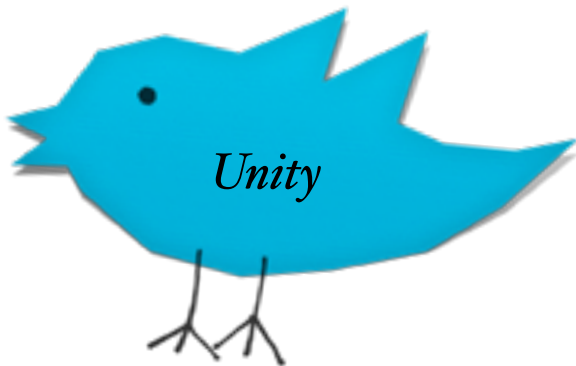




build. plant. grow.
the word this week



epiphany



lectionary
reading

Cycle ABC

Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord

Lectionary 20

Reading I: Isaiah 60: 1-6

In this passage the prophet Isaiah presents a vision of Jerusalem's pending exaltation. He speaks to the fact that God's light and glory are to be restored and that the people's relationship with their God will be renewed. The "glory of the Lord" refers to God's self-manifestation, which is exactly what the word "Epiphany" means. The gloom of exile will be over and a new beginning is granted. The light given to the nation of Israel is to be a light for all the nations. There will be a **unity** restored.

Reading 2: Ephesians 3: 2-3a, 5-6

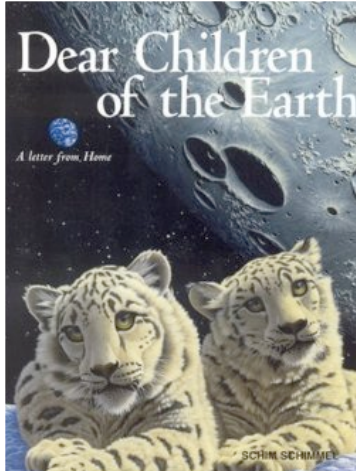
Saint Paul writes to the Church at Ephesus and proclaims boldly that Jesus Christ came to bring about unity among the peoples of the earth. It is through Jesus Christ that the God of Israel is made manifest to ALL peoples. Past generations only experienced that which separated people. Now through faith in Jesus Christ people can, if they wish, experience the greatness of **unity**. God chose and blessed Saint Paul with this ministry of preaching to the Gentiles.

Gospel: Matthew 2: 1-12

The gospel speaks of those earnestly seeking the newborn king. Those searching are from outside the nation of Israel, that is the Gentiles. The magi represent the nations of the world seeking the light and are guided by a star. Interestingly, there were those who had already had been chosen and called by God and they felt that they had no need to search for this Messiah. King Herod feared for his throne, though his fear was unwarranted, given that Jesus was to be a different kind of king. There seems to be a truth about human nature and it that we can easily become locked into our own way of thinking and not allow the least bit of new light to enter into our lives. God is ever seeking to allow new light to seep into our lives in order to see God more clearly. The truth is we must make ourselves available to the light and seek **unity** among others from various nations, races and creeds. This is God's will: **unity**.



children's story



Dear Children Of The Earth: A letter from Home

Written by Schim Schimmel

Copyright 1994 Cooper Square Publishing

ISBN-10: 1559712252

ISBN-13: 978-1559712255



character
education
activity

Unity is what God seeks for all of us. It is most important to remember that unity does not mean uniformity. Often human beings get the two confused. God created all of us to be unique and to combine the uniqueness of each is to provide something beautiful for God

Dear Children of the Earth

This enchanting and beautifully illustrated book begins with, as the title would lead you to understand, a letter from Mother Earth. In this letter, Mother Earth asks for help from her children everywhere. She writes to express her love for each and every child and asks for their love and appreciation in return. In her own words and with all of her heart, Mother Earth enfolds children with love and entrusts them with her protection. This love that Mother Earth expresses for her children very much parallels the love that God makes manifest for the whole world in the celebration of the Feast of the Epiphany. Mother Earth and God, our Loving Father, seek **unity** of love and a cooperation among peoples. The love is made manifest to the children of the earth by God's loving creation, Mother Earth, and to be enjoyed and stewarded by all of the inhabitants of the earth. The truth being told in the Scriptures and in *Dear Children of the Earth* is that we are all Children of the Earth and as such are called to **unity**.

Think of how your room would be if you did not clean it or provide some order for it? Soon you would be stumbling over all kinds of things. This would be an example that visually allows you to see what happens when we do not care for something. If our environment is to provide for us, then we must care for it. Similarly, this is true of caring for one another and being in **union** with one another as the Children of God. Think of what it might be like to be isolated from one another, to live alone and have no one to talk to or listen to, no one to embrace or share things with.

Unity is what God wants for all of us. God intends for all of us to be connected to one another and to seek out all the similarities and uniqueness and to celebrate them, much like the beautiful colors of a multicolored tapestry.

Activity

Step One: Have the music teacher provide a simple song for the students to learn and have them sing it in unison and then in parts or in a round. Record the song so the students can hear the uniform sound and then the added dimension of the song in parts or in a round. The Song Prayer of *Father I adore you, lay my life before you, how I love you. Jesus I adore you, lay my life before you, how I love you. Spirit I adore you, lay my life before you, how I love you.*, done in a round. ²

Unity calls for an interdependence among peoples.



case study

Look.
Feel.
Know.
Act.

What could you do today?

Today think of the different gifts and talents that God has given to you and how you might help others with those gifts and likewise how others might help you with their unique gifts and talents. When people come together and use their gifts for one another it makes God smile because all of the gifts are Gods. When God sees them shared and celebrated in **unity** with one another, there is a greater reflection of God shining through those people sharing their gifts for the good of one another. What gift or talent could you use with other members of your family or friends, classmates or school community that would contribute uniquely to a wonderful project illustrating **unity** among your family, friends, classmates or school?

Look Feel Know Act

In the Mass of the Holy Spirit, which is traditionally celebrated at the beginning of each academic year in every Catholic school throughout the world, we hear these words in the Preface: *Almighty God from a diversity of gifts You provide a unity that so reflects Your image here on earth.* The ultimate and defining example of diversity in unity is that of the loving relationship that exists among the Trinity of Persons in One God. Access on-line a picture of the classic icon of the Trinity by Andre Reblev, which has three images seated around a table with an open space left for each person to join the Trinity at the table. That image invites each person to enter into the loving relationship of the unity of God, who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Place yourself at the table, envision yourself among the Three and feel the Oneness of those gathered around the table, the uniqueness of each person yet the **unity** that exists because of the love that flows from one to another and to you. Commit yourself to be as loving as possible and do that by making an offering to God each morning to be of love in all things. Make this commitment throughout the day, when you get up out bed, and as often as possible throughout your day.

In *Dear Children of the Earth* we see a commitment on the part of Mother Earth to show her love to all creatures of the earth and in turn request that each of us care for her. This is best done when we act in **unity**. Each and every undertaking can be much easier with the talents and gifts of others working collaboratively. If we are to save and care for Mother Earth, we are called to use our gifts and talents together. For Mother Earth is indeed large but delicate and thus needs the care of all. Likewise, we are called to respond to God's love for us by loving one another, celebrating our diversity and allowing that celebration of diversity to make God's Kingdom manifest here on earth. Jesus says that the *kingdom of God is within* and we are called to allow that kingdom to shine through much like the star that led the Magi to the new born King.



**closing
tool**

Pray that you will see the unique gifts God has given to you and the unique image of God that you are. Pray that you will use those gifts and talents joined with those of others to do something beautiful for God.*

*** The phrase *to do something beautiful for God* has long been attributed to Blessed Theresa of Calcutta.**



**Santa Clara
University**

Character Education at the Markkula Center for Applied Ethics
ethics programs for communities that learn, live, pray, or work together

www.scu.edu/character