

The Church Was Divided

BIBLE PASSAGE: 1 Corinthians 1:10-31

MAIN POINT: Paul wrote that Christians should work together.

KEY PASSAGE: Galatians 2:20

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: Why does God want us to obey Him? We obey because God loves us.

2

INTRODUCE THE STORY
(15–20 MINUTES)
PAGE 22



TEACH THE STORY
(10–15 MINUTES)
PAGE 24



EXPERIENCE THE STORY
(20–25 MINUTES)
PAGE 26



Leader BIBLE STUDY

Paul helped start the church in Corinth, a city in southern Greece, during his second missionary journey. Corinth was known for its wickedness. If any city needed a church, this was it. Paul remained in Corinth for about 18 months and then continued traveling to share the gospel and plant more churches.

Six years later, Paul received word from Chloe, a believer in Corinth, that the church there was struggling. The church was fractured and openly engaging in various sins. Some believers were even denying the resurrection! This news surely troubled Paul, so he sat down to write a letter to the church.

One of the first issues Paul addressed was the church's division. Even if he could help resolve the other issues, a divided church would never be healthy and impact the city the way it needed to. According to Chloe's report, several factions had formed in the church. Some claimed to follow Paul. Others Apollos. Others Peter. And some even claimed to follow Jesus, which wasn't as good as it sounded. This group was most likely simply trying to sound more spiritual than the others.

Paul told the Corinthian believers that they should not be divided; they should all be one because of their shared faith in Jesus. Jesus isn't divided, and He alone died on the cross for them. Paul's message was clear: the gospel does not divide believers, it unites them.

We all—preschoolers included—are experts in finding ways to divide ourselves. Sin and selfishness divide, but Jesus and the gospel unite. God designed the church to show what true unity among a beautifully diverse people looks like. This week, pray that the message Paul shared with the Corinthian believers takes root in your heart and in the hearts of your preschoolers. Pray that God would break down the barriers we create and bring your children together as brothers and sisters in Christ.



MINISTRY GRID
training made simple

Additional resources for each session are available at gospelproject.com. For free training and session-by-session help, visit www.ministrygrid.com/web/thegospelproject.

The BIBLE STORY

Bible Storytelling Tips

- **Use your space:** Arrange preschoolers in smaller groups and guide them to sit in different spots around the room. Motion for the preschoolers to move together in one big group at the appropriate moment in the Bible story.
- **Use music:** Play background music as you tell the Bible story. Use intense, dramatic music at the portion of the story where people are disagreeing. Switch to calm, peaceful music at the portion of the story where Paul exhorts the believers to work together.

The Church Was Divided

1 Corinthians 1:10-31

Paul started a church in the city of Corinth. He stayed there awhile, and then he traveled on to tell more people about the good news of Jesus. Years passed, and Paul heard some bad news: **the church in Corinth was not doing well.** The believers there argued and had many other problems. **So Paul decided to write a letter to them.**

The people in the church should have been like one team working together, but they were divided into different groups. They thought that one teacher was better than the other. **One group said, “We follow Paul.” Another group said, “We follow Apollos.” A third group said, “We follow Peter.” A fourth group said, “We follow Jesus.” Paul said believers should not be divided.**

Paul asked, “Who died on the cross for you? It wasn’t Paul. It wasn’t Apollos. It wasn’t Peter. It was Jesus! Jesus died on the cross for you.” The people agreed that only Jesus is Lord, so Paul told them they should get along and love one another.

Paul said that people who do not believe in Jesus think the good news about Him is silly. He said, “Friends, think about this: God chose you to be in His family—not because of what you know or who is in your family here on earth.” **God saves people who trust in Jesus. No one can brag about being saved because it is not something we can earn or make happen. We should only brag about Jesus and what He has done.**

Christ Connection: Paul told believers in the church at Corinth to get along. Paul reminded the people that Jesus saves sinners. Because of Jesus, believers can come together like one big, happy family.



**WANT TO
DISCOVER
GOD'S WORD?
GET
MORE!**

Invite preschoolers to check out this week's devotionals to discover how God's Word can help them grow in the gospel. Order in bulk, subscribe quarterly, or purchase individually. For more information, check out www.lifeway.com/devotionals.

Introduce THE STORY

SESSION TITLE: The Church Was Divided

BIBLE PASSAGE: 1 Corinthians 1:10-31

MAIN POINT: Paul wrote that Christians should work together.

KEY PASSAGE: Galatians 2:20

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: Why does God want us to obey Him? We obey because God loves us.

Welcome time

- “Take My Life and Let It Be” song
- offering basket
- Allergy Alert download
- favorite toys related to the Bible story theme

Play the unit theme song in the background as you greet preschoolers and follow your church’s security procedures. Set an offering basket near the door to collect at an appropriate time. Post an allergy alert, if necessary. Set out a few favorite theme-related toys, such as puzzles and blocks.

Activity page

- “Divided” activity page, 1 per child
- pencils or crayons

Guide preschoolers to draw a line connecting the item to its other half.

SAY • Today’s Bible story is called “The Church Was Divided.” The church was not cut in half like these items. The people in the church at Corinth separated themselves into different groups. This was not good! The church should have been like one team working together. Listen to our Bible story to hear what Paul said to the believers in Corinth.



Play “Follow the Leader”

Choose a child to be the leader. The rest of the group will line up single file behind the leader. Those behind the leader should mimic her actions as she moves about the room. After a short time, direct the leader to move the back of

the line and allow the child now first in line to be the new leader. Continue play until each preschooler who wishes to be the leader has had the chance to do so.

SAY • In today's Bible story, the people at the church in the city of Corinth thought that one teacher was better than the others. One group said, "We follow Paul." Another group said, "We follow Apollos." A third group said, "We follow Peter." A fourth group said, "We follow Jesus." Believers should not be divided. Listen for what Paul wrote to the church in Corinth.

Divide stickers into groups

Gather round color-coding labels and a sheet of construction paper matching each color label. Post the construction paper on the wall at preschoolers' height. Give each preschooler a sheet of round labels. Invite him to stick each label on the corresponding sheet of construction paper.

SAY • Good job dividing your stickers into groups! In today's Bible story, the people at the church in the city of Corinth were not dividing stickers into groups, they were dividing themselves! That was not good. Listen to hear what Paul had to say.

- round color-coding labels
- construction paper (in same colors as labels)
- tape

Transition to teach the story

To gain the attention of all the preschoolers to move them to Bible study, show the countdown video, flip off the lights, or clap a simple rhythm for the children to copy. Invite all the preschoolers to hold hands and walk to Bible study together.

- countdown video (optional)

Teach THE STORY

SESSION TITLE: The Church Was Divided

BIBLE PASSAGE: 1 Corinthians 1:10-31

MAIN POINT: Paul wrote that Christians should work together.

KEY PASSAGE: Galatians 2:20

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: Why does God want us to obey Him? We obey because God loves us.

Introduce the Bible story

Tell preschoolers about a time you sinfully argued with someone. Model age-appropriate confession and repentance for preschoolers.

SAY • The believers at the church in Corinth argued and had many other problems. Paul wrote them a letter. Listen to what Paul wrote in our Bible story.

Watch or tell the Bible story

Place a bookmark at 1 Corinthians 1 in your Bible. Invite a preschooler to open it. Reverently display the open Bible.

SAY • We call the Bible God’s Word because the Bible is the only book that has God’s words in it. God’s words are true. Today’s Bible story comes from the New Testament Book of 1 Corinthians.

Show the video or tell the Bible story using the provided storytelling helps. Use the bolded version of the Bible story for young preschoolers.

Talk about the Bible story

SAY • The people in the church in Corinth should have been like one team working together, but they were divided into different groups. **Paul wrote that**

- Bible
- bookmark
- “The Church Was Divided” video (optional)
- Bible Story Picture Poster

- Main Point Poster
- Giant Timeline or Big Story Circle

Christians should work together. Paul reminded the people that because of Jesus, they should come together like one big, happy family.

Point to the Bible story picture on the giant timeline or big story circle as you ask the following review questions:

1. What was happening in the church in Corinth? (*They were divided into different groups.*)
2. Who is the only One who died on the cross for people? (*Jesus*)
3. What did Paul tell the believers in Corinth to do? (*get along and love one another*)
4. Can believers brag about being saved? (*no*)
5. What can believers brag about? (*Jesus and what He has done*)

Learn the big picture question

SAY • Can you answer our big picture question? ***Why does God want us to obey Him? We obey because God loves us.*** Paul reminded the believers that Jesus died on the cross for them. We do not obey God to earn His love. We obey God because He already loves us! We know God loves us because He sent Jesus.

• Big Picture Question Poster

Practice the key passage

Open your Bible to Galatians 2:20. Read the key passage aloud several times. Sing together the key passage song, “F-A-I-T-H.”

SAY • Our key passage tells us knowing that Jesus loves us and gave up His life to save us from sin changes the way we live. We live by faith in Jesus!

• Key Passage Poster
• “F-A-I-T-H” song

Transition to experience the story

Experience THE STORY

SESSION TITLE: The Church Was Divided

BIBLE PASSAGE: 1 Corinthians 1:10-31

MAIN POINT: Paul wrote that Christians should work together.

KEY PASSAGE: Galatians 2:20

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: Why does God want us to obey Him? We obey because God loves us.

LOW PREP

Sing “The More We Get Together”

Sing the song “The More We Get Together.” If you are unfamiliar with the tune or lyrics, look them up online before the session. Look up the American Sign Language signs for *more*, *together*, *happier*, and *friends*. Lead preschoolers in signing the words as they sing. Consider adding the following verses and inserting the names of children in your group.

“There’s Gavin and David,
And Zoe and Kaira.
The more we get together
The happier we’ll be.

SAY • We are happier when we get along and love one another. **Paul wrote that Christians should work together.** Paul told believers in the church at Corinth to get along. Paul reminded the people that Jesus saves sinners. Because of Jesus, believers can come together like one big, happy family.

LOW PREP

•blocks

Build together with blocks

Set out an assortment of blocks. Encourage preschoolers to decide what to build and then work together to build it. Comment on how well preschoolers get along as they work.

SAY • People who love Jesus should be like one team

working together. You all worked together like one team to build with blocks. In today's Bible story, **Paul wrote that Christians should work together.** Paul told believers in the church at Corinth to get along. Paul reminded the people that Jesus saves sinners. Because of Jesus, believers can come together like one big, happy family.

Make a cross relief painting

Use 1-inch painter's tape to make a cross on a sheet of heavyweight paper for each child. Guide preschoolers to paint over the entire paper with watercolors. Remove the tape to reveal a cross. Set aside the art to dry. Consider affixing a label with the key passage on each preschooler's artwork.

- heavyweight paper
- 1-inch painter's tape
- watercolor paints
- paintbrushes
- cups of water
- labels (optional)

SAY • Paul asked, "Who died on the cross for you? It wasn't Paul. It wasn't Apollos. It wasn't Peter. It was Jesus! Jesus died on the cross for you." **Paul wrote that Christians should work together.** Paul reminded the people that Jesus saves sinners. Because of Jesus, believers can come together like one big, happy family.

Work a floor puzzle together

Set out a floor puzzle depicting Jesus. Invite preschoolers to work together to assemble the puzzle. Consider assigning two children to find the corner pieces and two other children to find the edge pieces. Review the Bible story as preschoolers work.

- floor puzzle depicting Jesus

SAY • **Paul wrote that Christians should work together.** We all worked together to put this puzzle together! Whom do we see in this puzzle? Yes, Jesus! Paul

reminded the believers at the church in Corinth that Jesus died on the cross for them. Because of Jesus, believers can come together like one big, happy family.

Play with a parachute

Set out a parachute or a large sheet. Invite preschoolers to work together to perform different tasks with the parachute.

Suggested tasks include the following:

- parachute or large sheet
- rolled socks (optional)
- stuffed animals (optional)
- lightweight balls (optional)
- “Take My Life and Let It Be” song (optional)
- “F-A-I-T-H” song (optional)

- Make objects such as rolled socks, stuffed animals, or lightweight balls pop up like popcorn.
- Try to make a ball roll to a specific location such as between two preschoolers.
- Make a “Merry-Go-Round” by leading preschoolers to turn their bodies sideways and hold the chute with one hand. Then walk around in a circle. You may start and stop music as a cue to reverse and go the other direction.
- Count to three and everyone will lift the parachute overhead. Quickly crouch down, pulling the parachute down as well. This creates what looks like a “mushroom.”

SAY • We had so much fun working together! Followers of Jesus should get along and love one another. **Paul wrote that Christians should work together.** Paul told believers in the church at Corinth to get along. Paul reminded the people that Jesus saves sinners. Because of Jesus, believers can come together like one big, happy family.

Snack

Play the countdown video to signal the end of activities. Guide preschoolers to clean their areas. Take a restroom break and wash hands. Gather preschoolers for snack time. Thank God for the snack.

Make a snack mix for snack. Include ingredients such as dry cereal, miniature crackers, marshmallows, raisins, and chocolate chips. Invite each child to take turns adding an ingredient and stirring the mix. Commend preschoolers for working together to make a snack. Remind preschoolers that **Paul wrote that Christians should work together.** Because of Jesus, believers can come together like one big, happy family.

- countdown video (optional)
- Allergy Alert download
- snack food
- paper cups and napkins

Transition

When a child finishes her snack, guide her to throw away any trash. She may select a book or puzzle to examine, play quietly with play dough or a favorite toy, or color the Bible story coloring page.

Guide preschoolers to think of someone with whom they have a hard time getting along. Offer the journal page and invite them to draw a picture of themselves with that person. Explain that Jesus helps us come together like one family. When people see how followers of Jesus love each other, they want to follow Jesus too. Pray for the children.

SAY • God, thank You for choosing us to be in Your family.

Help us to love one another and get along. Remind us that Jesus died for us and is our Lord. Amen.

If parents are picking up their children at this time, tell them something that their child enjoyed doing or did well during the session. Distribute the preschool big picture cards for families.

- books
- puzzles
- play dough
- Journal Page printable, 1 per child
- Bible Story Coloring Page
- crayons
- *Big Picture Cards for Families: Babies, Toddlers, and Preschoolers*