



Hispanic Heritage Month takes place from September 15th to October 15th every year as a time to recognize and celebrate the many contributions, diverse cultures, and extensive histories of the American Latino community. Beginning in 1968, Hispanic Heritage Month was originally observed as “Hispanic Heritage Week” under President Lyndon Johnson, but it was later extended to a month during President Ronald Reagan’s term in 1988.

Since then, the month has been celebrated nationwide through festivals, art shows, conferences, community gatherings, and much more. The month also celebrates the independence days of several Latin American countries, including Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua on September 15th, Mexico on September 16th, and Chile on September 18th. It also includes holidays recognizing Hispanic contributions, such as Virgin Islands-Puerto Rico Friendship Day, which is celebrated in the U.S. Virgin Islands.

In the following link, you will find a two-minute video explaining the history behind Hispanic Heritage Month.

<https://www.oprahdaily.com/life/g36651645/hispanic-heritage-month-activities/>

This year we have selected the theme “United with Christ” based on Philippians 2:1-5 (NIV).

How will you be celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month? We encourage you to acknowledge and celebrate this special month within your units! Here are a few suggestions on how to do that:

WORSHIP SERVICE OUTLINE

Call to Worship	Psalm 149: 1-5
Invocation	
Welcome & Announcements	
Praise and Worship:	“As We Gathered” (Songbook #330) “Come, Now is the Time to Worship” (Songbook #332) “Come into His Presence” (HC #51) “He is Exalted” (HC #73)
Offering	
Scripture Reading	Philippians 2:1-5
Song	“Unity Hymn” https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eLRTHgGOShQ
Sermon	“United with Christ” (See pages 3-7)
Time of Commitment /Song	“Make Us One” https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rdC9NTKFT9s
Benediction	“Finally, all of you, be like-minded, be sympathetic, love one another, be compassionate and humble.” (1 Peter 3:8, NIV) Benediction (As You Go) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qT4in2q54aA

UNITED WITH CHRIST
by Captain Pedro Arias

SCRIPTURE: Philippians 2:1-5

INTRODUCTION

What would be the last words you would write to a church if you knew your death was imminent? The apostle Paul wrote these beautiful words to the church in Philippi without knowing if he would come out of the threat of death that hung over him alive. When the apostle arrived in the city of Philippi, he did not hesitate to call the inhabitants "...a warped and crooked generation..." (Philippians 2:15, NIV). Our generation is not far from being like the one that the apostle Paul described for the Philippians.

Dear brothers and sisters, let us not forget that once we convert to Christianity, God calls us to share the good news of salvation with this generation because they have not experienced the transformation of the presence of Jesus in their lives. Once we have been converted to Christianity, God expects us to live in this world as Philippians 2:15 (NIV) also says, "...children of God without fault..."

As a servant of God, the apostle developed a relationship with the Church of Philippi established and rooted in Jesus Christ and in love and respect for one another. They had an unparalleled love for Paul, and that love was reciprocated by the apostle.

The Philippian church was strong and innovative, and when a church has these qualities, it continually develops strategies and ministries to proclaim the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Because of this, there is a risk of difference of opinion, vision, emphasis, and interests. The point is this; the stronger the church and the more activities it develops, the more attention should be given to unity in the church. Why? Because a strong church has more people working, and where more people are working, more differences can arise; consequently, members must give more attention to unity.

If Christ lives through us, the church will acquire certain qualities of Christ that will allow it to remain united. I would like to briefly mention six qualities in this passage that will allow us to live united with Christ:

I. The Quality of Encouragement (v.1)

This word can mean many things throughout the scriptures, but in this context, it means comfort, exhortation, and strength. Note that this quality is a characteristic of Christ Himself. Through his Spirit, he encourages comfort and strengthens the believer to be one in spirit and to be engaged in the ministry of his Church. Christ does not want us to engage in murmuring, complaining, or

weakening unity within the church. Rather, the Spirit of Christ takes hold of the one who is disturbed or disappointed and comforts, encourages and strengthens them.

Let nothing interfere with the spirit of unity in the church. Please note we are not just to help others who are disturbed; we must allow the comfort and encouragement of Christ to flow into us when we are disturbed. Let Christ comfort us, and when others are upset, we must be there to comfort them. Imagine the spirit of unity that could flow through the church if all the members allowed the encouragement of Christ to flow through them.

Let us then be like Christ: Let us encourage the one who gossips to control their tongue and get rid of that behavior; let us strengthen the one who is tired; let us encourage the disturbed to rest in the Lord; let us encourage the disruptive to be transformed so that unity in the church will be the result of living as children of God.

II. The Quality of Love (v.1)

There is comfort in the love of Christ. His love moves a person to maintain unity with another believer. The word love here is agape love, love that is not selfish but rather sacrificial. Agape love is the love of the mind, of reason, and of the will. It is the type of love that goes far. It is love that allows us to love another person even when that person is not worth loving.

This agape love is the love of Christ, the love he showed to that crooked generation when he gave himself and sacrificed himself for it and for us. We did not deserve this type of love; we were unworthy of His love, yet Christ loved us despite everything.

Imagine the spirit of unity that could exist within the church if each member allowed the love of Christ to flow through them.

There would be no bitterness, anger, or any other action that affects another person. If a person committed any fault and deserved punishment, the members of the church would sacrifice and give themselves for them, just as Christ sacrificed himself for us.

III. The Quality of Common Sharing (v.1)

Paul tells us about the common sharing in the Spirit. Once a person has trusted Jesus Christ as their Savior, the Holy Spirit does two things in that person; the Holy Spirit comes into the life and heart of the person to comfort, guide, teach, equip, and use as a witness for Christ.

The Holy Spirit creates a spiritual bond between the new believer and other believers. He molds the heart of the believer to the hearts of other believers. He unites the lives of these believers, and they become one in life and purpose. They live a united life, sharing blessings, needs, and gifts together, all focused on the Lord and His purposes. The Holy Spirit becomes part of the unity and fellowship all centered on Jesus Christ and His mission.

Believers must have the same feeling. There should be no discordant element in the church; there should be no differences; there should be no bad influences from the old life; there should be no gossip because that would affect the fellowship of the Spirit in the church. Paul reminds us to be of the same mind, maintaining the unity of the Spirit.

IV. The Quality of Compassion (v.2)

Compassion is the quality that impels God to rescue us from our vain way of living. It is the force that keeps Him looking for us again and again, even if we are in rebellion against Him. We can be grouchy, we can even curse and be against His cause, but his compassion will keep Him looking for us until we gain life.

If we allow his compassion to flow into us, can we see what can happen in the Church? What will happen if we are moved by Christ's compassion and go and search out those who have left the corps? Those who have been offended. Those who have been criticized for their behavior. And the list goes on.

Think how many would have already been reconciled and returned to the church community if we had been compassionate and gone looking for them. Think how many problems we could have avoided if we had acted with compassion from the moment the problem arose.

The point is this. We must let the compassion of Christ flow into us and through us. His compassion will comfort us.

When the compassion of Jesus Christ flows in and through me, it maintains unity in the church. Also, it keeps our minds united and focused on the need of a world that must be reached and ministered to in compassion.

V. The Quality of Joy (v.2)

Believers in the church should show concern for the joy of each member of the church. And take note, if there is one thing quicker than anything else that brings joy to a church, it is unity.

The apostle demands: "...make my joy complete..." (v.2). Paul's point is simple and direct; their joy in Christ must be completed by only one thing: the unity between them.

Joy is always disrupted when there is criticism when believers are dissatisfied by something that makes no sense, when there are complaints and gossip, when there is opposition, and when there is an atmosphere of division due to dissatisfaction with something irrelevant.

We must deal with many tasks in the corps, such as planning the worship service, conducting all the programs, organizing the different Sunday School classes in the corps; attending financial meetings; taking care of the problems of the corps building; ministering to the new believers and serve in the joy of Christ.

But the only way we are going to be able to do this is by loving in joy the way Christ did. Since he did not come to be served but to serve others, that is what He gave himself on the cross for you and me.

VI. The Quality of Humility (v.5)

Notice the following: A large, active, strong corps may have two problems: conflict and empty glory.

Some people are going to have conflicts with others; this is because of the lack of maturity of the Lord in them. Therefore, they will get distracted or involved in talking about their differences, their jealousy, their envy, their desires or ambitions for positions in the corps, their longing for recognition, opposition to those who strive to work for the Lord, etc. If they do not get what they want, they will be willing to fight with other soldiers in the corps; the result is the division or lack of unity.

Paul tells us: "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves." (v.3)

Some will seek glory within the corps but notice that God's Word calls it "selfish ambition," which means an empty glory. Some want attention, recognition, position, and honor. They want people to look to them for advice or opinion. They want to belong to any committee of the corps or be recognized as a leader of it.

The spirit that must prevail in a strong corps is the spirit of humility. The only way a corps should remain strong and blessed by God is by people who display a spirit of humility.

Incidentally, a humble person may have a prominent position, fame, or power, but if they conduct themselves in a spirit of submission and denies himself for the sake of Christ and the sake of others, they are doing the right thing.

Contrary to what the world thinks, humility reaps incredible benefits - humility results in our exaltation on the glorious day of redemption. Yet, humility also requires an evaluation of ourselves. (See 1 Corinthians 8:2; Galatians 6:3).

Christ demands that His followers walk in humility. Humility comes from a sincere evaluation of who we are. It takes courage to look at ourselves, and it takes honesty to see ourselves as we really are.

Humility reaches its maximum splendor when we lose our lives for the cause of Christ and the welfare of others.

CONCLUSION

Considering what the apostle Paul expresses in Ephesians 1:1-5, let's reflect on the following questions:

- What do you consider to be your duty to the members of the corps and to those who are not congregating in the corps due to a lack of encouragement or due to any situation that happened at the corps that could have caused that person to leave the corps?
- What do you consider to be the most outstanding quality of your corps right now, and why?
- Is the unity in the members of the corps the result of the work of the Holy Spirit? Or is it the result of some expectation created by a person?
- Is the quality of compassion evident in the corps? How so?
- What do you consider to be the most noticeable quality in your corps?
- In your opinion, what recommendation could be made regarding the lack of humility of some members of the corps?
- In what qualities mentioned in this passage do you feel the prompting of the Holy Spirit in your life?

Let us conclude with this prayer:

"Heavenly Father, I confess my hidden motives of selfish ambition and vain conceit. I admit that my heart still seeks its own. Forgive me, Lord! Replace my selfishness with the selflessness of Christ, Who laid down His life for me. Replace my ambitions with the attitude of Christ, Who purposefully took on the very nature of a servant. Teach me to love and to live as Jesus did. As Christ was made in human likeness, so also may I be transformed into the likeness of Christ."
(NIV Worship Bible, page 1,580)

HOW TO START A HISPANIC MINISTRY

The Intercultural Ministries Department released a video called “How to Start a Hispanic Ministry” in July 2021. You may not be starting a Hispanic ministry soon. Still, this resource has some useful segments that you can use as you celebrate National Hispanic Heritage Month. Here are a few suggestions:

<https://youtu.be/6mQmkCjsGng>

- ✚ **History** (7:05) – We invite you to listen to the beginnings of the Hispanic ministry in the Central Territory, particularly in the Metro Division. Hear the story of Raul Guerrero (Order of the Founder) as shared by his daughter, retired officer Major Yaneth Fuqua.
- ✚ **Values** (13:16) – Learn some important values about the Hispanic community, including “La Familia,” celebrations, food, and hospitality.
- ✚ **ESL** (30:44) – You may want to think about starting an ESL program. Listen to Carlos G. Moran, former ESL Director, as he gives some important insights about how to start an ESL Program.
- ✚ **Immigration** (39:01) – Listen to a part of Dr. Alexia Salvatierra and Dr. Rolando Cuellar’s presentation on immigration at the 2019 ONE Conference.
Topics include:
 - *Biblical Principles and Challenges
 - *Jesus and the refugee and orphan
 - *Positive aspects of current migration
 - *Fear and carrying the cross

- *More and more future congregations will be multicultural
- *The church is the answer

PROGRAM IDEAS TO CELEBRATE HISPANIC HERITAGE IN OUR CORPS OR INSTITUTIONS

- Sunday Worship Service:** Choose a Sunday between September 15 and October 15 to have a worship service to highlight this event. Ask someone in your congregation from a Hispanic background to share their testimony.
- Open Air or Open Gym:** Invite the community to learn more about the Hispanic Heritage. Prepare different stations around the Gym where people can find information about the Hispanic history, music, and healthy food preparation from different countries; play typical games of those countries, have activities for children, competitions, crafts, etc.
- Health Fair:** Invite community groups to participate in a free health fair. Provide free health services such as eye exams, blood pressure tests, weight control, etc. Have available workshops about health information, programs, etc.
- Recognize a Hero in the Community:** Identify a Hispanic person in your community (police, firefighter, teacher, etc.) and recognize their work in the community during your Sunday Service or at a special luncheon.
- Watch a Movie:** Host a movie night and show a movie or a documentary that talks about Hispanic culture. Here are a few suggestions: “Under the Same Moon,” “Bella,” “Spanglish,” “Instructions Not Included,” “The Other Side of Immigration,” or “Which Way Home.”
- Host a Citizenship or Immigration Workshop:** Contact your local World Relief or other similar agency and invite them to give a Citizenship or Immigration workshop.

USEFUL LINKS FOR NATIONAL HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

- “Crafts to Celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month”** – In this link, you will find Hispanic heritage printable resources to use with children and crafts representing different countries like Chile, Cuba, Guatemala, and Mexico.
http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/09/05/crafts-hispanic-heritage_n_3875830.html
- “Celebrating Latino Culture for Hispanic Heritage Month”** – In this link, you will find Hispanic heritage month activities for kids, including How to make paper fiesta flowers; musical crafts; Hispanic heroes trading cards; interactive activities, children’s books, Hispanic inventors and more.
<http://www.modernmami.com/hispanic-heritage-month-activities-for-kids/>

- ✚ **“National Day”** – In this link, you will find useful information on celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month with a Hispanic Heritage Month Timeline, Hispanic Heritage Highlights, and Why Hispanic Heritage Month is important. <https://nationaltoday.com/hispanic-heritage-month/>

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES – SMALL GROUP STUDIES

- ✚ **Sacred Conversations on Race, Culture, and Reconciliation** – This 10-session discussion guide for small groups creates a safe space and invites candid conversations about race and culture.
<https://interculturalministriescentral.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/11/2016/10/SACRED-CONVERSATIONS.pdf>
- ✚ **CULTURE 101: EMBRACING CULTURAL DIFFERENCES – ENGLISH & SPANISH**
This video, available in English and Spanish, is for those who want to develop cultural competence for intercultural and multi-ethnic ministries. The video, approximately 30 minutes long, can be used in a variety of program settings. Small group discussion questions and activities are included. The viewing guide is available.
Spanish Version: <https://vimeo.com/185958717>
English Version: <https://vimeo.com/174858793>

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES – ARTICLES AND BOOKS


- ✚ **“What Christians can learn during Hispanic Heritage Month”** – This brief article by Giancarlo Montero gives a brief history of how this celebration started and invited Christians to celebrate with Hispanic brothers and sisters our unity in diversity.
<https://erlc.com/resource-library/articles/what-christians-can-learn-during-hispanic-heritage-month/>
- ✚ **“5 Facts about National Hispanic Heritage Month”** – In this article by Joe Carter, he highlights five key facts pertaining to the observance of this celebration.
<https://erlc.com/resource-library/articles/5-facts-for-national-hispanic-heritage-month/>
- ✚ **“The Story of Latino Protestants in the United States”** – by Juan Francisco Martínez begins with a description of the Diverse Latino Protestant community. Then this book examines six main periods in the history of American Latino Protestantism, paying special attention to such key issues as migration patterns, immigration policies, enculturation, and assimilation.
- ✚ **“Welcoming the Stranger”** – Matthew Soerens & Jenny Hwang
Immigration is one of the most complicated issues of our time. Voices on all sides argue strongly for action and change. Christians find themselves torn between the desire to uphold laws and the call to minister to the vulnerable. The authors point us toward

immigration reform that is compassionate, sensible, and just, as they offer concrete ways for Christians and local churches to welcome and minister to our immigrant neighbors.

 **"Harvest of Empire: A History of Latinos in America"** – Juan Gonzalez

The new immigrants have ignited a vibrant "Latin explosion" in American popular culture. But the Latino influence reaches far beyond music, sports, cuisine, or the latest magazine cover. This book features family portraits of real-life immigrant Latino pioneers, as well as sketches of the political events and social conditions that compelled them to leave their homeland and how they have transformed the nation's cultural landscape.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES – OTHER VIDEOS

 **"La Deuda" (The Debt)** is a brand-new short film produced by Share Change – the Los Angeles-based multimedia arm of The Salvation Army's USA Western Territory. Filmed on location in Mexico, the Spanish-language film is loosely based on Jesus' Parable of the Unmerciful Servant, found in Matthew 18. *La Deuda* premiered in early February, with a screening on the HBO Latino channel in the USA and Bermuda. Subsequently, the film will appear on HBO streaming services, including HBO Max. The film is a coming-of-age tale, following a young boy called Victor in his quest to save the life of his beloved pet goat, Isabel. It includes English subtitles, and a companion Bible study is available for download in both Spanish and English from salarmy.us/LaDeudaStudy.

 **"Which Way Home"**

This Academy Award Nominee-Best Documentary Feature follows some unaccompanied children as they make the long and treacherous voyage to the U.S. border. Often traveling for months or even years at a time, these courageous and determined children each have stories of hope and resilience, disappointment, and sorrow.

 **"The Other Side of Immigration"** – Juan Gonzalez

This video asks why so many Mexicans come to the U.S., and what happens to the families and communities they leave behind. Filmmaker Roy Germano provides a perspective on undocumented immigration rarely witnessed by American eyes, challenging audiences to imagine more creative and effective solutions to the problem.

SHORT IMMIGRATION COURSE ONLINE

Would you like to understand U.S. immigration better? Here is a five-part email minicourse by the Pew Research Center. You will receive an email every few days over the span of a couple of weeks. Each email will answer a different question about immigration: Who are U.S. immigrants? How has immigration changed the U.S.? Who are legal immigrants, and who are unauthorized ones? And more.

<https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/10/16/want-to-understand-u-s-immigration-weve-got-an-email-course-for-you/>