

Sunday School Lesson, February 1, 2026

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Lesson—Working Together Makes Us Better¹

Text: Mark 4:26-32; Ephesians 4:4-6, 11-16

I. Aim for Change/Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson, we will...

1. Understand and compare how Paul explains spiritual gifts in his letters to different New Testament churches.
2. Recognize and accept the spiritual gifts given by Christ.
3. Pursue reconciliation within the church and between the church and the wider community.

Why This Lesson Matters: When we use the unique gifts that Christ gave the church to minister to one another, then we can grow together and experience spiritual unity.

Key Verse: *Speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love. (Ephesians 4:15-16, KJV).*

II. Topical Outline of the Lesson

1. Introduction
2. Unity's Foundation (Mark 4:26-32; Ephesians 4:4-6)
3. Unity's Provision (Ephesians 4:11-13)
4. Unity's Results (Ephesians 4:14-16)

III. Historical/Biblical Background and Lesson Context

Mark may be second chronologically in the New Testament, but it is nearly universally agreed that his gospel was the first to be written. In Mark 4, Jesus was teaching by the sea of Galilee when he shared 2 parables about how God's Kingdom grows (Mark 4:26-32). He uses examples from farming, something the people who were listening were familiar with, to show that God's work often starts small but grows in powerful and surprising ways.

¹ Outline Content courtesy of the Sunday School Publishing Board Teacher Manual, which should be purchased at www.sspbnbc.com

Paul wrote the book of Ephesians about AD 60-62 while imprisoned in Rome. Paul established the church in Ephesus in AD 53 during an extended stay there on his third missionary journey. Paul's overarching purpose was to encourage believers to reflect Christ daily and minister in unity and love amid persecution. Emphasis was the capital of the Asian district. It is the same area known today as Turkey.

Both Mark and Paul speak to how, when the people of God are unified, growth and maturity are inevitably the result.

IV. *Prominent Character(s) in the Lesson*

Jesus: The son of God who taught a parable to distinguish the arrogant from the humble.

Paul: an apostle to the Gentiles, author of at least thirteen books of the New Testament, who was converted to Christianity after an encounter with Jesus.

V. *Key Terms in the Lesson (KJV)*

<i>Edifying</i>	<i>Harvest</i>	<i>Parable</i>	<i>Seed</i>
<i>Sickle</i>	<i>Sleight</i>	<i>Sown</i>	

Food for thought/question for consideration: (What have we learned, Charlie Brown?) Play

If every disciple of Jesus would put their spiritual gifts to use in the life of the church, the entire body of Christ would strengthen its witness to the lost and advance further in its mission and ministry to reach the world.

Closing Hymn: *Blessed be the tie that binds, our hearts in Christian love;
The fellowship of kindred minds is like to that above.*

Sunday School Slogan: *To Sunday School to Sunday School, we all should go; we have classes for all ages, help us to grow.*