



**Educate
+ Engage**



ANCHORS:

participation



OVERVIEW

This lesson focuses on the second anchor discussed in this series: the anchor of participation, specifically referred to in Acts 2:42 as fellowship. When we fellowship with believers, we are participating (interacting) with God's people. Without the anchor of participation, we will quickly become disconnected from the body of Christ and eventually become a weak, vulnerable vessel. But when we are connected to a support system of godly believers, we have the strength and stability to make it through life's storms.

Rock the Boat Illustration

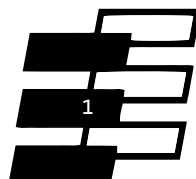
- o Supplies
 - One wooden board (strong, long, and wide enough for a student to stand on and for staff members to hold on either end)
 - One blindfold
- o Support
 - Three staff members (two to hold the ends of the board and one for the student to rest hand on shoulder)
- o Instructions
 - The staff member not holding the board should lead a blindfolded student out onto the board and stay nearby for the student to have a shoulder for support.

A teacher will tell a story of the student on a journey out to sea, dramatically building the story of a raging storm, high waves, winds, lightning, and thunder. The staff members holding the ends of the board will lift the board just a few inches off the ground. As the story progresses, they will shake and move the board to give the feeling of being in the storm.

During the story the staff member standing for support will slowly lower themselves to the ground, giving the student the illusion that they are being raised high into the air, but they will only be a few inches off the ground the entire time.

The teacher will end the story by telling the student they are losing their support system in the storm and before long, it's man overboard! When the staff member moves away from the student, two staff members holding the board will tip it over.

Don't worry, the student will safely and most likely dramatically fall to the ground. (It is a good idea to whisper to the student about the short fall to the ground to avoid any injury.)



Scripture Passage

Romans 12:4–5 (NLT)

Just as our bodies have many parts and each part has a special function, so it is with Christ's body.

Participating in fellowship with one another as a community of believers was designed by God as a spiritual support system for the storms of life. We are many parts of one body, and as such we are all connected.

EDUCATE



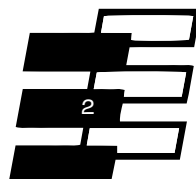
In Mark 2 and Luke 5, we read the story of a paralyzed man whose friends brought him to Jesus to be healed. Sadly they could not get to Jesus because of the crowd, but they did not give up. They carried their friend up on the roof and lowered him through the roof to Jesus. That must have caused a scene. Immediately and miraculously, Jesus forgave his sins and healed his body!

Mark gave us insight into this miracle. Referring to the man's friends, Jesus helped the paralyzed man when Jesus saw his friends' faith. The paralyzed man was forever changed because he participated with friends who cared about him and who had faith in God even if his own faith was weak.

Being anchored with fellow Apostolics who love you and care for you is priceless. The Bible continually teaches us that participating and doing life with a fellow believer will make us better people. Proverbs 27:17 (NLT) reads: "As iron sharpens iron, so a friend sharpens a friend." Iron tools were used often in Bible days, but after being used on a regular basis, the iron would get dull. For iron to sharpen iron, two contrasting iron blades had to work together to make a difference and sharpen one another. This verse in Proverbs 27 tells us that we need spiritually strong Christian friends in your life! **They will help knock off our rough edges and make us better.**

Ecclesiastes 4:9-10 (NLT) tells us: "Two people are better off than one, for they can help each other succeed. If one person falls, the other can reach out and help. But someone who falls alone is in real trouble."

It's a simple and powerful truth: we are better when we are together. You and I need the anchor of participation! The anchor of participation—fellowshipping with other people on a regular basis—is right as long as it's not with the wrong people. We must make certain that our anchor



is sure. The Greek translation of *fellowship* in Acts 2:42 is *koinonia*, which means “community, association for religious and spiritual purposes.”

II Corinthians 6:14 (NLT) cautions us: “Don’t team up with those who are unbelievers. How can righteousness be a partner with wickedness? How can light live with darkness?” Notice the verse doesn’t say we shouldn’t witness or reach out to unbelievers; it says not to team up, partner, or participate with them. The Bible says that the early believers were separated from the world and lived in holy Christian fellowship, strengthening and building up each other in their faith. We should do the same with a sure anchor of participation.

Sustaining the Anchor of Participation

- Consider the following list of “how-tos” for sustaining the anchor of participation:
- Do good things for each other (Galatians 6:10).
- Bear each other’s burdens (Galatians 6:2).
- Forgive each other (Colossians 3:13).
- Restore each other (Galatians 6:1; James 5:19–20).
- Submit to each other (Ephesians 5:21).
- Encourage each other (I Thessalonians 5:11).
- Pursue peace and mutually build each other up (Romans 14:19).
- Motivate each other to love and do good deeds (Hebrews 10:24–25).
- Admonish and exhort each other (Colossians 3:16; Hebrews 3:13).

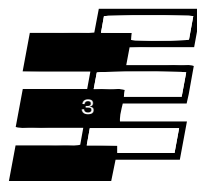
These principles are wonderful guides to teach us how we are supposed to live and act towards one another.

Severing the Line to Anchor of Participation

Not only does the Bible tell us how to sustain godly relationships, it also warns us about severing the line to the anchor of participation.

I Corinthians 1:10 (NLT) addresses divisions in the church: “I appeal to you, dear brothers and sisters, by the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ, to live in harmony with each other. Let there be no divisions in the church. Rather, be of one mind, united in thought and purpose.”

James 1:26 (NLT) warns: “If you claim to be religious but don’t control your tongue, you are fooling yourself, and your religion is worthless.”



Also Proverbs 6:16–19 teaches that God hates a gossip, a false witness who pours out lies. Nothing can cut the line to the anchor of participation faster than gossip, drama, backbiting, badmouthing, name calling, and labeling others. The quickest way to hinder church revival is with disunity. United we stand, divided we fall. We must follow the example of Jesus Christ and love and forgive others despite their differences, faults, and failures.

Don't Go Solo

One final reminder about the importance of having this anchor of participation in our lives is found in Hebrews 10:25 (NLT): "And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near." Our spiritual survival absolutely depends on us staying connected to the body of Christ through Christian fellowship; it depends on the anchor of participation.

Closing

Wolves are one of the most fascinating types of animals you can watch or study. The bonds between wolf packs are admirable, and the hierarchy of a wolf pack is simply amazing. There are alpha wolves, beta wolves, and omega wolves. Wolves live, travel, hunt, and eat together. But on rare occasions—as a result of conflict or curiosity—a wolf will be separated from the pack and be termed, *lone wolf*. Lone wolves are the exception rather than the rule. They lose protection and provision, leaving them misplaced, malnourished, and struggling in miserable isolation.

It is not God's will for you to be a lone wolf. It's not His plan for you to be separated from the church and fellowship and participation with believers. We are all much better together.

ENGAGE

Ask the Lord to help you stay unified with fellow believers and keep the anchor of participation. We are exponentially stronger when we are together. As Deuteronomy 32:30 (NLT) tells us: "How could one person chase a thousand of them, and two people put ten thousand to flight, unless their Rock had sold them, unless the Lord had given them up?" When God's people are unified in participation and in purpose, with His help, we are unstoppable.

This week plan a time to get together or text some friends in our youth group to fellowship with each other and strengthen each other. Pray for and with each other. Bear each other's burdens. Anchor yourselves to God and to each other to help you survive life's storms.

