

# CHANGING HEARTS WELS PRISON MINISTRY

GRADES 3-4

## PHILEMON AND ONESIMUS

### Philemon 1-25

God chose the Apostle Paul to teach people about Jesus. One individual who learned from Paul was a man named Philemon. Philemon became a leader of the early Christian church and offered his home as a place for believers to gather to worship. Philemon showed his faith by the way he generously helped those in the Christian church. It made Paul happy to see Philemon show his love for fellow believers.

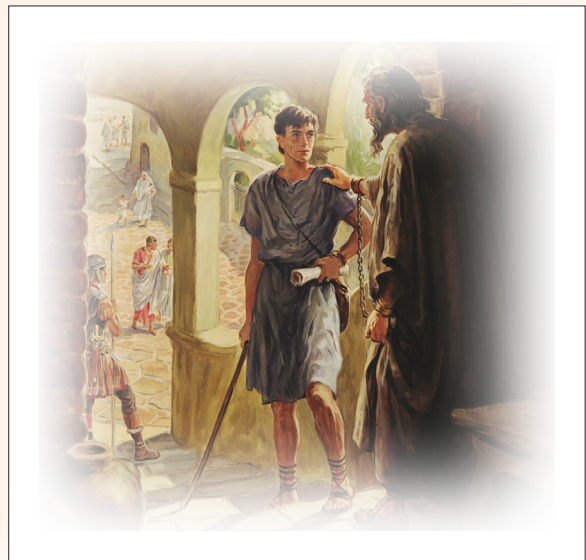
Philemon had a slave who worked for him named Onesimus. Onesimus ran away.

Onesimus found Paul, who at the time was under house arrest in Rome for preaching God's Word. Paul told Onesimus that God loved him so much that he sent his Son Jesus to die on a cross to pay for all his sins. Onesimus was sorry that he had run away. When he learned how much Jesus loved him, he wanted to return to Philemon and tell him he was sorry.

Paul wrote a personal letter to his friend Philemon. In it he told Philemon that his slave Onesimus had become a follower of Christ, and he was sorry for running away. As a sign of his new faith, Onesimus was

helping Paul, who was imprisoned, by serving as his messenger.

Paul lovingly urged Philemon to accept Onesimus back, no longer as a slave but as a Christian brother. Paul was sure Philemon would accept Onesimus because Philemon knew God had forgiven all his sins and accepted him just as God had forgiven Onesimus.





## PARENTS AND KIDS:

This lesson teaches that Paul urged his friend Philemon to love and welcome his slave Onesimus. Paul encouraged Philemon to copy the love Christ had shown to him. We thank and praise God for taking our sins away through his Son Jesus. As followers of Christ, we continue to grow in our faith. God shows how much he loves us by forgiving us. He asks us to love others, including those who have wandered from God. This includes people who have broken the law and spent time in jail or prison. We also want to reach out to their children and make them feel welcome. Although it may not be widely known that their parents are or have been incarcerated, children sometimes share these facts with their friends.

### TO DO:

Using the letter on the next page as an example, help your child write a short letter inviting another child, who hasn't been to church or Sunday School recently (or ever), to attend. Insert the name of your church and the date and time in the blank. Help your child address an envelope, put a stamp on it and place it in the mailbox. Or your child can hand deliver the letter if he/she will see the child to whom it is written. Be sure to follow up with a text or phone call!

### TO DO:

As a family, through role play, practice inviting someone to your church who hasn't been there for some time (or possibly ever). Then practice welcoming them when they arrive at church.

## PRAY TOGETHER:

Thank you, dear Father, for showing us your love by sending Jesus to take our sins away. Help us to show love to those who have wandered from you but have returned by helping them and welcoming them into or back into our church family. Give us opportunities to invite them to Sunday School, Vacation Bible School, church, and church activities.



### MEMORY TREASURES

#### John 13:34

A new command I give you: love one another.

**A NOTE** FROM YOUR FRIEND



**DEAR** \_\_\_\_\_,

YOU'RE INVITED TO COME TO \_\_\_\_\_  
WITH ME. WE HEAR ABOUT JESUS AND HIS GREAT  
LOVE FOR US. WE SING SONGS AND PRAISE HIM FOR  
ALL HE HAS DONE. WE PRAY TO JESUS. JESUS LOVES  
YOU AND SO DO I!

YOUR FRIEND,  
\_\_\_\_\_



FOR THE LORD IS GOOD AND HIS LOVE  
ENDURES FOREVER.

**P.S.** I'LL HAVE MY PARENT TEXT OR CALL YOUR  
PARENT TO SEE IF WE CAN MAKE A PLAN.