

Christian Leadership in a Multifaith World Curriculum Designed by Interfaith America & CCCU

Module 1 – Christian Foundations for Interfaith Bridge-Building
Activity 3 – A Fresh Look at 1 Corinthians 13

Overview

In this activity, students will read and analyze 1 Corinthians 13 through the lens of loving someone who orients around religion differently. Key focus is given to concepts like love, truth, faith, and hope.

Learning Outcomes

Students who successfully complete this activity will:

- Apply the traits of love described in this passage to the text of a relationship with someone who believes differently.
- Explore the relationship between love and truth, and recognize the limitations of having truth as the only goal of the Christian life.

External Materials

- 1 Corinthians 13
- Rachael McNeal's essay "Bearing Witness to the Love of Jesus" in *From Bubble to Bridge: Educating Christians for a Multifaith World* (IVP Academic, 2016). (pp. 94-96)

Activity Content

Sometimes we become so familiar with a scripture passage that we forget to slow down and read what it is actually saying. Take, for example, 1 Corinthians 13, which is often read at weddings. We tend to focus on love as patient and kind, and we tend to apply these concepts to our relationships with people we already love. But 1 Corinthians 13 also has powerful words about the relationship between love, truth, faith, and hope. In addition to telling us what love should look like, this passage also gives us challenging examples of what *doesn't* constitute love. And, by reminding us in several places that human knowledge is limited, this passage also challenges us to think about how we interact with people who are committed to very different views of the truth.

Student Assignment Options

Begin this lesson by reading 1 Corinthians 13.

1. After reading 1 Corinthians 13, make a list of what this passage says that love DOES and a list of what it says that love does NOT do.
2. Consider the following questions that can help us connect 1 Corinthians 13 with our treatment of those who believe differently from us:

- a. In what ways are Christians sometimes proud and boastful in their interactions with non-Christians? Can you think of some examples of Christians being “resounding gongs” or “clanging symbols”? How might this be harmful to interactions with people who believe differently?
 - b. What does it mean to dishonor those who believe differently? Can you think of examples of how this is done in social media? What would it look like to honor others instead?
 - c. Looking at the list of what love does, imagine what this would look like for a Christian when interacting with a co-worker from a different religious tradition.
3. Summarize what this passage says about the relationship between knowledge and truth.
 - a. How does this passage connect with virtues explored in Activity 1.2 like humility?
 - b. Why do you think many Christians tend to emphasize truth over love? What is lost when we do this?
 - c. Sometimes it feels scary to encounter beliefs that are different from our own. How does this passage encourage us that we do not need to be afraid of this?
4. Read Rachael McNeal’s essay “Bearing Witness to the Love of Jesus” in *From Bubble to Bridge: Educating Christians for a Multifaith World* (IVP Academic, 2016). (pp. 94-96)
 - a. How does Rachael McNeal’s essay illustrate what I Corinthians 13 has to say about love?
5. Read Martin Luther King’s [Palm Sunday sermon](#). Reflect on how Gandhi’s life mirrors the teachings of 1 Corinthians 13. Also, reflect on how King’s treatment of Gandhi is consistent with Paul’s teachings in 1 Corinthians 13.
6. Now consider I Corinthians 13 when it comes to treating other Christians. Using the ideas in this passage, how might the Body of Christ build bridges across internal differences among Christians?