

LEADERTREKS **SERMON SERIES**

MARK OF A DISCIPLE

Disciples of Christ use their spiritual gifts to unite the body of Christ.

SCRIPTURE

EPHESIANS 4:1–16

SERMON OVERVIEW

In a Christ-centered community, believers must use their gifts in an effort to build a healthy functioning body of believers. God has given each of us a gift and these gifts aren't meant to be used on us alone. The church won't be fully united unless we are all involved and using our God-given gifts for the body of Christ and the glory of God.

OPENING

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

-
-

GAME AND ICE BREAKER QUESTION

- We recommend **The Ties That Bind** or choose another screen game from **Deep Discipleship Games**.
- What's a talent you have that not many people know?

MESSAGE

Use the following teaching points and suggested illustrations as a starting point to build your message.

READ EPHESIANS 4:1–3

POINT 1: We are called to maintain unity, not create it

The supernatural unity that exists in the church originates through the Lord (John 17:21–23). We don't have to try and create this unity on our own. It's already there. We are called to maintain it, to keep it going. And the way we do this is found in verse two: "with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love."

ILLUSTRATION: Tell a personal story about a family member you are close to, a sibling or cousin. Describe the bond you have because you are family. You didn't have to create that connection. It runs deep in both of you because you are united by blood.

As Christ-followers, we have been united by his blood. We all are united in the same family, and we are called to keep that unity.

READ EPHESIANS 4:4-7

POINT 2: One Lord, one faith, one God

Notice how often the word “one” is repeated in these verses. Paul was emphasizing his point. In Paul’s day, people tried to mix their beliefs. They tried to combine their old way of doing things with the new ways Jesus taught. They also tried to merge faith in Jesus with faith in idols and other gods. Unfortunately, not much has changed.

Our culture also tries to mix Jesus in with other religions. Even church people can be guilty of trying to live the way they always have while simply sprinkling in a little Jesus. But Paul points out the impossibility of this. There is one Lord—Jesus; one faith—in Christ; and one God—the Creator and Father of all.

Jesus himself warned against splitting our devotion among lesser pursuits, declaring that we can’t serve two masters (Matthew 6:24). There is only one God, so only he deserves our whole heart.

READ EPHESIANS 4:8-16

POINT 3: The church grows through our gifts

We go to church for many reasons, one of which is to learn how to live out our faith. God gives each Christ-follower at least one spiritual gift. In our worship services and Bible studies, we are equipped, or prepared, to use those gifts. Then we use those gifts to build up the church.

ILLUSTRATION: Share a personal story about a time you joined a group and went through a process to see where you best fit. (Examples: When you join the school band, you try a bunch of instruments to determine which one suits you best. When you join a team, you try out several positions before finding where you best fit.)

We identify and develop our spiritual gifts through our involvement at church.

CLOSING REFLECTION

Use this prompt to wrap up your message and leave your students with a challenge to apply.

- What do you think happens when the church is disconnected?
- When do you feel the most like you “fit in” at church?

GROUP DISCUSSION

Pick a few questions from below to discuss. Close with prayer.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- How was the week? What's the best thing that's happened? Anything major going on?
- When have you been a part of a team (sports, music, drama, mission trip, etc.) that either did or did not work together well? What was that experience like?
- When have you witnessed the body of Christ working in unity and using their spiritual gifts together?
- Why do you think it's essential to stay unified as the body of Christ?
- What do you think your spiritual gift might be as a Christ-follower?
- How are you currently using your spiritual gifts within the body of Christ?
- What examples can you think of in the Bible when people used their spiritual gifts to help others within the body?
- What could happen within the body of Christ if people don't get involved and effectively use their spiritual gifts in the local church?
- How have you contributed to the body of Christ in the past?

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

- What could be a good fit for you in the future at church?

PRAYER

Close by praying or invite someone to pray for your group.
Use this space to keep track of any prayer requests.

Scripture quotations are from the ESV® Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®), copyright ©2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved. May not copy or download more than 500 consecutive verses of the ESV Bible or more than one half of any book of the ESV Bible.

Any reference within this piece to Internet addresses of websites not under the administration of LeaderTreks is not to be taken as an endorsement of these websites by LeaderTreks; neither does LeaderTreks vouch for their content.