

SAMPLE



Thank you for downloading the FREE SAMPLE of **DNowStudies** 4-session Bible Study, *Community*

Community is an amazing resource for your DNow or Retreat weekend. By leading your student through this study, you'll not only challenge them to live out their faith in a powerful way, you'll equip them to do it long after your event is over.

Before jumping into this sample, make sure you check out all the amazing features that **DNowStudies** puts at your fingertips. There really is nothing else like it anywhere...

What You'll Find In This Sample

- >>A Sample of a Small Group Lesson Plan
- >>A Sample of the Student Book
- >>A short version of the *Community* Overviews

Of course each of these components, and dozens more, are available to your teachers through their Online Lesson Manager. But this PDF will simply give you an idea of the main content of *Community*.

If you have questions, email us at dnow@leadertreks.com.
Or, give us a call at 1-877-502-0699

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YOUTH MINISTRY

Did you know that Small Group Content is just one of the many components you have access to with the purchase of a **DNow** study?

DNowStudies gives you the resources you need to create transformational DNow or Retreat Weekends. Take a look at what's included in your purchase of *Community*.

- Large Group Speaker Outlines
- Large Group Videos
- Large Group Motion Background/Loop
- Large Group PowerPoint Slides
- Promotional Tools: Web Banner/Poster Files
- Promotional Tools: Promo Video
- Parent Resources

Throw in built-in **Tools and Training** for you and ALL your leaders, a streamlined **Teacher Management** tool, and of course your **Small Group Lesson Plans** and you begin to see how **DNowStudies** really can help make your Disciple Now and/or Retreat Weekend exceptional.

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YOUTH MINISTRY

Community: John 13:35

We all have our preferences—the foods we like to eat, the music we like to listen to, and the things we like to do. Our preferences can even define who belongs in our groups—what unites us—bringing us together for a purpose that’s bigger and better than ourselves.

But sometimes our preferences actually end up getting in the way. Anytime two or more people get together, it can happen. We bicker about small differences, shout to promote our opinions and beliefs over others’, and are even willing to go to war over bigger, more serious issues.

What about when Christians get together? We’ve all heard stories about the disagreements that can tear a congregation apart. We’re supposed to be the ones leading the charge, but we’re often the ones who look the *least* unified to a watching world. Jesus knew this was going to be the case. He’s not surprised by our fighting. But still, he says this:

“By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”
(John 13:35)

Jesus calls us to love one another. We won’t agree about everything. We’ll still have our individual preferences, but the unity Jesus calls us to doesn’t depend on our preferences. It depends on Jesus. He is our ultimate example of setting aside preferences to fulfill God’s purposes. Jesus set aside his comfort, status, and power to save us and make us part of his family. And he promises that when we make connecting with him our biggest priority, he’ll unify us in a way that will transform the world.

That’s what this series is all about: pursuing Jesus together, and allowing him to move us past liking *things* to loving *people*. Community. We *literally* can’t do it alone.

Small Group Outlines

Small Group Session 1

- **Session Title:** The Problem
- **Main Scripture Passages:** John 17:14, James 4:1-2, Matthew 12:30
- **Session Overview:** The goal of this session is to help students see the need for unity in the church and the cost of disunity. Students will take a look at the early church in Acts 2 to see what true community is supposed to look like and how hard it is to achieve. From there, they’ll begin to identify the problem behind the disunity we so often experience, and they’ll be challenged to pursue unity both inside and outside of the church.

Small Group Outlines

Small Group Session 2

- **Session Title:** The Source
- **Main Scripture Passages:** Galatians 6:2, 1 Peter 3:8-9, Philippians 2:3
- **Session Overview:** The goal of this session is to help students understand that Jesus is the source of our unity as Christ-followers. Students will dig into John 15's vine and branches imagery to discover their need to stay connected to our common source, Jesus, as we pursue our common goal of bearing Christ's fruit. Students will be challenged to go beyond their preferences as they pursue a gospel-centered unity that embraces and transforms the world.

Small Group Outlines

Small Group Session 3

- **Session Title:** The Difference
- **Main Scripture Passages:** John 17:22, Ephesians 4:11-13, Hebrews 10:23-24
- **Session Overview:** The goal of this session is to help students see how different our lives become when we live in unity. This lesson is the practical, nuts and bolts section of the study where students can walk away with specific character traits and action-steps for living out Christ-like unity. Students will first understand that this is going to take hard work, and that it's their job. Second, they will hear about what biblical character traits are needed to start living the way that Jesus calls us to. Finally, they will be reminded that, ultimately, each of these character traits reflect Jesus, and his heart toward us.

Small Group Outlines

Small Group Session 4

- **Session Title:** The Call
- **Main Scripture Passages:** 2 Corinthians 13:11, 2 Chronicles 30:12-13, Matthew 28:19
- **Session Overview:** The main objective of this lesson is to show students what we and our communities were made for: worshiping God. Moving past our preferences in community becomes truly "worth it" when we live in God's ultimate purpose for our lives. When we connect to Jesus individually and start living differently, the next logical step is to start influencing others to do the same. Students will learn that our call to influence others requires us to remember that we—at our core—are reconciled people, that we are part of God's ministry of reconciliation to the world, and that we are now ambassadors of Christ.

Large Group Outlines

Large Group Session 1: Acts 2:42-47

Large Group Session 2: John 15:4-17

Large Group Session 3: Ephesians 4:1-6

Large Group Session 4: 2 Corinthians 5:14-21

Student Book Devotional Outlines

Devotional 1: Galatians 5:13-26

Devotional 2: Romans 8:12-17

Devotional 3: Ephesians 4:25-32

Devotional 4: Philippians 2:1-16



01. THE PROBLEM

HOW TO USE THIS RESOURCE

GOAL:

The goal of this lesson is twofold:

1. *This small group lesson is designed to help you and your students go deeper into understanding what true Christian community looks like, and why our experiences often fall short.* Students will explore the high cost of disunity in our relationships, and how that impacts the family of Christ and the world. They'll discover that they have an important part to play in battling disunity.
2. *It is also designed to make it easy for you to facilitate and teach students about what true, Christian community looks like, where it comes from, and why it is critical for us to pursue.* That is why the Small Group Leader Guide is packed with easy-to-use instructions, timeframes, and questions that promote thinking and draw out real responses.

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

- A copy of the Small Group Leader Guide for you and any other facilitators.
- A Student Book for each participant.
- Be sure to check out the Live It Out section ahead of time to prepare. You'll need:
 - a hula-hoop for each small group (or something large/light enough that everyone can get around and hold up with just their pointer fingers—a dowel rod, a pool noodle, etc.).

TEACHER PREP VIDEO:

Don't forget to take a minute and watch the teacher prep video found in your DNow Studies account. It's a short video that will take you through some of the need-to-knows before you dive into this lesson with students.

WHAT'S INCLUDED: Small Group Leader Guide or Student Book

This table outlines the parts of each lesson and provides an approximate timeframe that you can adapt to meet the needs of your group.

Lesson Elements (and brief description)	Included in Small Group Leader Guide	Included in Student Book	Approximate Timeframe
LARGE GROUP TALK REVIEW W/OPENING QUESTIONS Recap the teaching. Get discussion going by sharing answers from the end of the Large Group Talk.		✓	3-5 minutes
A SECOND LOOK A look at world-changing unity in current, everyday life—followed by discussion questions.	✓	✓	10-15 minutes
A LITTLE DEEPER Dig into Bible passages that were not in the Large Group Talk. See what else Scripture says about this topic.	✓	✓ (w/discussion questions)	15-20 minutes
LIVE IT OUT An experiential activity to help students reinforce and internalize the lesson—followed by discussion questions.	✓		10-15 minutes
APPLY IT A practical application for students to do this week.	✓	✓	2-3 minutes
STUDENT DEVOTIONAL A short devotional for students to do on their own.		✓	

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SMALL GROUP SESSION ONE: THE PROBLEM

THE FIRST MEETING

Since this is the first small group meeting for this event, take the time to lay the foundation for the whole event.

- *If your students don't know each other, cover introductions and consider an icebreaker (see leadertreks.org/freebies for several icebreaker and team-building activities).*
- *Make sure to cover the schedule and ground rules for the event, especially if you are staying at a host home.*
- *Tell students why you are here. You are probably sacrificing some time and comfort to be a small group leader and, chances are, it's worth it! Let students know why you care so much about them and why you want to invest in them to help them grow. Tell students why you think they're great and why it's worth it for you to be a small group leader this weekend!*

LARGE GROUP TALK REVIEW

Take a minute to review what students just learned in the Large Group Talk. Have them pull out their notes, and ask them to share what their answers were for the two questions found on **page 4** of the Student Book. Consider having students share their answers with a partner, and then ask for two or three volunteers who might want to share with the whole group.

A SECOND LOOK

*Read this story together and answer the following questions, found on **page 6** of the Student Book.*

You don't have to look very hard for examples of disunity in the world—the music industry is full of them. Even when things appear to be going right on the outside, with world tours, fame, and millions of dollars being made, it seems like band mates just can't get along for more than a few years. It's rare for a group of musicians to keep it going for more than a decade.

A great example of this is The Police, a band that had the potential to be one of the greatest bands of all time (just ask your parents). In fact, despite breaking up after just a few years, many hits by The Police are still recognized and enjoyed around the world today.

Started and headlined by a schoolteacher, Gordon "Sting" Sumner, The Police took the musical world by storm and were rock's next big thing within a year of forming. As often happens, though, tensions rose when Sting tried to take control of the band. During the recording of their second album, things went south. Names were called, artistic differences surfaced, egos took over, and the band called it quits at a time when, from the outside, it seemed like they should have been more united than ever over their success as a band.

Discuss:

- Describe a situation when you've been a part of a group that seemed to be successful from the outside, but, on the inside, was full of difficulty and disunity.
- What are things that you see contributing to disunity among Christ-followers?
- What step could you take toward unity in these situations, whether you're directly a part of them or not?

Leader's Note: Make sure to say a positive or encouraging comment after students share, for example, "Thanks for saying that," "Good insight," "I think we've all felt that way," or "I've never thought of it like that." If you let silence take over after a student shares, it can change the tempo of the discussion and prevent students from sharing any more. Stay upbeat, nod at them, and smile. It can change the whole atmosphere of each small group time.

A LITTLE DEEPER

Take some time to explore these passages with your students and to dig a bit more deeply into this idea of being unified as a body of believers.

Read each Bible passage and answer the questions found in the Student Book on pages 7 and 8:

JOHN 17:14

I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.

Background Note: This verse is part of a section of scripture referred to as Jesus' "high priestly prayer." The whole chapter of John 17 is Jesus' prayer for the disciples as well as future Christians right before his betrayal, trial, crucifixion, and ultimate resurrection. What's interesting in this prayer is that multiple times Jesus prays for the unity of the believers—that "they may all be one even as we are one." While praying for the body of believers he's about to leave to accomplish his mission on earth, he acknowledges that his followers are separate from the world and that unity with Jesus and his church doesn't mean that we will be unified with the world.

Discussion questions found on page 7 of the Student Book.

JAMES 4:1-2

What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you? You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. You do not have, because you do not ask.

Background Note: James argues that disagreements (quarrels and fights) among believers are essentially the results of the selfishness that resides inside of all of our hearts. Ultimately, it's our sin (which often finds its root in selfishness) that causes disunity. We need to look inward; disunity starts in our hearts!

Discussion questions found on page 7 of the Student Book.

MATTHEW 12:30

Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters.

Background Note: As Christ-followers, we have a decision to make moving forward—are we going to continue to live selfishly and cause discord amongst us (like described in James) or are we going to make the choice to unite ourselves to Jesus, follow him, and live sacrificially, laying our selfishness down to the benefit of others?

Discussion questions found on page 8 of the Student Book.

LIVE IT OUT: HELIUM HULA HOOP

What you'll need: hula-hoop for each small group (or something large/light enough that everyone can get around and hold up with just their pointer fingers—a dowel rod, a pool noodle, etc.). If you use a straight object, have members of the group get on opposite sides of the object for this activity to work.

The goal of this exercise is for the group to work together to lower the hula-hoop to the ground using only their pointer fingers. Have everyone gather around the hoop and, while you're still holding it in place, have each person make a fist and point their index fingers and place them under the hoop.

Say Something Like: *You're going to work together as a team to lower this hula-hoop all the way to the ground. Here's the catch: everyone must keep his or her fingers in contact with the hoop or it has to come back up and you'll have to start over again. Also, you may not 'hook' your fingers around the hoop...they have to point straight while the hoop rests on them.*

Instructions:

- When you say, "Go," the students should attempt to lower the hoop to the floor, which is actually more difficult than it sounds. Often the hoop mysteriously starts to float up, hence the name of the activity, "Helium Hula Hoop."
- Give the group a couple chances to lower it. If they're having difficulty, have them take a break to talk together and develop a strategy. Take note of those who get frustrated with others in the group, since that will be a part of the follow-up questions.

Debrief:

- Did anyone find him or herself getting frustrated with the activity or with other people?
- Did the tension and difficulty of accomplishing the task create more unity or less unity in the group? Why?
- What are some things you did (or could have done) to keep unity during this activity?
- In what way can you apply some of these same strategies to maintaining unity in our student ministries/churches/small groups?

APPLY IT

What is one thing you can do this week to grow a sense of Christ's unity with your friends and family?

Be specific:

What are you going to do?

When are you going to do it?

Is there someone who can keep you accountable?

Leader's Note: *Whenever students make applications, challenge them to be specific. It's one thing to say, "I'm going to trust God more." The truth is, our students won't really know if they did this, or if they grew in trust over the week. It's another thing to say, "Every morning this week before I eat breakfast, I'm going to tell God that today is his and that I trust him, and I'm going to ask him to give me the strength to replace worries with trust." Challenge your students to answer the questions under the "Be Specific" section. You can even have them pair up, share their applications, and ask for accountability from their partner.*

WHAT'S NEXT?

Schedule: Let students know what's happening next in the schedule and what they need to do or bring with them.

Student Devotional: The Student Book contains a short devotional for students to do on their own. Remember to point this out to students and let them know if and when this fits into the schedule of the weekend. The devotional that corresponds with this lesson is found on **page 35**.

INTERACTIVE STUDENT BOOK



Comm
UNITY

beyond our preference
to Christ's purpose

THIS BOOK BELONGS TO:

Community: Beyond our Preference to Christ's Purpose

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THE END OF COMMUNITY... KIND OF

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WELCOME TO COMMUNITY

Have you noticed that ads are getting weirder and weirder? Companies spend tons of money on marketing as everyone tries to figure out the next clever way to shout, “THIS IS WHAT I’M ALL ABOUT!” Honestly, we’re no different. We want people to think of us in certain ways: the fun one, the goofy one, or the smart one. It turns out that Jesus wants the world to think of Christians in a certain way too.

“BY THIS ALL PEOPLE WILL KNOW THAT YOU ARE MY DISCIPLES, IF YOU HAVE LOVE FOR ONE ANOTHER.”

JOHN 13:35

Here are some things you need to know as you go through this study:

1. **God wants to connect with you.** In fact, he’s looking forward to it. But how ready are you to connect with him? As you go in and out of the sessions and devotional times, make sure you are willing to listen to him and learn from him. He promises that he will come near to you if you come near to him (James 4:8). Try it!
2. **What you put into this study is what you’ll get out of it.** There are people all around you who have spent a lot of time praying for you and getting ready to invest in you. You’ll probably meet some new people, hear some new speakers, and get a chance to spend some quality time with God and with friends. Take advantage of it! Ask hard questions. Commit to being authentic and honest. God wants to use this time and these people in your life.

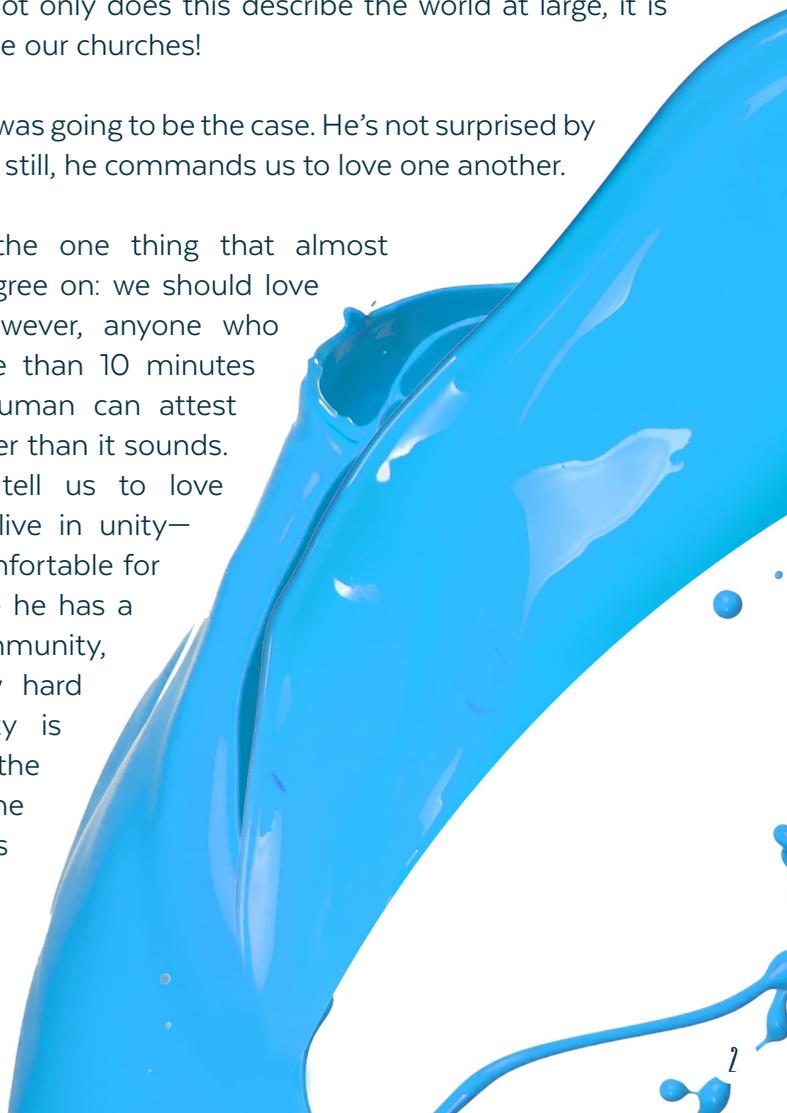
SESSION ONE INTRO

THE PROBLEM

It doesn't take much more than a quick browse on Facebook, the news, or a YouTube comment section to learn that our world really struggles to get along. Each of us can think of at least one or two opinions or beliefs we hold that another person would strongly disagree with. Not only does this describe the world at large, it is just as true inside our churches!

Jesus knew this was going to be the case. He's not surprised by our fighting. But still, he commands us to love one another.

This may be the one thing that almost everyone can agree on: we should love each other. However, anyone who has spent more than 10 minutes with another human can attest that this is harder than it sounds. Jesus doesn't tell us to love each other—to live in unity—because it's comfortable for us, but because he has a purpose for community, no matter how hard it is. Our unity is supposed to tell the world about the God that holds us together as his people.



SESSION ONE LARGE GROUP

THE PROBLEM

These two pages are designed so you can take note of anything that stands out to you and that you think is worth remembering during the large group talk. This talk will set the stage for the rest of the session. Consider writing down main points, quotes, Bible verses, and any questions that pop into your head.



Think of a group of people that should be unified but are not.
What are some words you would use to describe them?

What are some words you would use
to describe your own Christian communities?

A SECOND LOOK

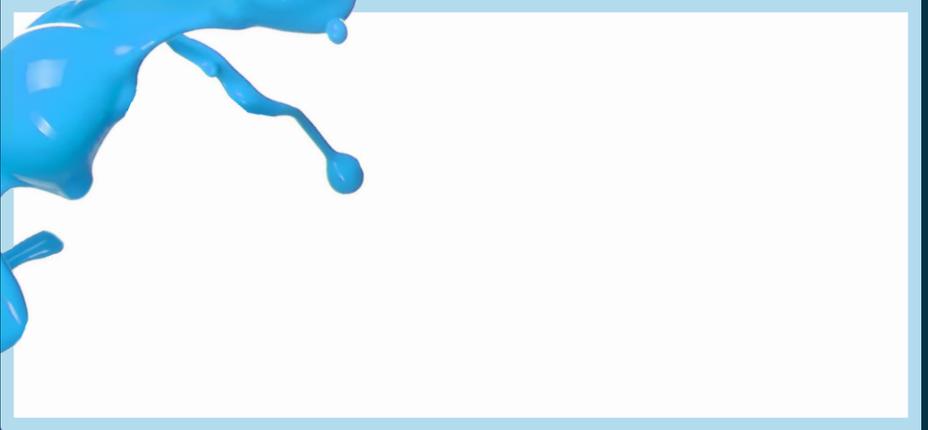
SMALL GROUP SESSION ONE: THE PROBLEM

You don't have to look very hard for examples of disunity in the world—the music industry is full of them. Even when things appear to be going right on the outside, with world tours, fame, and millions of dollars being made, it seems like band mates just can't seem to get along for more than a couple of years. It's rare for a group of musicians to keep it going for more than a decade.

A great example of this is The Police, a band that had the potential to be one of the greatest bands of all time (just ask your parents). In fact, despite breaking up after just a few years, many hits by The Police are still recognized and enjoyed around the world today.

Started and headlined by a schoolteacher, Gordon “Sting” Sumner, The Police took the musical world by storm and were rock's next big thing within a year of forming. As often happens, though, tensions rose when Sting tried to take control of the band. During the recording of their second album, things went south. Names were called, artistic differences surfaced, egos took over, and the band called it quits at a time when, from the outside, it seemed like they should have been more united than ever over their success as a band.

Describe a situation when you've been a part of a group that seemed to be successful from the outside, but, on the inside, was full of difficulty and disunity.



What are things that you see contributing to disunity among Christ-followers?



What step could you take toward unity in these situations, whether you're directly a part of them or not?



A LITTLE DEEPER

TAKE A LOOK AT EACH OF THESE BIBLE PASSAGES AND GET READY TO TALK THROUGH THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS WITH YOUR GROUP.

John 17:14: I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.

Do you find it easy or difficult to be “not of the world”?

What are some ways you’ve experienced “not fitting in” because you’ve chosen to not be “of the world”?

James 4:1-2: What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you? You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. You do not have, because you do not ask.

Describe a time when selfishness (either your own or someone else’s) led to a major disagreement between you and a friend, a parent, a sibling, etc.

Why is selfishness linked to a lack of unity with other Christ-followers?

Matthew 12:30: Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters.

What are the actions and attitudes of someone who is “with Jesus” vs. those who are “against Jesus”?

How does uniting with Jesus allow us to have unity with each other?

APPLY IT

What is one thing you can do this week to grow a sense of Christ’s unity with your friends and family?

BE SPECIFIC:



WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO?



WHEN ARE YOU GOING TO DO IT?



IS THERE SOMEONE WHO CAN KEEP YOU ACCOUNTABLE?

NOTES:
