay and water. Everybody then packs the mud into the frame to build solid walls. The floor of the hut is plastered by clay mixed with cow dung, which has been dried and mixed with herbs so it has a flat smell. The hut is then decorated by drawing patterns in the walls while it is still wet.

The hut will look very presentable when it's finished. The people sing songs to celebrate the completion of the hut before the family moves in. Just as they work together in unity to build the hut, we need to join together in unity to offer what God has given us and to celebrate life more abundantly. When we work together in unity, good normally follows after. We feel revived and strengthened to do more. We don't have to go and build huts as they do in Kenya, but we can do something else that will make the people around us happy.

Partnering

Divide the class into pairs. If needed teachers can participate too! Instruct partners to stand facing each other with their hands braced against each other. Using the support of each other, have each pair see how far they can lean forward while walking their feet backward. Next, have the pairs turn back to back, linking arms. Using the support of each other, challenge the pairs to sit down and then stand up again without unlinking their arms. Discuss the experience. What part did working together play in the results? Could the activities have been accomplished successfully alone?

Expand

Sharing

paper, pens

Find ways where the class can work together in the course of this week. Consider planning a youth service or service project. Pray that the class may work together in unity. Close with prayer.