

## TEACHER EDITION **PHILEMON AND ONESIMUS**

### Philemon 1-25

#### Looking Ahead

**THEME:** We love others because God first loved us.

**SCRIPTURE TEXT:** Philemon 1-25



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

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

**SUMMARY AND APPLICATION:**

Philemon, a Christian and church leader, had a servant 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 as a brother in the Lord.

**Out of love for our Savior, we love others and welcome them 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 servant. 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 faithful to the work of God and the church. This man had a servant named Onesimus. We will learn how the Apostle Paul urged Philemon to show his love for his servant Onesimus, who had sinned against him.

#### Teacher Telling

Make copies of the sheet containing pictures of Paul, Philemon, and Onesimus (one for the teacher and one for each student). Cut them out and tape each to a tongue depressor. Use these while telling the story to the children.

## Children Telling

If the children are able, they can cut out their own figures and tape them to the stick to use during their retelling of the story while being prompted by the teacher.

## Developing the Truth



After telling the story and having the children retell it, 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 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 servant, but as a brother in the Lord. Ask the children, "Why might Philemon not want to welcome Onesimus?" (**Philemon may have thought of Onesimus as a runaway servant.**) 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. After Onesimus ran away, he also learned that God sent us a Savior. We know the Savior's name. Ask the children, "Who saved us?" (**Jesus saved us.**) Ask the children, "What has Jesus done to take our sins away?" (**Jesus died on the cross to take our sins away.**) God loved us by sending his Son Jesus to die for us. God wants us to show

love for each other and welcome each other into our church family, to hear God's Word and serve God with us. *Note for the teacher: This may include helping or welcoming those who have been released from jail or prison. It may also include helping or 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. Let's say our memory treasure together a few times.

## Practicing the Memory Treasure



**MEMORY TREASURES**

**John 13:34**

A new command I give you: love one another.

## Correlated Lesson Activity

**CHANGING HEARTS:** Only God can change hearts through his forgiveness and the power of his Word. Help the children make the following project to illustrate this truth. Allow the children to do as much of the project as they can.



Fold a piece of 9" x 12" red construction

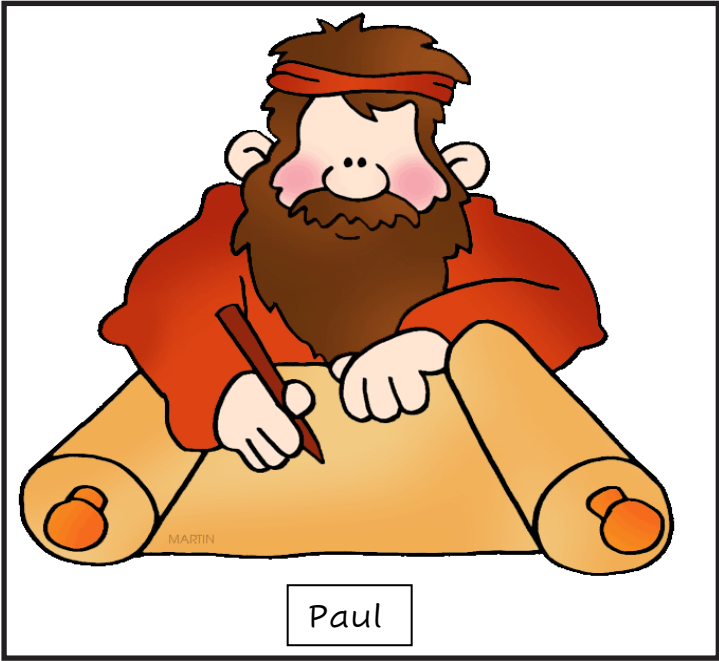
paper in half to make a 9" x 6" booklet. Draw a heart on one side so that the top two bumps of the heart are on the fold. Have the children cut on the line. This will make a heart shaped booklet, connected at the top of the heart. On the outside cover, make many marks and lines with assorted crayons. These represent the many sins we commit. Open to the inside. Keep this heart clean. Add only a cross and a happy face. We know that God has forgiven our sins through Jesus. He has led us to believe in him through his Word. God has changed our hearts into hearts of faith. Now we want to serve God by showing love to others, helping them, and welcoming them to hear God's Word in church.



### **Closing the Lesson**

Close with the following prayer.

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



Paul



Philemon



Onesimus