

SESSION 5 (Joint): A MAN AT CHURCH (Ephesians 4 v 1-13)

THE BIG IDEA:

As Paul tells us how to live as men who are part of God's plan, the first thing he says is to be part of a church, and to use our abilities to serve our church.

GUIDANCE FOR QUESTIONS:

1. A deceptively hard question! We might say: "Because they believe in Jesus". But you can't *see* belief! We might say: "Because they say they are". But they might be wrong, or lying. Keep encouraging the teenager to think about it, and hopefully he'll begin to think about the fact that it makes a difference to how they behave.

2. Encourage the teenager to put verse 1 in his own words. Paul urges Christians to live in a way which matches their "calling".

3. Holy (ie: distinctive) and blameless in God's view of us. We are meant to live in a way which shows our praise of His grace to us.

You might like to point to verse 5, too—we've been called to be God's children, living as part of His family.

4. The body of Christ, and as "one body".

5. Be in "unity" ie: good, close relationship with other Christians in a church community. Point out this isn't easy and doesn't come naturally—we need to make an *effort* to enjoy this kind of unity.

6. Be humble (ie: put others first) and gentle (kind). Be patient, bearing with one another in love (not getting cross or irritated by others' failings, but loving them even when they're not very lovely). This is difficult because we're used to thinking of ourselves, and because other people in church aren't perfect, and so they will annoy us!

Christians can work for a united church by... patiently loving each other.

7. Grace. All of us. (**Note:** Paul's talking to Christians here. Not absolutely everyone has been given this grace—but absolutely every Christian has.)

8. This is a hard question, because the beginning of v 12 ("prepare God's people") is a job for church leaders and teachers, not every single church member. The answer lies in what church leaders are to prepare all God's people (ie: us!) to do—"works of service". Make sure you tease out together what this means—we're to use the gifts God's given us to serve His people.

9. The church will be built up (end v 12)—it will grow and be strong. The church will be united (v 13). And the church will become more mature (v 13)—it will become more grown up and un-babyish in its faith (the next Solo session deals with the concept of Christian maturity).

Christians can work for a united church by... using their God-given gifts to serve each other.

10. Church isn't an incidental add-on for a Christian, of any age. It's essential. If we are serious about living as a Christian (v 1), we will be part of a church. This is crucial, because Christians often see (or treat) church as an optional extra—I go when I want to. Paul sees church as central to the Christian life—we go because we serve our Christian family there.

11. With humility, gentleness, patience and love. You might like to ask the teenager to give examples of what this would look like for him specifically in his particular church.

12. Jesus. To serve His people. Take your time thinking about the last part of this question—you might like to look forwards to *Section G: But what can I do?* at this stage.

SCENARIOS:

This is the first week with “scenarios”, which simply present the teenager with a realistic life situation and ask him to apply the Bible section to that circumstance or problem. The scenarios deal with the most likely mistakes in Christian lifestyle which the section addresses, and therefore hopefully allow the Christian teenager to see a wrong lifestyle and apply the passage to it, without you having to point out directly the ways in which he is/may be getting it wrong!