



CHANGING HEARTS WELS PRISON MINISTRY

GRADES 3-4

TEACHER EDITION PHILEMON AND ONESIMUS

Philemon 1-25

Looking Ahead

THEME: We love others because God first loved us.

SCRIPTURE TEXT: Philemon 1-25

See the People's Bible: Harlyn J. Kuschel, Philippians, Colossians, Philemon, pages 1-6 and 210-228.



AIM: How did Paul urge Philemon to show his love for Onesimus?

TRUTH: Paul urged Philemon to welcome Onesimus back as a brother in the Lord.

SUMMARY AND APPLICATION:

Philemon, a Christian and church leader, had a slave named Onesimus who ran away. Upon reaching Paul, Onesimus confessed his sins and became a follower of Christ. As a matter of Christian love, Paul writes a letter urging Philemon to welcome back Onesimus no longer as a slave but as a brother in Christ.

Out of love for our Savior, we love and welcome others into or back to the family of believers.

MEMORY TREASURES: John 13:34

A new command I give you: love one another.



Teaching the Lesson

INTRODUCTION: Begin by asking the children what it means to be someone's slave. Explain that Philemon's relationship with

Onesimus was similar to a boss and a worker in our time. In today's lesson we will learn about a Christian man named Philemon who was generous, loving, and devoted to the work of God and the church. This man had a slave named Onesimus. We will learn how the Apostle Paul urged Philemon to show his love for his slave Onesimus, who had sinned against him.

Explain to the children that Paul was placed under house arrest for proclaiming God's Word. This meant Paul was chained to a soldier/guard while he lived in his own rented dwelling in Rome. He could receive friends and visitors. Paul continued to proclaim God's Word to all with whom he came into contact while he waited for a trial.

Write "Love is _____" on the board. Ask the children to think of ways to complete this sentence. (Examples: Love is giving my mom a hug. Love is helping my little brother or sister.) Call their attention to the fact that we usually think of showing love to those who love us in

return or those who deserve our love. We probably wouldn't think to say, "Love is welcoming someone to church who was put in jail for breaking the law." Tell them in today's lesson they'll learn that because God loves, forgives, and welcomes us into his family, we'll love and welcome others, including those who have strayed from God or who at one time did not know about God's love.

Teacher Telling

Encourage the children to listen carefully to learn the answer to this question: **How did Paul urge Philemon to show his love for Onesimus?**

Using the student page, tell the story of Philemon and Onesimus. While telling it, place each corresponding piece of the heart labeled FORGIVENESS on the board, securing it with a magnet.

Children Telling

Divide the children into pairs. Assign the 4th grader as the scribe. Give the children five minutes to recall and record on a piece of paper as many facts as they can from the story. When the five minutes are up, have them share their facts while you make a master list on the board. As the facts are shared, the children should cross off any similar facts on their own papers. Continue until they run out of facts. Then have them help you number the facts in chronological order. If they have missed any major facts, add them to the list now.

Possible facts for the lesson include the following:

- Paul had a friend named Philemon.
- Philemon was a leader in the church.
- Philemon's slave Onesimus ran away.

- Onesimus found Paul and learned of God's love and forgiveness.
- Onesimus was sorry for the wrong he had done.
- Onesimus wanted to return to Philemon.
- Paul wrote a letter to Philemon.
- Paul urged Philemon to welcome back Onesimus no longer as a slave but as a Christian brother.

Developing the Truth



After completing the list in order, guide them to state the truth using a discussion such as the one that follows.

Philemon was a Christian friend of Paul's. Philemon showed his love and generosity to others by opening his home for worship services. Ask the children, "What did Philemon receive from Paul?" (**Philemon received a letter from Paul.**) In this letter Paul urged his friend Philemon to welcome back Onesimus no longer as a slave, but as a brother in the Lord. Ask the children, "Why might Philemon not want to welcome Onesimus?" (**Philemon may have thought of him as a runaway slave.**) Ask the children, "Why was Onesimus now a dear brother?" (**He now believed Jesus was his Savior.**) Ask the children, "How would Philemon be able to do what Paul asked?" (**Both he and Onesimus were children of God through the forgiveness Jesus won.**)

Applying the Truth to Our Lives

Philemon believed that God sent his Son, our Savior, to take all his sins away. Philemon forgave the sins of his slave Onesimus because he knew God had forgiven him. You and I know the Savior's

name. Ask the children, “Who is our Savior?” (**Jesus is our Savior.**) Ask the children, “What has Jesus done to take our sins away?” (**Jesus died on the cross to take our sins away.**) God has shown us his great love by sending his Son Jesus, to die for us. We sin against God when we don’t do what he asks us to. This happens often, yet he loves us and has saved us. God has forgiven us. Ask the children, “Because God forgives us and shows us his love, what does he want us to do for others? (**God wants us to show love to others by welcoming them, helping them, and inviting them to hear God’s Word.**) *Note for the teacher: This may include welcoming those who have been released from jail or prison. It may also include welcoming a child whose parent was or is in jail or prison.*

Philemon learned about Jesus from Paul. Onesimus learned about Jesus from Paul. Ask the children, “Who taught you about Jesus your Savior?” (**Responses may vary.**) Ask the children, “How can we help others learn about Jesus?” (**We can share God’s Word with them and invite them to hear it in Sunday School, worship services, and during other church activities.**) When they do come, we can help them feel welcome with our words and actions. By sharing God’s Word with them and welcoming them to our church, we are showing them God’s love.

Practicing the Memory Treasure

John 13:34 A new command I give you: love one another.



Let’s say our memory treasure together a few times. Then have

the children cut the puzzle pieces out that contain the memory treasure and put them back together. When finished, they can put them in a provided envelope with their lesson to take home.



Correlated Lesson Activity

CHANGING HEARTS:

Only God can change hearts through his forgiveness and the power of his Word. Instruct the children to complete the word search on Philemon and Onesimus to review the lesson.



Closing the Lesson

Close with the following prayer.

Lord Jesus, thank you for loving us. Help us to show love to others by helping them and welcoming them to church and Sunday School.

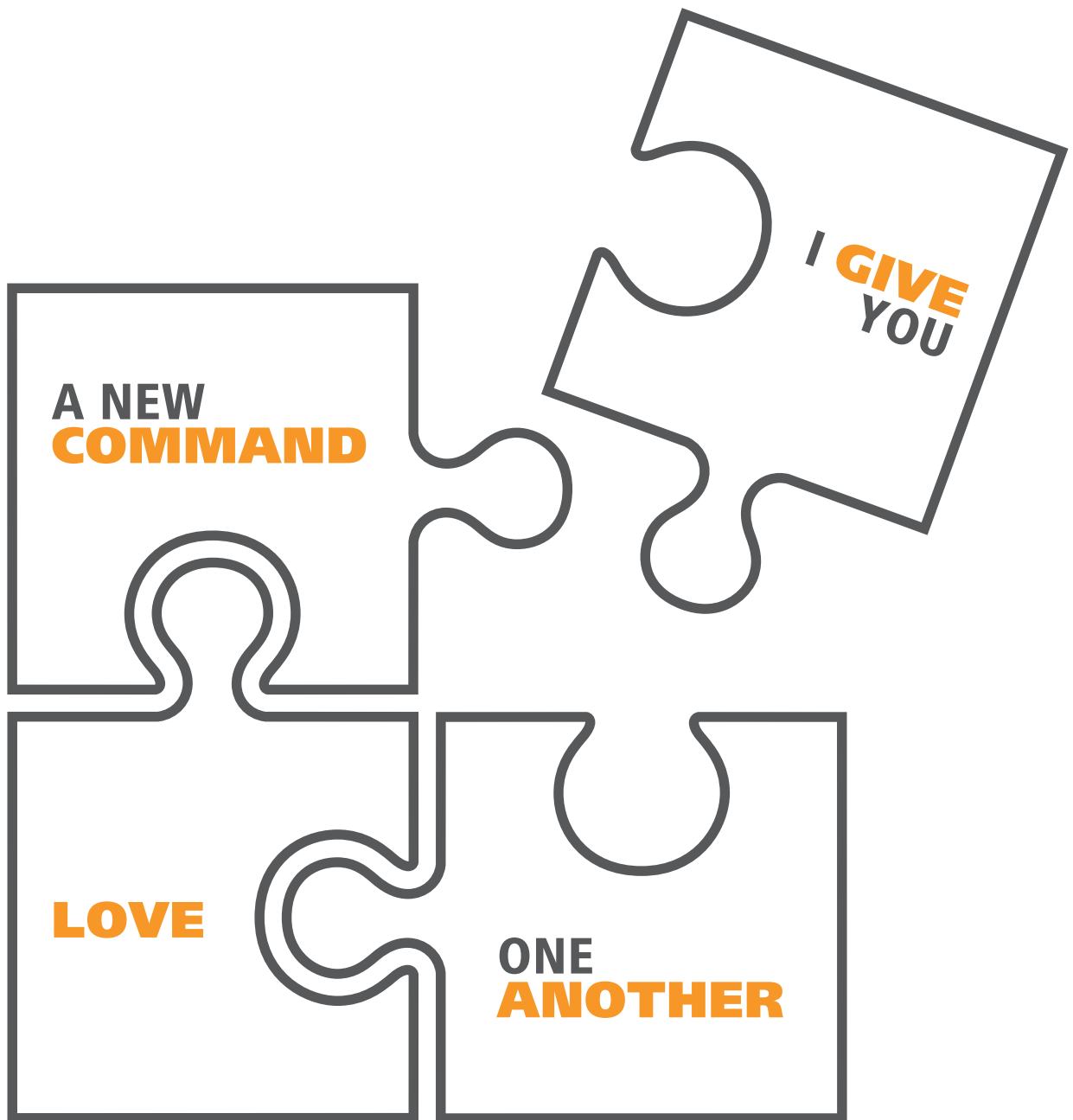
**ONESIMUS RAN AWAY
FROM PHILEMON.**

**PAUL TOLD ONESIMUS
OF GOD'S LOVE AND
FORGIVENESS.**

FORGIVENESS

**ONESIMUS
WAS SORRY
FOR WHAT
HE HAD
DONE.**

**PAUL WROTE TO
PHILEMON URGING
HIM TO WELCOME
ONESIMUS.**



Give the children time to cut out the puzzle pieces. Practice putting it back together while saying the memory treasure verse. If time is limited, they can take the sheet home and cut it out at home.

PHILEMON AND ONESIMUS

S L A V E E E N V L
J F O R G I V E W J
N J N V Q J S T W L
T H E M E H F R E Q
O U S S N S O F L M
P N I T U I A B C Q
S A M E V S I J O F
S S U A Q E Y M M J
C Q S L M L H C E M
P H I L E M O N Q R

JESUS ONESIMUS PAUL PHILEMON SAVIOR FORGIVE LOVE
SLAVE STEAL WELCOME